

***Professional Development and
Learning Communities in Support of
Academic Literacy***

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Agenda

- Define key terms and current trends in professional learning communities & teaching academic literacy
- Discussion and networking

How have you or how do you hope to support your own and others' professional development in academic literacy at your school?

Academic Literacy

- Academic literacy refers to the advanced skills students must have to be able to achieve grade-level standards in each academic area in middle and high schools.

Academic Literacy Skills

- The Inter-Institutional Centre for Language Development and assessment (ICELDA) 's tests, all measure a construct that relies on our definition of academic literacy that states that students must be able to do a number of things.

Academic Literacy Skills

- understand a range of academic vocabulary in context
- interpret and use metaphor and idiom, and perceive connotation, word play and ambiguity

Academic Literacy Skills

- understand relations between different parts of a text, be aware of the logical development of (an academic) text, via introductions to conclusions, and know how to use language that serves to make the different parts of a text hang together

Academic Literacy Skills

- interpret different kinds of text type (genre), and show sensitivity for the meaning that they convey, and the audience that they are aimed at

Academic Literacy Skills

- know what counts as evidence for an argument, extrapolate from information by making inferences, and apply the information or its implications to other cases than the one at hand.

Academic Literacy Skills

- understand the communicative function of various ways of expression in academic language (such as defining, providing examples, arguing)
- make meaning (e.g. of an academic text) beyond the level of the sentence

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

for the What Works Clearinghouse™ Practice Guide

**Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English
Learners in Elementary and Middle School**



1



Debrief

Ask team members to share the instructional strategies and activities that they implemented in their classrooms and to explain how students responded, both orally and in writing. Next, ask members to share how they might change or adapt their lessons to increase student learning.

2



Define Session Goals

Identify the focus and the specific goals of the session.

3



Explore New Practices and Compare Them to Current Practices

Access team members' prior knowledge and experiences related to the topic of the session. Move into new learning by discussing specific features of each recommendation along with the supporting evidence. Compare current practices with newly learned concepts.

4



Experiment with Newly Learned Strategies

Collaborate with team members to practice applying activities and strategies that were addressed in the practice guide.

5



Reflect and Plan

Guide team members in thinking about how the new learning relates to their previous knowledge and practice. Then, as a group, plan how the activities and strategies studied will be implemented in members' classrooms prior to the next PLC session. Remind the team members to be prepared at the start of the next session to share their experiences in implementing the strategies.

Table 1: Overview of the PLC facilitator’s guide

Focus	Session
Introduction	■ Introduction to the Practice Guide
Recommendation 1: Academic Vocabulary	■ Session 1A: <i>How-to</i> Steps 1–2 ■ Session 1B: <i>How-to</i> Step 3 ■ Session 1C: <i>How-to</i> Step 4
Recommendation 2: Oral and Written English Language Instruction in Content Areas	■ Session 2A: <i>How-to</i> Steps 1–2 ■ Session 2B: <i>How-to</i> Steps 3–4
Recommendation 3: Structured Writing Instruction	■ Session 3A: <i>How-to</i> Steps 1–2 ■ Session 3B: <i>How-to</i> Steps 3–4
Recommendation 4: Small-Group Intervention	■ Session 4A: <i>How-to</i> Steps 1–5



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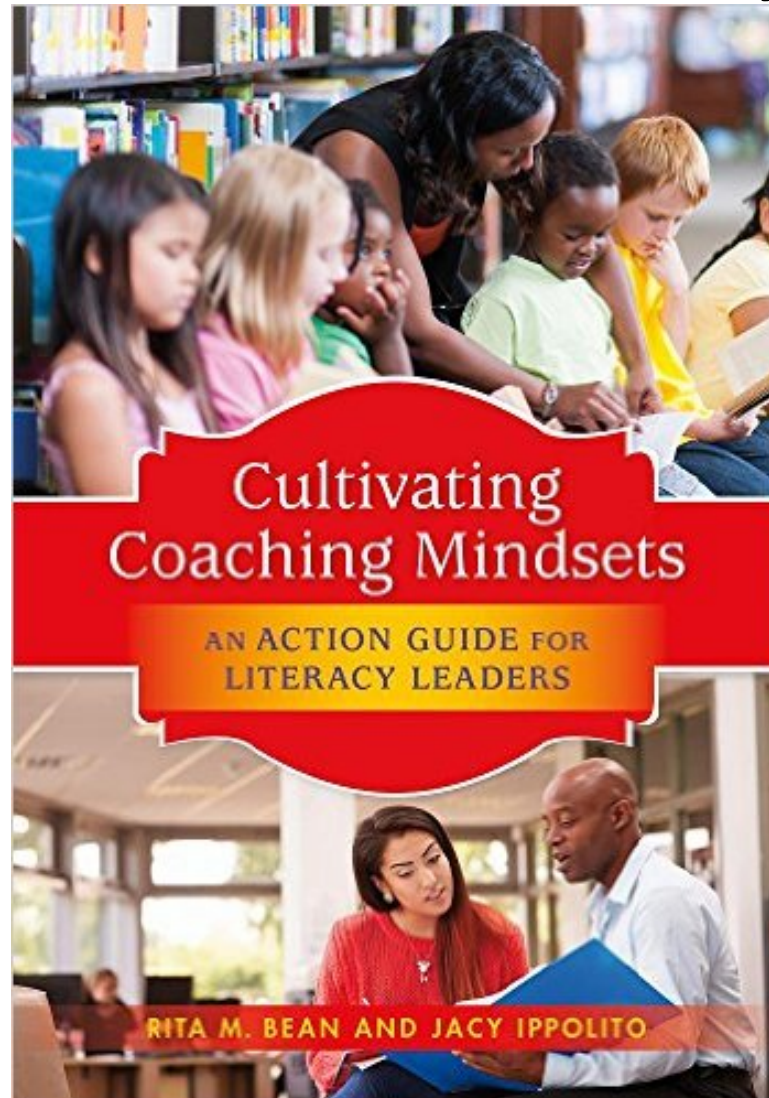
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Cultivating Coaching Mindsets: An Action Guide for Literacy Leaders



- **Detailed framework** to help literacy leaders promote the advancement of literacy instruction that improves and deepens learning.
- **Facilitation techniques** for providing meaningful feedback while respecting teachers' views and knowledge supporting teachers as they build their capacity to reflect on and improve literacy learning for all students.

Selected References

- Bean, R.M. & Ippolito, J. (2016). *Cultivating coaching mindsets: An action guide for literacy leaders*. West Palm Beach, FL: Learning Sciences International and the International Literacy Association.
- Dimino, J. A., Taylor, M., & Morris, J. (2015). *Professional learning communities facilitator's guide for the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide: Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school (REL 2015–105)*. 16

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