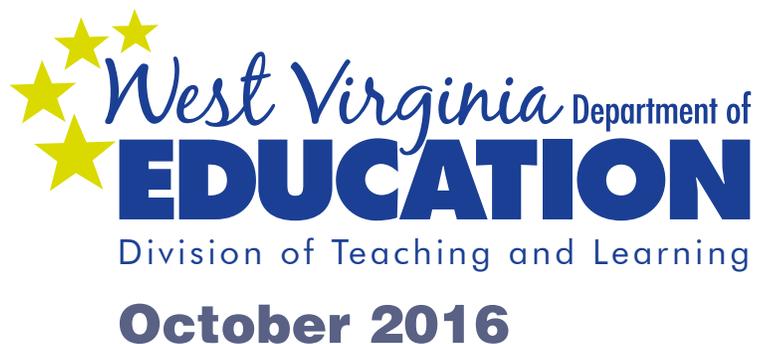


# Professional Learning Community Facilitation Guide:

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## Text Sets





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## Introduction

As part of the One Voice. One Focus. All Students Achieving vision plan, West Virginia schools provide a statewide early childhood focus where we teach every child to read, on grade level, by third grade. The WVDE is moving forward with the West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading through a comprehensive approach to early literacy that includes an emphasis on all content areas of development in school, as well as strengthening school readiness efforts, promoting positive attendance patterns, and providing access to high-quality, sustained extended day and extended year learning opportunities.”

Each county in West Virginia has developed a formal plan to address the underlying challenges that can keep young children, especially those from low-income families, from learning to read well:

- School readiness - too many children are entering kindergarten already behind
- School attendance - too many children are missing too many days of school
- Extended learning opportunities - too many children are losing ground academically over the summer
- High quality instruction – while schools cannot do it alone, there is an obligation to support increased teacher expertise which is the factor most closely related to student achievement

The Professional Learning Community (PLC) materials were created for counties and schools to use as part of their efforts to support teacher expertise and ultimately improve upon high quality instruction. The intent of these documents is to provide guidance for teachers seeking to learn more about instruction around foundational reading skills. The editors of these documents hope that teachers feel supported in their endeavors to improve reading instruction for West Virginia children.

## **Text Sets PLC**

Is there a solution to closing the reading gap? Research supports that text sets build knowledge and vocabulary around specific topics of study. This course gives participants a deeper understanding of leveled reading instruction to support student growth in reading and vocabulary. One session will give an overview of the instructional shifts that are required to effectively teach the WV College and Career Ready ELA standards. Participants will also have the chance to reflect on current teaching practices and address problems that have created the reading achievement gap. Readings, resources, and session activities ask participants to consider text complexity and intentionality for reading activities, and by the end of the course, participants will have a solution to closing the gap: text sets.

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## Session 1: An Overview of ELA Shifts (Changes)

**Overview:** This session introduces the three ELA Shifts and describes the purpose behind the shifts in ELA instruction. Additionally, the session identifies the instructional practices connected to the ELA Shifts. Participants will specifically understand Shift 3 in relation to Shifts 1 and 2. The session will also allow participants the opportunity to reflect upon the relationship between the shifts and their own teaching practice. Participants will also complete the Core Actions Scavenger Hunt in an effort to better understand the Core Actions and ELA Shifts.

**Goals:** In this session you will...

- *understand the purpose behind the shifts in ELA instruction,*
- *identify instructional practices connected to the shifts,*
- *reflect upon practice related to each ELA shift, and*
- *understand shift 3 in relation to shifts 1 and 2.*

### Potential PLC Activities:

- Read and discuss [The Common Core Shifts at a Glance](http://achievethecore.org/page/277/the-common-core-shifts-at-a-glance) at <http://achievethecore.org/page/277/the-common-core-shifts-at-a-glance>  
This document explains the changes in mathematics and ELA/Literacy. This two-page PDF allows the viewer to quickly see the ELA Shifts at a glance and read brief explanations and their intended impact.
- Read and discuss the [ELA shifts PowerPoint](http://achievethecore.org/page/394/introduction-to-the-ela-literacy-shifts) – Select the PowerPoint with Notes, published by Achieve the Core at <http://achievethecore.org/page/394/introduction-to-the-ela-literacy-shifts>  
This is a brief introduction to the ELA Shifts or changes in instructional focus. The presentation provides you with an overview of the key instructional shifts required by the WV College and Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy. This presentation will explain the 3 literacy shifts and the research and rationale for each shift.
- Read and discuss [Making the Shifts](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec12/vol70/num04/Making-the-Shifts.aspx), by Sandra Albert, Published by Educational Leadership at <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec12/vol70/num04/Making-the-Shifts.aspx>  
As we put the standards into practice, it is important to focus on a few shifts that have the most significant effect on students. These shifts should guide all aspects of implementing the standards—including professional development, assessment design, and curriculum. When educators attend to three core shifts in English language arts and literacy as well as in mathematics, the expectations for teaching and learning will be clear, consistent, and closely aligned to the goals of the standards.
- Read the Instructional Practice Guide in order to answer the questions in the Core Actions Scavenger Hunt.
  - » [Instructional Practice Guide K-2:](http://achievethecore.org/category/1155/printable-versions)  
<http://achievethecore.org/category/1155/printable-versions>
  - » [Instructional Practice Guide 3-12:](http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/IPG_Coaching_ELA_3-12.pdf)  
[http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/IPG\\_Coaching\\_ELA\\_3-12.pdf](http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/IPG_Coaching_ELA_3-12.pdf)
- Complete the [Core Actions Scavenger Hunt](http://achievethecore.org/page/1082/ela-literacy-instructional-practice-guide-coaching-tool) questions together. Please download and save your completed Scavenger Hunt.
  - » <http://achievethecore.org/page/1082/ela-literacy-instructional-practice-guide-coaching-tool>  
Print the Instructional Practice Guide from Activity 1 and use different colored highlighters to complete the last activity on the scavenger hunt.

### **Discussions:**

- Reflect on the experience of aligning the Core Actions with the Shifts. What has changed in your understanding of the shifts and the necessary instruction to support them? For example, if you were using close reading to target a specific shift, do you now see that strategy as better aligned to another shift? Please share your own examples of a shift in your instructional practice.

## **Session 2: The Problem: Why Build Knowledge and Vocabulary- A Reflection on Current Practices**

**Overview:** This session encourages participants to reflect upon current teaching practices and to identify what problems may exist in both their own practices and teaching practices in general. Through several bodies of research, the participants will gain deeper insight into the problems and solutions involved in closing the reading gap. Participants will also gain insight into the myths and orientation of leveled reading theory as well as its role in literacy instruction today. Participants will understand the need to utilize Texts Sets in the classroom in order to build vocabulary at a rapid enough pace to begin to close the reading gap.

**Goals:** In this session you will...

- *reflect upon current practices in literacy instruction and the role of building knowledge and vocabulary,*
- *understand the need to utilize text sets in order to build vocabulary at a rapid pace, which is necessary in order to close the reading gap,*
- *understand the myths and orientation of leveled reading theory, and its impact on education today, and*
- *gain deeper insight into the problems and solutions involved in closing the reading gap.*

### **Potential PLC Activities:**

- Read and discuss “[Knowledge Matters Campaign: Job One Build Knowledge -- ESSA Creates an Opportunity—and an Obligation—to Help Every Child Become a Strong Reader](#)”, By Lisa Hansel and Robert Pondiscio at <http://knowledgematterscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ESSA-brief.pdf>  
The overarching principle is what wise policymakers must keep in mind: Reading comprehension is not a skill that educators teach, it's a condition they create. Accountability plans must ensure that every student gets the broad knowledge and vocabulary that remain unacknowledged drivers of language proficiency. Higher standards simply cannot be met without them.
- Read and discuss the following “[Rejecting Instructional Level Theory](#)”, Blog: Shanahan at <http://www.shanahanonliteracy.com/2011/08/rejecting-instructional-level-theory.html>  
In his blog for teachers, parents, and students; Timothy Shanahan discusses the latest educational research and ideas. In this entry, he rejects the commonly accepted instructional level theory and shares its origin. His compelling rationale for rejecting the theory encourages educators to rethink long held beliefs and instructional strategies.

- Read and discuss “[Learning to Read and Write: A Longitudinal Study of 54 Children from First Through Fourth Grades](#)”, by Connie Juel at <http://people.uncw.edu/kozloffm/learningtreadandwrite.pdf>  
This article takes an in-depth look into reading acquisition with special focus on the following questions: Do the same children remain poor readers and writers year after year? What skills do poor readers and writers lack? What factors seem to keep poor readers and writers from improving?
- Watch and discuss the [Text Set Introduction](#) by David Liben at <https://vimeo.com/132681353>  
In this resource, David Liben gives a presentation on text sets and how they can help support all learners, especially those with background knowledge or vocabulary deficits. By building up these domains through a volume of reading, we will begin to close the reading gap. He shares personal stories as well as research to support his belief that text sets are the educator’s strongest tool for building vocabulary and knowledge.
- Watch the Text Set Introduction Presentation by David Liben (Resource #4) between minutes 15 and 19 during the presentation. Pay special attention to the which is harder quiz. Which was harder? Why? Would a lesson on making inferences or finding the main idea have helped you in this situation? What would have helped?
- Watch this short explanation clip of the [Baseball Study](#). Recht and Leslie Baseball Study Explained Clip.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYNiP-1rgYs&feature=youtu.be&hd=1>  
Reflect on the role knowledge played in this study. How does this body of research change the emphasis we place on building knowledge when planning instruction? Think about your own lesson plans. How can you place more emphasis on building knowledge immediately? What about in the future?

**Discussions:**

- Based on your new understandings of leveled readings (Resources #1-2), why do you think such an emphasis was placed on Emmett Betts’s work on leveled reading theory?
- What are your new thoughts about leveled reading? Explain one shift in your own philosophy and instruction that will take place as a result of this research.

**Session 3: The Solution Part I: Using Text Sets to Build Knowledge and Vocabulary**

**Overview:** In this session, participants will experience a Text Set from both the teacher and student perspective. Participants will read and complete an entire text set as a student in an effort to better understand the process. Participants will choose appropriate materials in order to fill in gaps in student knowledge. Additionally, participants will reflect on the entire text set experience. In their reflection of the experience, participants will specifically consider potential obstacles and solutions to implementation of a text set in their classroom or school.

**Goals:** In this session you will...

- *experience a text set from a student perspective,*
- *choose appropriate materials in order to fill in knowledge gaps in an existing text set, and*
- *reflect on the text set experience.*

### **Potential PLC Activities:**

- Watch and discuss the [Teacher Panel on Implementing Text Sets from Achieve the Core](#) by David Liben at <https://vimeo.com/132680916>  
In this clip, David Liben moderates a panel discussion focused on the implementation of text sets in a variety of academic settings. Teachers and administrators reflect on the implementation process, student engagement, and results of the project. They share concerns, obstacles, and successes.
- Read and discuss [Teaching Through Text Sets](#)  
This resource seeks to provide teachers with one approach to, and the materials for, accomplishing the goal of closing the reading gap. The series provides sets of diverse texts—organized around common themes, topics, or concepts—with lesson plans to help students address complex texts. Thus, teachers will be able to assess not only the content knowledge gained by students but also the English language arts skills used for communicating that knowledge.
- Experience a text set by completing the following readings in order and answering the prompts on the provided template. The following readings are a collection of resources around the topic of commercial fishing. In the experience of moving through the body of resources, participants should gain insights into the fishing industry. Additionally, participants will begin to build knowledge and vocabulary around the topic advancing ability to access the complex concepts of the text:
  - » Read [Pacific Cod: Bycatch](#)
  - » Read [Bycatch](#)
  - » Reread [Pacific Cod: Bycatch](#)
  - » Read [Monterey Bay Aquarium: Seafood Watch](#)
  - »

### **Discussions:**

- Reflect on your experience with the text set about commercial fishing. How did the number of readings help you build knowledge and vocabulary about this subject?
- List some potential obstacles to implementing text sets in your classroom. Also list authentic solutions to those obstacles.

## **Session 4: Text Complexity Unpacked**

**Overview:** In this session, participants will gain insight into text complexity, its importance, and how to determine the complexity of a text. The readings and resources will explain how to simplify text complexity in a way that teachers can easily understand and utilize. Participants will also understand how to design tasks with text complexity in mind. Participants will also complete a Qualitative Analysis Rubric to analyze texts and pair those texts with appropriate activities. Additionally, as a portion of the project, participants will determine what knowledge is necessary for comprehension of that text as well as how to increase complexity through assigned tasks.

**Goals:** In this session you will...

- *Understand the elements of text complexity,*
- *complete a Qualitative Analysis Rubric,*
- *determine knowledge necessary for comprehension, and*
- *analyze texts qualitatively and pair them with appropriate activities.*

### **Potential PLC Activities:**

- Watch and discuss “[Simplifying Text Complexity](https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/simplifying-text-complexity)” by Sarah Brown Wessling at <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/simplifying-text-complexity>  
The clip unpacks the concept of text complexity and discusses how teachers can design tasks with text complexity in mind. In this video, you will learn what comprises text complexity and how to incorporate it purposefully into the classroom. The clip also fully explains the three-part model for determining text complexity and how to incorporate those three components (qualitative, quantitative, and reader and task) into discovering the true complexity of a text.
- Watch and discuss “[Assessing Text Complexity](https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/assess-text-complexity-parcc)” at <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/assess-text-complexity-parcc>  
This video looks into the importance of text complexity. It also reminds educators that text used during teaching should not be easy to work through individually for our students. Additionally, the clip serves as a “how to” model for both assessing text complexity and scaffolding lessons to support students as they access complex text.
- Read and discuss [The Critical Role of Text Complexity in Teaching Children to Read](http://www.heinemann.com/fountasandpinnell/supportingMaterials/fountasAndPinnellTextComplexityWhitePaper.pdf) at <http://www.heinemann.com/fountasandpinnell/supportingMaterials/fountasAndPinnellTextComplexityWhitePaper.pdf>  
This article dives into the imperative role of that text complexity plays in teaching children to read. If we are serious about high literacy achievement, then we must be certain that our classroom materials offer the richest learning opportunities possible, and our teachers are provided the opportunity to cultivate professional growth that supports them in delivering highly effective instruction.
- Together you will assess the text complexity of a chosen text using the Qualitative Analysis for Read Aloud K-2 – Complete the analysis (found under text complexity at the following link) [Achieve the Core: Text Complexity](#)
- Next choose an activity to increase the complexity of the book you previously assessed. Next change the text not the activity to further increase the complexity of the task.

### **Discussions:**

- Why is it important to teach using complex texts?
- How do you anticipate and plan for the challenges that a text might bring?
- How can you tell whether a task is a good match for a text?
- Reflect on your experience with testing text complexity. What was difficult or challenging about the process? What was something you learned throughout the activity? How will you use this experience in your classroom?

## Session 5: The Solution Part II: Building Knowledge and Vocabulary with Intentionality

**Overview:** Participants will begin to understand that building knowledge and vocabulary with intentionality leads to reading and vocabulary gains in the classroom. The readings and resources will support the rationale for vocabulary exposure and instruction. Participants will gain insight into the specific and intentional organization of the ways in which an expert pack is organized in order to build vocabulary and knowledge. Participants will take part in a project in which they will provide a rationale for choices from the menu and will implement a strategy or strategies of their choice into classroom instruction. Upon completion, participants will reflect upon classroom implementation.

**Goals:** In this session you will...

- *understand how an expert pack is organized to build vocabulary and knowledge,*
- *provide rationale for choices from the menu,*
- *implement strategy or strategies of choice into classroom, and*
- *reflect upon classroom implementation of choice menu items to build knowledge and vocabulary*

### **Potential PLC Activities:**

- Read and discuss [A Wealth of Words: The Key to Increasing Upward Mobility is Expanding Vocabulary](#) by E.D. Hirsh at <http://www.city-journal.org/html/wealth-words-13523.html>  
Hirsh, a professor at The University of Virginia and founder of The Core Knowledge Foundation discusses his belief that building students' vocabularies is the key to closing the income and educational gap in America. The reading discusses, in disheartening detail, the growing inequality of income and opportunity in the United States, along with the decline of the middle class and its impact on schools. The article explores the claim made by Hirsh that expanding vocabulary is the key to overcoming the income and opportunity gap in America.
- Watch and discuss "[The Leading Edge of Early Childhood Education Session 2](#)", Published by Harvard Education You Tube Video – Please watch minutes 42:57-47:25 at <https://youtu.be/81LEco4bODI>  
The portion of the clip that will be viewed stresses the importance of vocabulary instruction in the Early Childhood Classroom. It brings special attention to the vocabulary gap and points out that the gap is more about content words. In summary, teaching words outside of context fails to make the necessary impact on the vocabulary gap. The research shared is from the Harvard Graduate College of Education.
- Read and discuss "[Under Common Core, Students Learn Words by Learning About the World](#)" by Liana Heitin at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/05/13/under-common-core-students-learn-words-by.html>  
The article uses the support of research to dig deep into the types of vocabulary instruction that work. One approach focuses on reading around a topic in an effort to quickly build vocabulary—the topic not being as important as the volume of reading. She expands on the how and why of structuring vocabulary study in this more effective form.
- Choose and discuss the provided choice menu. How would you implement these choices in your classrooms? How will these be beneficial to your students?

[2-5-8 Menu](#)

## **Discussions:**

- The context for an unfamiliar word isn't just the other words surrounding it in a text but also the situation referred to by those words. Familiarity with the relevant subject matter ensures that a student's unconscious meaning-guesses are likely to be right, So the fastest way to gain a large vocabulary through schooling is to follow a systematic curriculum that presents new words in familiar contexts, thereby enabling the student to make correct meaning-guesses unconsciously. Spending large amounts of school time on individual word study is an inefficient and insufficient route to a bigger vocabulary. Describe your current teaching practices as they pertain to vocabulary. In what ways does this article encourage you to rethink your current teaching practices? Be specific and give examples. Please describe ways that you could change the way you structure vocabulary instruction in your classroom.

## **Session 6: Putting it all Together: Shifting Instruction to Better Build Vocabulary and Knowledge**

**Overview:** In this session, participants will implement and reflect on activities that build knowledge and vocabulary in the classroom. Throughout the course, participants will have gained a deeper insight into both the ELA shifts and the importance of building knowledge and vocabulary in order to close the literacy achievement gap. Participants can both define what a text set is and explains its importance in literacy instruction. The resources in this session will support the need for a “both and” approach to reading instruction as well as a way to access already created text sets ready for use in the classroom. Participants will take part in a project in which they will provide a rationale for choices from the menu and will implement a strategy or strategies of their choice into classroom instruction. Upon completion, participants will reflect upon classroom implementation.

**Goals:** In this session you will...

- *Gain a deeper insight into the ELA Shifts,*
- *understand the importance of building knowledge and vocabulary in order to close the literacy gap,*
- *define what a text set is and why it is important, and*
- *implement and reflect on activities that build knowledge and vocabulary in the classroom*

## **Potential PLC Activities:**

- Read and discuss “[Both and Literacy Instruction](http://achievethecore.org/page/687/both-and-literacy-instruction)” by David and Meredith Liben at <http://achievethecore.org/page/687/both-and-literacy-instruction>  
An “either-or” approach to concepts like close reading and volume of reading leaves important elements of instruction out. This paper discusses the essential elements of a comprehensive K-5 ELA/Literacy curriculum that aims to support all students in achieving. This paper discusses those elements in three main sections: foundational literacy skills, reading comprehension, and volume of reading.
- Watch and discuss “[How to Find Created Text Sets](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mE4VJ7QE9M&feature=youtu.be)” by Mary Jo Jividen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mE4VJ7QE9M&feature=youtu.be>  
This short clip explains how to access already completed Text Sets and simplifies the process of “unpacking” the texts in order to plan for implementation painlessly. These easy-to-access teacher resources would be invaluable to a teacher hoping to implement text sets.

- Explore this website “Text Sets: Building Knowledge and Vocabulary” at [http://achievethecore.org/category/411/ela-literacy-lessons?filter\\_cat=1112&sort=name](http://achievethecore.org/category/411/ela-literacy-lessons?filter_cat=1112&sort=name) Use this site to find and explore existing text sets by grade level. These easy-to-access teacher resources would be invaluable to a teacher hoping to implement text sets. Participants may want to bookmark this clip for later use.
- Revisit the provided choice menu. Which choices did your PLC decide would be most beneficial to your classrooms? Plan to implement at least two of these. Be cautious of your students’ needs as you choose activities to implement.  
*2-5-8 Menu*

**Discussions:**

- Why are multiple experiences with complex text, such as Close Reading and Text Sets, imperative to student success? Reflect and share why these are important in your classroom.
- Reflect on your implementation of your choice menu activities. What were their impacts on students? What opportunities do you have for improvement? Which activities might you try next?





**ONE VOICE**  
**ONE FOCUS**  
All Students Achieving



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