

Full-day staff development with language arts teachers (2 groups) 8:10 – 3:15

12/9/08 – Kay, Katie U., Cindy, Marlane, Jack, Jay, Heather, Sidni, Stephanie, Melissa, Juvi

12/10/08 – Karen, Sarah, Bobby Ray, Maria, Peter, Wendi, Kim S., Traci Romero, Cheryl W., Gabe, Glenda

GCHS Language Arts Agenda

 *Notes & recommendations regarding agenda items are in blue.*

 *Resources for all topics available at <http://www.literacyleader.com/>*

1. Establish group norms

- *Norms had been previously developed, but not reviewed in some time. A few teachers were unsure of or unaware of language arts team norms.*
- *Recommend reviewing norms at upcoming department meeting and making adjustments as needed.*
- *Recommend beginning and ending each department meeting with a review/assessment of team norms.*

2. Review SMART Goals and School Improvement Plan

USD 457 SMART Goals for Reading:

- *On the 2009 Kansas Reading Assessment, **40% of all ELL** students will meet or exceed standards at the 11th grade level.*
- *On the 2009 Kansas Reading Assessment, **60% of all SWD** students will meet or exceed standards at the 11th grade level.*
- *On the 2009 Kansas Reading Assessment, **71% of all Hispanic** students will meet or exceed standards at the 11th grade level.*
- *On the 2009 Kansas Reading Assessment, **65% of all SES** students will meet or exceed standards at the 11th grade level.*
- *On the 2009 Kansas Reading Assessment, **80% of all GCHS** students will meet or exceed standards at the 11th grade level.*

3. Make connection to the three R's: rigor, relevance, and relationships

- *Teachers indicated that staff had previously discussed these concepts as a faculty.*
- *Teachers discussed the connection of these concepts to the topics addressed today and to the task of preparing students for Kansas Reading Assessment (KRA).*

4. Discuss state and local reading assessment data

- Identify areas of strength and concern for students
- Identify areas of need for teacher support
 - *Areas identified: text structure, author's purpose, figurative language, plot, prefixes/suffixes/roots, summarizing, main idea & supporting detail*

5. Analyze format and structure of Kansas Reading Assessment

- Take and score practice assessment
- Review item format and test specifications
- Discuss potential areas of challenge for students
 - *Resources utilized: KSDE Flip Charts, Kansas Reading & Literature Standards Condensed Version (one-page chart), Sample Question Stems for KRA, Graphic organizer of tested indicators, sample passages with questions aligned to KRA*

6. Share strategies to teach assessed indicators

- Target low-scoring indicators
 - *Areas identified: text structure, author's purpose, figurative language, plot, prefixes/suffixes/roots, summarizing, main idea & supporting detail*
- Explicit teaching
 - *Reminder: "Telling isn't teaching." Teachers must model, think-aloud, and provide for structured, collaborative practice, **prior to** independent student practice.*
- Reading for a purpose
 - *Reminder: Focus on previewing and predicting text for author's purpose, main idea, and main text structure, and text features **before** reading. Check and adjust predictions **during** reading. Confirm and conclude **after** reading.*
- Apply reading skills to connected text
 - *Narrative, expository, persuasive, technical, with emphasis on persuasive and narrative*
 - *Reminder: Be sure to teach skills to the highest level identified in each reading indicator – "identify," "analyze," "apply," etc.*
 - ***Model** for students how to locate evidence of their answers/interpretations.*
 - ***Model and think-aloud** for students how to highlight and/or mark text to "make visible the invisible" process of reading.*

7. Scaffolding instruction: Gradual Release of Responsibility

- *Building Adolescent Readers* (Kelly Gallagher, Stenhouse)
 - *Video clips highlighted the steps of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model: 1. Demonstration/Modeling with Think Aloud (“I Do, You Watch”), 2. Shared Demonstration (“I Do, You Help”), 3. Guided Practice (“You Do, I Help”), 4. Independent Practice (“You Do, I Watch”)*
 - *Reminder: Use “first-draft” reading strategies to help students identify questions and confusions within a passage. Use “second-draft” strategies to help clarify confusions and comprehend passage.*
 - *Leigh Ann Roderick has the complete video set available to lend.*

8. Collaborative lesson development and resource share

- Ideas to prepare & motivate students for state assessment

 *Feedback/suggestions from staff and recommendations from Kristi:*

- *Create a database of high quality, engaging lessons targeting the tested indicators. I recommend we begin this process immediately. A protocol for developing the lesson database will be shared at the next department meeting.*
- *Question from staff regarding the sharing of resources: What can be shared? Is there an approval process? I recommend that teachers be allowed to share resources with one another, provided that they meet the criteria described in the Criteria for Quality Checklist (to be shared at the next department meeting), and that a copy also be sent to Kristi, Jan, and Leigh Ann. Resources will be added to the department’s professional collection and/or <http://www.literacyleader.com/>.*
- *Develop a professional resource library. Generate a list of professional resources currently available. I recommend that we begin this as soon as possible. Teachers have already provided some suggestions of resources to purchase. I will send that list as well as a sheet for teachers to list resources they currently have and are willing to share.*
- *Reminder: Work on building positive relationships with students. Set high expectations. Develop a “team” atmosphere in your classroom. Let students collaborate and share with one another their personal comprehension strategies. Remember that teachers’ attitudes influence students’ attitudes. **If you don’t believe they can do it, they will know it.** Let students know you believe in their abilities, and work as a class-team to learn strategies to conquer the KCA!*

 Additional recommendations from Kristi:

- Share “test prep only” strategies (using KCA highlighter tool, reading the questions before reading the passage, etc.) only if ample time can be spent modeling and practicing in a similar context/format to actual KRA.
- Students should be made aware of accommodations available to them (questions read aloud to them, etc.) and be provided opportunities to practice **before** they take the KCA. Students should not be mandated to use these accommodations during the KCA, but of course should be allowed to request and receive them.
- During the administration of the KCA it is extremely important that teachers support and be visible to students. Teachers should circulate around the room, offering encourage smiles and pats on the shoulder. Try to create a positive testing environment for students. **Teachers should NOT, during any portion of the test, attend to other activities** (grading, reading, surfing the internet, etc.).

9. Next steps for professional development & support

- Develop tentative timeline for curricular changes and continued student improvement efforts

 **December-end of February (KRA)**

- Focus on developing students’ reading skills and attitudes for success on KRA
- Suggestions & comments from LA teachers:
 - Students must have multiple opportunities to read and analyze a variety of passages from all four text types.
 - Students’ interest and instructional reading level must be considered when selecting passages.
 - Teach every indicator at least twice, with more focused instruction on indicators with which student continue to struggle.
 - Teachers are very appreciative of mini-lessons and units provided by Jan.
 - Teachers request more flexibility in utilizing mandatory lessons/units.
- Recommendations from Kristi:
 - Begin to develop database of lessons (protocol for lesson development will be shared at next department meeting).
 - I recommend teachers be allowed more flexibility as long as criteria described in Criteria for Quality Checklist (to be shared at next staff meeting) are met, and progress monitoring and formative assessments continue to show student improvement. Instructions regarding opportunities for teacher flexibility will be included with future mandatory lessons/units.

- Utilize the PowerPoint and additional resources provided at <http://www.literacyleader.com/>

January-February

- Meet with Kristi again for professional development and continued support
- Progress-monitoring assessments will be developed and/or provided. Teachers will administer assessments to students on a regularly scheduled basis. Student data will be analyzed by individual teachers and shared as a department. Then instruction will be adjusted accordingly, followed by another round of progress-monitoring assessments.
- Continue development of explicit, engaging lessons/database to use between now and the KCA.
- Share additional teaching strategies and resources to address student areas of need.
- Revisit SIOP methods and Observation Protocol.
- Discuss and make decisions about curriculum for each grade level for the rest of this school year.
- Implement revised protocol for department meetings.

March-May

- Discuss and make decisions regarding curricular changes for next year
 - Analyze local data and relevant research to support decision-making
 - Utilize 3-Tier/MTSS model as framework for decision-making
 - Decisions must reflect what's best for GCHS students, regardless of whether or not they are comfortable for staff.
- Provide professional development and support to CWC teachers regarding planning and providing collaborative instruction.
- Provide professional development and support to teachers working in the district less than three years. Topics should address needs requested by teachers and might include classroom management, SIOP, etc.
- Share with entire building staff the efforts the language arts team has made this year. Celebrate their leadership and persistence in improving student achievement.
- Develop and share plan for cross-curricular, building-wide support to increase students' academic literacy achievement. What is the responsibility of each department? Of every staff member?
- Revisit SIOP methods and protocols as a staff. This is also a good topic to begin the year with. I recommend administrators utilize the full SIOP Observation Protocol form when observing teachers. The rubric format

describes examples of high and low quality instruction which teachers and administrators can use to discuss how to improve individual teaching practices.

10. Develop protocol for language arts department meetings

- Identify topics for professional collaboration (see notes above for topics)
- Discuss effectiveness and efficiency of current department meetings

 *Feedback and suggestions from staff (all recommended by Kristi):*

- *Currently, department meetings could be more effective and are not meeting everyone's needs*
- *Review norms and revise if needed*
- *Topics should focus on teaching and learning, and should be established in advance*
- *Send information that can be easily shared in writing via email rather than use department meeting time*
- *Set and follow a structured agenda, including scheduling amount of time that will be devoted to each topic. If more time is needed, topic should be tabled for the next meeting or handled in another manner agreed upon by the group*
- *Utilize a "Parking Lot" structure to attend to ideas that come up during meetings but are not on the agenda*
- *Designate a secretary to take and post/send notes for every meeting*
- *Schedule some meetings to be done in smaller sub-groups: grade levels, CWC, etc. (Sub-group meetings must also follow agenda format and take notes to post/send to entire department.)*
- *Develop a communication system to keep track of agendas, notes, and department plans and progress.*

