

## ***Professional Meeting Plan***

### **Resources Needed**

PowerPoint slides

3 × 5 cards

Common Core State Standards in Language Arts

### **Participants**

20 K–12 language arts teachers

### **Topic**

Best practice instructional strategies

### **Goals (05 minutes)**

Explain: Today's meeting has two purposes: first, to learn about and share professional best practices, and second, to generate and then categorize staff recommendations for future in-service.

### **Introductions (10 minutes)**

Ask participants to share their names, assignments, and a childhood memory about learning a difficult concept.

### **Reflection Opportunity (10 minutes)**

*Intriguing Quote*

Ask participants for any professional connections they can make to the following quote: *The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.*—L. P. Hartley (1895–1972)

As participants share connections, make comments that convey the idea that educators need to continually develop their professional skills, which means doing things differently in order to improve student learning.

### **Professional Practice (30 minutes)**

*Encouraging Student Writing*

Read "Big Dreams and Tall Ambitions in the Teaching of Writing," the first chapter in Lucy McCormick Calkins and Shelly Harwayne's book *Living Between the Lines* (1991). Ask participants to listen for important ideas, jotting them down as you read.

## **Professional Meeting Plan** (continued)

Ask participants to compare their notes with a partner and discuss the ideas they found important.

Give participants the opportunity to share their notes with the whole group. As they present their ideas, help teachers make connections to their instructional practices.

### *Writing Analysis*

Show this narrative from *Under the Tuscan Sun* by Frances Mayes (1996, p. 3):

Italy is thousands of years deep and on the top layer I am standing on a small plot of land, delighted today with the wild orange lilies spotting the hillside. While I'm admiring them, an old man stops in the road and asks if I live here. He tells me he knows the land well. He pauses and looks along the stone wall, then in a quiet voice tells me his brother was shot here. Age seventeen, suspected of being a partisan. He keeps nodding his head and I know the scene he looks at is not my rose garden, my hedge of sage and lavender. He has moved beyond me. He blows me a kiss. "*Bella casa, signora.*" Yesterday I found a patch of blue cornflowers around an olive tree where his brother must have fallen. Where did they come from? A seed dropped by a thrush? Will they spread next year over the crest of the terrace? Old places exist on sine waves of time and space that bend in some logarithmic motion I'm beginning to ride.

Ask participants to critique the writing style—what do they like about this narrative? Why? How would they improve upon it? Invite teachers to share how they teach writing style to students at their grade level.

### **Break (10 minutes)**

## **Professional Meeting Plan** (continued)

### **Teaching Challenges (25 minutes)**

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6–12 (*available from [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us)*)

Give participants time to review Text Type and Purposes in the writing section of the document.

Invite participants to share a writing standard that will be difficult to teach and identify the support they need from colleagues. Keep the focus on instructional practice as the discussion unfolds.

### **In-Service Recommendations (25 minutes)**

*In-service Interests*

Step 1: Give participants several 3 × 5 cards and invite them to jot down in-service suggestions that would help writing teachers improve instructional effectiveness. Collect these cards and shuffle to mix.

Step 2: Stand in a semicircle around a large piece of butcher paper posted on a wall.

Step 3: Keep one card but distribute the remaining suggestions equally among the participants.

Step 4: Read the suggestion you have aloud, tape it on the butcher paper, and invite anyone with similar or related suggestions to tape their cards below, forming the first category.

Step 5: Call on participants who still have suggestions to follow the procedure in Step 4, forming additional categories. This continues until all the cards are posted.

Step 6: Ask for titles for the various categories; when consensus is reached, write these above the appropriate list of suggestions.

### **Wrap-Up (05 minutes)**

*What have we learned?*

How will we put “new ideas” into practice in our schools and classrooms?

Direct the participants to stand and form a circle. Toss a soft object (e.g., stuffed mascot) to a member of the group to signal the chance to share a response to the wrap-up questions. The respondent gets to choose the next person to share by tossing the mascot.