Tackling Adolescent Literacy
A Systematic Guide for a School-Wide Approach

Lesson #1: Tie the Work to a Common Vision:

The North Carolina Vision and Mission Statement:
- **Vision Statement**:

We are committed to building capacity to provide high quality professional development targeting adolescent literacy anchored in Evidence Based Practices and supported by technical assistance and coaching, resulting in increased teacher knowledge and sustained implementation of highly effective classroom practices.

- **Mission Statement**:

Our mission is to incrementally build a state wide approach to establish an understanding of the components of adolescent literacy programming and replicate successes across the state by building a core network of professional developers at the state, regional and local level.

Lesson #2: Deliver a Consistent Message:

- Establish a common framework for understanding adolescent literacy (Refer to the Adolescent Literacy Frame)
- Create a plan for delivering the initial information.

Lesson #3: Assess the Level of Readiness for Change:

- Take time to understand the school that is undergoing the change.
- Review data from various sources to identify areas of need. (Refer to the Literacy Profile Worksheet)
- Develop systems of shared leadership to help make decisions and drive the change.

Lesson #4: Design a Robust Plan for Professional Development, Coaching and Mentoring.

- Create a professional development plan that addresses the areas of need identified in the literacy profile. (Refer to the Guiding Questions and the Adolescent Literacy Action Plan Form)
- Build positive working relationships.

Lesson #5: Build Capacity:

- Identify individuals who exhibit potential and recruit them to assume leadership roles.
- Be prepared to address shifts in key personnel.
- Take advantage of the micro-credential system of certification.

Lesson #6: DON'T GIVE UP!

- "Improvement seldom, if ever, occurs on a straight trajectory; it typically involves bumps and slides, as well as gratifying leaps."
    School Reform from the Inside Out: Policy, Practice, and Performance
        by Richard F. Elmore

Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Adolescent Literacy

www.sim.kucrl.org

www.ncsip.org

www.evidenceforessa.org

www.adlit.org/webcasts/makingroom/

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http://all4ed.org/reports-factsheets/adolescentliteracybridging/

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What Content-Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy. To download this document, visit www.nifl.gov. https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/adolescent_literacy07.pdf

Addressing Adolescent Literacy

Listed below are some recommendations to consider when establishing a school-wide approach to adolescent literacy. (Adapted from: *Creating a Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle and High School Principals*, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Virginia, 2005)

- Identify strengths and weaknesses in the area of literacy.
    - o Develop a data plan to determine the literacy levels of your students.
    - o Select areas for improvement
    - o Determine the systems changes needed to support a literacy initiative.
- Develop a Literacy Leadership Team to:
    - o Develop and prioritize needs and determine ho to meet those needs
    - o Collect and analyze multiple forms of data to share with staff.
    - o Support the implementation of research-validated methods to increase literacy.
- Create a collaborative environment that fosters sharing and learning.
    - o Provide opportunities for teachers to work together and to discuss issues.
    - o Encourage collaborative practices.
    - o Build capacity by fostering leadership skills within the faculty.
- Develop a school-wide organizational model that supports extended time for literacy instruction.
    - o Create periods for different levels of intensity of instruction
    - o Engage staff in decisions about how to change the schedule to provide literacy instruction.
- Develop a school-wide plan to address the professional development needs of teachers.
    - o Focus professional development on research-validated practices that can be implemented school-wide for all teachers.
    - o Target professional development for teachers who provide more intensive levels of literacy instruction.
    - o Provide job-embedded support, coaching and professional development.
    - o Provide administrative support, e.g. classroom visits, verbal support, etc.

The Frame

Key Topic: Adolescent Literacy

is about...

Addressing the reading and writing needs of all students to boost their academic performance and prepare them for college and/or careers.

Main Idea #1:
Create a literacy profile.

- Collect and analyze data.
- Ask guiding questions.
- Identify strengths, needs & challenges
- Identify appropriate instructional changes needed.

Main Idea #2:
Form a literacy leadership team.

- Determine the team's role and function.
- Develop selection criteria and form team.
- Schedule regular meetings
- Establish a communication protocol

Main Idea #3:
Develop common understandings and connections..

- Conduct targeted conversations in meetings
- Support school improvement plan goals
- Support a collaborative learning culture.
- Engage all stakeholders.

Main Idea #4:
Establish a continuum of literacy support.

- Consider the building blocks of literacy.
- Build a continuum of literacy instruction
- Monitor implementation.
- Monitor student outcomes.

Main Idea #5:
Build a plan for professional development and support..

- Align PD to student and teacher needs.
- Provide opportunities to collaborate and practice.
- Foster teacher leaders.
- Develop a plan for sustaining and scaling up.

Main Idea #6:
Conduct ongoing and annual reviews.

- Set measurable targets.
- Keep the targets front and center.
- Conduct ongoing assessment of the progress.
- Conduct annual review and revise plans.

So what? (What's important to understand about this?)

Supporting adolescent literacy is complex and requires a lot of hard work! It involves extensive planning and collaboration at all levels.

EGibbs, PLeitzell, RPowers

Secondary Literacy Profile

Results on the State Assessment:
List percentage of students performing at each level.

ELA Assessment	% Students at Level 1	% Students at Level 2	% Students at Level 3	% Students at Level 4	% Students at Level 5
Grade 6					
Grade 7					
Grade 8					
Grade 9					
Grade 10					
Grade 11					
Grade 12					

Math Assessment	% Students at Level 1	% Students at Level 2	% Students at Level 3	% Students at Level 4	% Students at Level 5
Grade 6					
Grade 7					
Grade 8					
Grade 9					
Grade 10					
Grade 11					
Grade 12					

Indicate all sources of assessment information you receive or have access to on the skills of your students in the following areas (state, district or school assessments, etc)

A. Decoding proficiency _____ yes _____ no Source: _____
B. Reading fluency _____ yes _____ no Source: _____
C. Reading vocabulary _____ yes _____ no Source: _____
D. Reading comprehension _____ yes _____ no Source: _____
E. Motivation/attitudes _____ yes _____ no Source: _____
F. Oral language proficiency _____ yes _____ no Source: _____
G. Oral vocabulary _____ yes _____ no Source: _____

Instructional Challenges and Practices:

Identify the following items that would support the literacy levels of your students with a plus (+). Identify those that would hinder the literacy levels of your students with a minus (-). Place your answers to the right of your choices.

Student mobility		Teacher expectations	
Student motivation		English Proficiency	
Instructional programs		Family Literacy Practices	
Previous instruction		Parental Support	
Student ability		Communication among teachers regarding student performance	

What are the greatest reading-related challenges facing your students? Rank the areas of greatest concern (1) to areas of least concern (8). Place your ratings to the right of each choice.

Reading Fluency		Reading Comprehension		Vocabulary		Self-monitoring	
Motivation		Decoding		Stamina		Background Knowledge	

Building Blocks of Literacy Supports

Literacy supports should be provided at all levels (building blocks). Please list what is currently in place as well as what is needed to support literacy across the school.

Level of Instruction	Focus of Actions	Example	What We Have	What We Need
Level 1: Ensure mastery of critical content	All students learn critical content required in the core curriculum, regardless of literacy levels.	Teachers compensate for limited literacy levels through the use of explicit teaching or enhancement routines, adaptations, and technology.		
Level 2: Weave shared strategies across classes	Teachers embed selected learning strategies in core curriculum courses through direct explanation, modeling, and required application in content assignments.	Teachers use a common reading strategy for summarizing in course activities throughout the year.		
Level 3: Support mastery of shared strategies for targeted strategies.	Students who have difficulty mastering the strategies presented in courses by content teachers are provided more instruction through specialized instruction delivered by support personnel.	When teachers notice that some students are having difficulty with one of the common strategies (such as summarizing), the students get extra from support personnel.		
Level 4: Provide more intensive intervention for those who need work on basic literacy elements.	Students learn literacy skills through specialized, direct, and intensive instruction through carefully designed and delivered courses.	Courses in research-based reading programs such as Corrective Reading are offered to students with basic skill deficits.		
Level 5: Deliver therapeutic language intervention for those who need it.	Students with underlying language disorders learn the linguistic underpinnings they need to acquire content literacy skills and strategies.	Speech-language pathologists engage students in curriculum-relevant therapy.		

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DECIDING WHERE TO BEGIN

General Questions for All Levels:

- What types of gains does the school/district expect and how soon?
- What could be the effect on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) if the school begins with this level?
- What does a gap analysis show (when the school analyzes what is currently in place vs. what they need)?
- Which level(s) offer the school the biggest bang for time, money and effort? What is the cost/benefit of beginning with this level?
- What are the indications from the research conducted by the University of Kansas and the experience of the schools implementing CLC™? What lessons have been learned?
- Does the school want/need to begin with interventions for a specific group of students and/or with a school-wide effort to bring all of the staff together in promoting adolescent literacy?
- What changes will be required to begin at a specific level?
- How ready is the staff for a particular level? What does the readiness assessment indicate?
- What do the results of the various walkthroughs indicate?

Level 1: Content Mastery

Does our school have needs/gaps in this level?	Should we begin with this level?
• Are students meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in content areas? • Are students learning the content in general education classes regardless of their literacy skills? • Are students demonstrating mastery on quizzes, tests, assignments, and other measures of mastery? • What does our school currently have in place for this level? What do we need to put in place? • Do content teachers use methods and routines to help students learn the content and compensate for gaps in literacy skills?	• Are all courses aligned with state and local standards? • Are courses in a content area vertically aligned, i.e. do the teachers in that content area agree on the outcomes and critical content for each course in grades 7-12? • Do all teachers use effective school-wide methods and routines to help all students learn? • Does the school want/need to begin with a school-wide effort to bring all of the staff together in promoting adolescent literacy? • What types of gains does the school/district expect and how soon?

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DECIDING WHERE TO BEGIN
(CONTINUED)

Level 2: Embedded Strategy Instruction

Does our school have needs/gaps in this level?	Should we begin with this level?
- Are students meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in content areas? - Are students learning the content in general education classes regardless of their literacy skills? - Are students demonstrating mastery on quizzes, tests, assignments, and other measures of mastery? - What does our school currently have in place for this level? What do we need to put in place? - Do students know effective and efficient learning strategies that help them learn content across general education classes? - Do content teachers teach students strategies to learn the content and demonstrate mastery?	- Do content teachers believe they are responsible for improving literacy and, therefore, believe they should teach literacy skills (e.g., learning strategies) in their classes? - Are content teachers willing to take the time needed in general education classes to teach learning strategies? - Does the school have a structure for supporting students who may need more intensive instruction and/or practice in strategies? - Does the school want/need to begin with a school-wide effort to bring all of the staff together to promote adolescent literacy? - What types of gains does the school/district expect and how soon?

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DECIDING WHERE TO BEGIN
(CONTINUED)

Level 3: Intensive Strategy Instruction

Does our school have needs/gaps in this level?	Should we begin with this level?
• Are students meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the area of literacy? • Are students reading and writing at grade level? If not, are students reading and writing 2-3 years below grade level? • Does the school use assessments to identify students who are below expectancy in reading and/or writing? • What does our school currently have in place for this level? What services do we offer students? What do we need to put in place? • Do special education and/or other support teachers teach students learning strategies? Do they provide explicit, intensive instruction in strategies and do students demonstrate mastery of those strategies?	• Do special education teachers have time in their schedules to provide intensive instruction? If not, can their schedules/ roles be changed to allow time for teaching students who need instruction in strategies? • Does the school have a structure for providing intensive instruction in learning strategies (e.g., strategies course or strategic tutoring)? • If no structure exists for providing intensive instruction, how soon could that structure be put in place? • Do special education teachers believe it is their role to teach effective learning strategies to help all students learn? • Does the school want/need to begin with intensive instruction for students who are 2-3 years below expectancy in literacy skills? • What types of gains does the school/district expect and how soon?

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DECIDING WHERE TO BEGIN
(CONTINUED)

Level 4: Intensive Reading (Basic Skill) Instruction

Does our school have needs/gaps in this level?	Should we begin with this level?
• Are students meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the area of literacy? • Are students reading and writing at grade level? If not, are students reading and writing 3 or more years below grade level? • Does the school use assessments to identify students who are below expectancy in reading and/or writing? • What does our school currently have in place for this level? What services do we offer students? What do we need to put in place? • Do reading specialists, language arts, special education and/or other teachers use research-based interventions to address students' severe language-based literacy deficits? Do they provide explicit, intensive instruction in basic literacy skills?	• Does the school have a structure for providing intensive instruction in basic literacy skills, e.g. reading course? • If no structure exists for providing intensive instruction, how soon could that structure be put in place? What would that require? • Do teacher believe it is their role to teach basic literacy skills? • Has the school/district adopted a research-based reading program? If not, how soon could the school/district choose a reading program and put it in place? • Does the school want/need to begin with intensive instruction for students who are 3 or more years below expectancy in literacy skills? • What types of gains does the school/district expect and how soon?

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DECIDING WHERE TO BEGIN
(CONTINUED)

Level 5: Intensive Clinical/Therapeutic Intervention

Does our school have needs/gaps in this level?	Should we begin with this level?
• Are students meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the area of literacy? • Are students reading and writing at grade level? If not, do these students have underlying language disorders? • Does the school use assessments to identify students who have language impairments? • What does our school currently have in place for this level? What services do we offer students? What do we need to put in place? • Do speech-language pathologists use research-based interventions to address students' severe language-based literacy deficits? Do they provide explicit, intensive instruction in language skills? • Do speech-language pathologists work with the other school professionals to provide curriculum-relevant therapy that interfaces with other interventions in the school?	• Are speech-language pathologists available to provide intensive intervention in the school? • If no structure exists and/or no professionals are available for providing intensive instruction, how soon could changes be made? What would that require? • Does the school want/need to begin with intensive instruction for students who have significant language impairments? • What types of gains does the school/district expect and how soon?

Adolescent Literacy Action Plan

District: _____   Date: _____

Literacy Leadership Team: _____

Consider communication, professional development, coaching, data collection, feedback, monitoring and support

Goal	Action	Time Frame	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed