

# Section 3b:

## Instructors

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This strand is designed to assist instructors in using the *Guide* to select and implement approaches to professional development that are appropriate to their goals and learning preferences.

This strand is for:

- Instructors who do not have coordinators in their agency.
- Instructors who would like to consider approaches to professional development that are different from their current approach (e.g., possibly workshop/presentation).
- Instructors who would like their professional development program to be more organized and focused.

This strand, which is organized in a step-by-step manner, suggests the parts of the *Guide* that will be most helpful to instructors; and also suggests when it is appropriate for instructors to contact their administrators or supervisors with requests for approval and support.

A summary of the steps for implementing professional development by instructors can be seen in the following chart.

| Implementation Strand for Instructors                     |  |
|---|--|
| Steps of Implementation                                   | Related Resources in <i>Guide</i>              |
| Step 1: Complete Needs Assessment Profile for Instructors | Appendix A: Profiles                           |
| Step 2: Analyze Profile Data                              | Section 3b (this Section, Step 2)              |
| Step 3: Review Approaches to Professional Development     | Section 2: Approaches                          |
| Step 4: Complete Professional Development Plan            | Appendix A: Plans                              |
| Step 5: Implement Professional Development Approach(es)   | Section 2: Approaches<br>Section 4: Evaluation |
| Step 6: Evaluate Professional Development                 | Section 4: Evaluation                          |

**Step 1: Complete the Needs Assessment Profile for Instructors.** All of us have ideas regarding content and instructional skills—particularly those in which we would wish to be more proficient. Most of us, taking into consideration our busy lives, attend workshops or conferences convenient to us. However, we might better spend our time designing some systematic plan that addresses identified instructional needs.

This step suggests that instructors begin to look in an organized manner at their own instructional needs, and to plan and implement their own professional development. To accomplish that task, instructors need, first, to locate, in Appendix A, a form entitled “Needs Assessment Profile for Instructors.” The form is designed for quick and easy completion by busy instructors.

**Step 2: Analyze the Needs Assessment Profile data.** When the profile form is complete, a review of several large chunks of data will enable instructors to design a professional development plan that reflects real needs and preferences and opens the door for a systematic implementation of that plan. In analyzing the profile, answering several questions under each category will help determine appropriate professional development content and approach. Some of those questions are suggested below.

**Teaching Situation:** (Location/isolation) Are you located in a rural, suburban or urban area? Are you isolated at your instructional site? If several other instructors are at your site, are collaborative efforts possible or do schedules make that very difficult? (Computer availability/ comfort) If you are isolated, are computer networks available for on-line cooperative efforts? If computer networks are available, do you feel capable and comfortable in using that technology? (Teaching Areas) Are you teaching subjects where there are few or many instructors in your subject? (For example, there may be many ESL instructors but very few ABE instructors or vice versa.) Do you feel well qualified to teach the content in your area? (For example, do you wonder if there are new approaches to reading or ESL that you have been unable to keep up with?)

- **Preferred Learning Preferences and Professional Development Preferences** (Learning Preferences) If collegiality is a possibility, do your colleagues have similar learning styles? If you are considering a cooperative venture, would you like training in team approaches first? (Professional Development Preferences) What kind of professional development activities do you prefer? Do these preferences suggest that you will be more successful in using one professional development approach over another (See Section 2 of this *Guide*)?
- **Education/Training (including professional development activities).** Does your background include education and experience in elementary or secondary education? How extensive is your education in teaching adults? Has your ‘inservice’ professional development been systematically planned or haphazard? Has that development been

largely through workshops and conferences? Have you considered, or would you be comfortable with, other approaches?

- Extent of Teaching Experience. Have you been teaching your subject for a long time? Has that experience been in teaching adults? Do you feel that your students are successful in learning the concepts of your content area?
- Support. Do you feel that you have administrative support? (For example, are administrators actively involved in your professional development? Do they show interest and compliment you on your achievements? Do administrators and instructors work as a team in planning and carrying-out professional development activities that serve both the individual and the program? Is there funding support that provides release time, if needed, or remuneration for professional development activities? If the answers to some of these questions are negative, is there a possibility that the situation can change?)

***Step 3: Review approaches to professional development (Section 2)*** Section 2 of this *Guide* presents four possible approaches to professional development. If there are any of these approaches that you haven't used, you will want to review that approach with your profile data in mind as you read. For example, you might be asking: Is this an approach I would like to use? Would this approach better fit what I want to do than my usual approach?

Remember that combinations of approaches often are useful (e.g., an inquiry/research project might involve peer coaching). A workshop on cooperative learning might precede an inquiry/research project.

Once you are comfortable with how each professional development approach works and comfortable with your role in determining your own professional development needs and approaches, you should return to the final section of your “Needs Assessment Profile: Self Analysis.” Would you now change any of the items you listed as professional development activities? Would you change the rank-order? In making these changes, you may find helpful the following form for linking components of your needs assessment profile with the professional development approaches that you have just reviewed.

| Linking Components of the Needs Assessment Profile Summary for Instructors<br>with Professional Development Approaches  |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Components from Profile Summary   | Possible Approaches |
| <p><i>Teaching Situation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location/Isolation</li> <li>- Extent of Teaching Time</li> <li>- Teaching Areas: ABE/ESL<br/>GED/ASE . . .</li> <li>- Computer Availability/Comfort</li> </ul> |                     |
| <p><i>Support:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Administrative (e.g., encouragement/<br/>participation)</li> <li>- Fiscal (e.g., funding/release time)</li> <li>- Team Approach</li> </ul>                                 |                     |
| <p><i>Education/Training:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal Teacher Education, (Y/N) Focus</li> <li>- Past Professional Development</li> </ul>  |                     |
| <p><i>Preferred Learning Preferences and Professional<br/>Development Preferences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning Preferences</li> <li>- Professional Development Preferences</li> </ul>                       |                     |
| <p><i>Teaching Experience:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Years of Experience</li> <li>- Experience in Teaching Adults</li> </ul>   |                     |
| <p><i>Professional Development Topics/Content Listed:</i></p>   |                     |

**Step 4: Complete a professional development plan.** Appendix B contains several forms that may be used as guides for constructing a professional development plan for yourself. The plan you design may be formal or informal, according to your requirements and your perception of your agency's preference in plan design. The advantage of using one of these forms is that it will serve to remind you to include several important elements that are often forgotten such as:

- Clear objectives are required to convince administrators of the need for activities, and to allow for assessment and evaluation of those activities;
- A plan for evaluating all professional development activities;
- A time-frame for completing the activity (which can help to avoid future misunderstandings with administrators); and
- A statement of the support needed and expected (e.g., release time, resources, compensation) to complete the activity.

It is at this point that you are ready to negotiate with an administrator who has the authority to approve and support your plan. Remember that agency constraints may require some modification of the plan; and, whatever you can achieve towards systematic goals is an improvement over haphazard professional development.

**Step 5: Implement the professional development approach(es).** The content of the implementation may be of several kinds:

- Improving such instructional practices as using groups effectively, monitoring instruction, teaching for transfer, helping students improve their thinking skills, and the like.
- Becoming more expert in content areas such as ESL, reading theory, the nature of adult learners and adult learning, or instructional software.
- Developing new curriculum, such as that to accommodate new quality standards, or building new programs, such as family literacy or workplace literacy;
- Assessing and evaluating student gains.

In any case, it is important to recognize that individual goals of professional development that also serve agency program goals are more likely to be enthusiastically supported by administrators. Your professional development plan (Step 4) may want to include this dimension.

Another key to successful implementation is flexibility. No successful project that we know of was ever carried out exactly as planned. Although it is important to have that plan as a guide, events during the implementation process will invite change. On the other hand, change needs to be

reasonable so that the project doesn't balloon into a lifelong endeavor. Thus flexibility needs to be balanced by judgment and constraint.

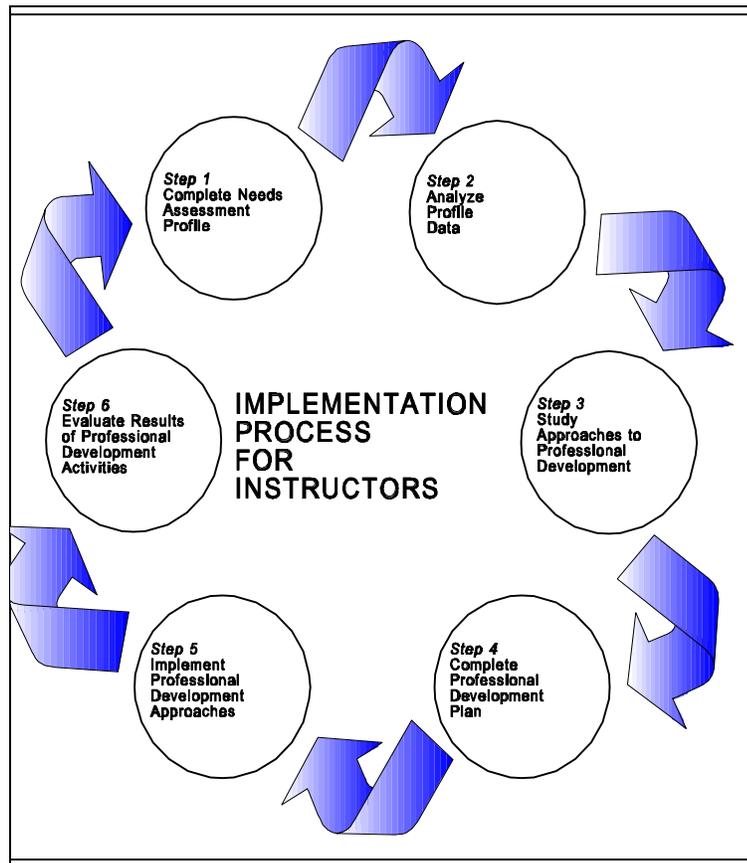
Part of the need for flexibility and change results from continuous monitoring and assessment of the professional development process. Again, having a plan for monitoring and assessment is an essential component of a well-designed professional development plan and sets the stage for Step 6.

***Step 6: Evaluate professional development approaches*** Evaluation is not a difficult step if properly set up from the outset. Unfortunately neither planning nor follow-up evaluation is often the case for professional development activities.

The traditional pattern in professional development, both in K-12 and adult programs, has been to participate in professional development activities and to assume that the desired result, if known, will automatically follow. Section 4 of this *Guide* explores this condition and some possibilities for effective evaluation of professional development.

Instructors, themselves, can do much to insure that evaluation of their efforts produces data useful in redesigning development approaches and content. In other words, evaluation must answer those questions designed earlier. For example, if the goal and objectives are related to instructional improvement, the question to be answered in evaluation is: Has there has been a consistent change in instructional behavior? (e.g., The change might be from instructor as giver of information to instructor as facilitator of learning.)

If goals and objectives are related to content enhancement, the question becomes: Does the instructor demonstrate new knowledge of curriculum content? (This means that the instructor demonstrates, by selection of content and strategies, that adult learners actually learn differently than do children, in many significant ways— or by the selection of computer software appropriate for adults in content and design.) The cyclical nature of implementation can be observed in the figure that follows.



### **Practice Exercise**

A completed needs assessment profile for an instructor who teaches both ABE and ESL follows. The sample “Needs Assessment Profile” is included to provide an opportunity for instructors to “try their hand” at selecting a professional development approach (or approaches) for this individual, and to design a plan that could be submitted to a supervisor or other administrator for approval and support. Instructors may want to use the blank forms provided, so as to compare their results with the possible solution described in Appendix D.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROFILE FOR INSTRUCTORS

Name: Jane Green

Agency: Washington Adult School

21 Madison Street

(street)

Anytown

(city)

(state)

(zip)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

Describe briefly your current teaching assignment:

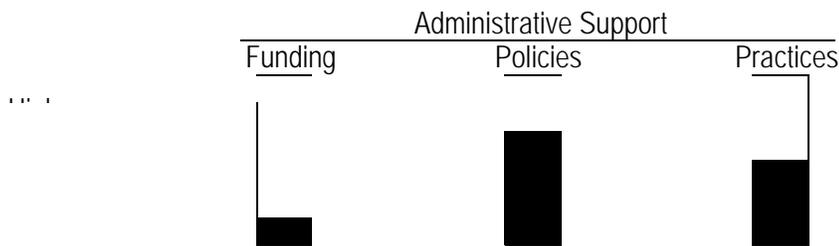
I teach 2 ABE Beginning Level and 1 ESL Intermediate Level classes  
weekly

Your teaching situation: (Check one box each in #1 and #2)

1. rural  suburban  urban   
2. isolated  collegial

### SUPPORT

Shade the following bar graphs to the level that best illustrates support for professional development in your own instructional situation:



### TEACHING AREAS

Your teaching areas are: ESL  ABE  GED  ASE  LD  Workplace  Family Literacy   
Other (specify)

Extent of teaching: Full-time  ( 9 hours weekly)

Part-time  ( \_\_\_\_\_ hours weekly)

Coordination/administration  ( \_\_\_\_\_ hours weekly)

Number of years experience teaching in adult education 3

### COMFORT LEVEL AND ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

COMFORT: High  Medium  Low

ACCESS: High  Medium  Low

**EDUCATION/TRAINING**Teacher Education: yes  no Focus: Elementary  Secondary  Higher Education  ESL  Adult Education Previous Technical Training or Professional Development Activities: Intermittent  Ongoing Types of Activities: Workshops/Presentations  Observation/Feedback Projects (e.g., curriculum development, program enhancement) Inquiry/Research Other (specify)  \_\_\_\_\_Topics Studied in Professional Development Activities: Adult learning; cooperative learning**LEARNING PREFERENCES** (Check any that apply)Large group  Pairs  Hands-on activities  Taught by colleagues Small group  Alone  Reading 

(sometimes)

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES**

If you could select your own mode of professional development, what would be your preference? Please rank-order, with the number 1 your first choice and the number 5 your last choice.

5 Developing your own plan of study with support from your agency.

2 Researching an issue, problem, or topic in your own teaching environment.  
(Please check: Alone  With others  On-line )

4 Practicing classroom strategies with feedback from another teacher or supervisor who observes you.

1 Working on an agency project (e.g., curriculum development, agency reorganization).

3 Attending workshops to learn new instructional skills.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTENT**

On page 3, list elements within an instructional strategy you would like to master, or detail an instructional issue, interest, or problem you would like to study. A few examples are presented, simply to stimulate your thinking.

**Strategies:**

- using a whole language approach,
- using small groups,
- monitoring student learning, and
- teaching for transfer of learning.

**Issues/Interests/Problems**

- ways to get ESL students to practice using oral English, and
- getting students to read for meaning rather than word recognition.
- does the teaching of thinking skills improve GED test performance?
- will writing skills improve more by using computer-generated journals or by handwritten journals?

Your Topics: *(List no more than 2):*

1. Workplace Literacy (Our agency is planning to start a literacy program with 2 employers)
2. Motivating adult students to learn routine English skills: subject-verb agreement; writing complete sentences

**SELF ANALYSIS**

Given the preceding profile, what professional development activities do you think ought to be included in your schedule? (Rank-order, if possible. List as many or as few activities as your think necessary.)

1. I would like to be included in the new workplace literacy program
2. Work in a small group to research how workplace literacy programs function
3. Finding out how cooperative learning can be used in the workplace
4. Research and practice motivational strategies with my classes (and with students in the workplace -- if I'm selected)

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|--|---------------------|
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| <i>Support:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administrative (e.g., encouragement/participation)</li> <li>- Fiscal (e.g., funding/release time)</li> <li>- Team Approach</li> </ul>                                     |                     |
| <i>Education/Training:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal Teacher Education, (Y/N) Focus</li> <li>- Past Professional Development</li> </ul>  |                     |
| <i>Preferred Learning Preferences and Professional Development Preferences:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning Preferences</li> <li>- Professional Development Preferences</li> </ul>                           |                     |
| <i>Teaching Experience:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience in Teaching Adults</li> </ul>  |                     |
| <i>Professional Development Topics/Content Listed:</i>   |                     |

## REQUEST FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Because it is expected that adult educators at every level engage in professional development activities, please submit the following proposal indicating your professional development plan for the coming year.

NOTE: Your plan may be accomplished individually or in collaboration with others. If you choose a collaborative project, please check the appropriate box and list all persons involved, and their position.

Individual Proposal

Collaborative Proposal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 1.                | <i>Please write a paragraph or two describing what you would like to accomplish, and the reasons for selecting those particular goals.</i> |
|                   |  |
| 2.                | <i>What specific activities do you think will enable you to accomplish your goals? Please indicate the timeframe of all activities.</i>    |
| <b>ACTIVITIES</b> | <b>TIMEFRAME</b>   |
|                   |  |

|   |  |                               |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 3.  | <i>Please detail the expenses that you expect to be reimbursed, plus any necessary support (e.g., release-time, materials, observation opportunities, networking, progress conferences).</i> |                               |
| <b>ANTICIPATED EXPENSES</b>   |  | <b>OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES</b> |
| 4.  | <i>How will you evaluate whether or not your goals were achieved?</i>  |                               |
|   |  |                               |
| 5.  | <i>How would you prefer to present the results of your professional development activities?</i>  |                               |
|   |  |                               |
| <p>YOUR COMPLETED PROPOSAL SHOULD BE RECEIVED IN THIS OFFICE BY _____. YOU WILL BE CONTACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. <b>PLEASE DO NOT BEGIN ACTIVITIES BEFORE YOUR PROPOSAL HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR FUNDING.</b></p> |  |                               |
| Signed: _____<br>Administrator/Professional Development Coordinator   |  | Date: _____                   |

