

## Guidelines to Review Professional Development Programs in Reading

Florida Center for Reading Research

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to the Curriculum and Instruction Team at the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) in the review of professional development programs in reading. The document is based on the National Staff Development Council's Standards for Staff Development, as well as Florida's Professional Development Standards and other current documents reporting quality professional development programs that advance both teacher and student learning. The Curriculum and Instruction Team members who use these guidelines to navigate their review of programs have extensive knowledge of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) and *Reading First*, have taught struggling readers to read, have taught reading methods courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, have assisted in developing reading curriculum that is research validated, and have extensive knowledge of state and national standards for high-quality professional development.

### PROCESS OF USING THESE GUIDELINES

The document guidelines are organized into three broad categories – program content, process, and context. Research documents the importance of each of these areas for maximizing the connections between staff development and student learning. The *Content* category addresses the “what” of the reading staff development program. The *Process* category assists the team members in making decisions about the “how” of the staff development program. Finally, the *Context* category allows the reviewers to describe the learning culture and expectations set forth by the program. Two additional areas, “materials” and “other” address quality issues outside the three broad categories. To determine how a program aligns with these areas, the reviewers examine the entire program and notes how alignment occurs for each element by checking the “yes”, “somewhat,” or “no” spaces on the document. A mere check is not sufficient; rather, it is important to cite specific examples in the “comment” space to justify each check.

Educators who use this document to guide their own review of a Reading Professional Development Program will find the following resources helpful:

- Glossary of Reading Terms developed by FCRR
- Continuum of Phonological Awareness Skills developed by FCRR
- Continuum of word types
- Reviews of Reading Professional Development Programs already posted at [www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org) (under FCRR Reports—Professional Development)
- References listed at the back of this document

<b>Title of PD Program in Reading:</b>				
<b>Circle method(s) used:</b>				
<b>Review of Training Manual(s)   Interview with Lead Trainer(s)   Observation of PD session(s)</b>				
<b>Other:</b>				
<b>Program Characteristics</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)</b>
<b>1. CONTENT</b>				
1.1 Is the content of the professional development program aligned with SBRR?				
• phonemic awareness				
• phonics				
• fluency				
• vocabulary				
• comprehension				
1.2 Does the professional development program promote explicit and systematic instruction within an uninterrupted block of time for reading instruction and/or intervention?				

1.3 Does the program inform educators about the use of valid and reliable classroom assessments for screening purposes?				
1.4 Does the program inform educators about the use of valid and reliable assessments for progress monitoring?				
1.5 Does the program inform educators about the use of valid and reliable assessments for diagnostic purposes?				
1.6 Does the program provide research-based instructional strategies for differentiating instruction (e.g., effective grouping practices)?				
1.7 Can the program be customized to meet the varying needs of participants?				

1.8 Does the program offer special content designed for school leadership (e.g., coaches, administrators)?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom Observation Tools</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher-leaders as trainers</li> </ul>				
1.9 Does the program initially develop deep content understanding as a foundation for new skill development?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is presentation of new concepts or content substantial enough to ensure thorough understanding of new content?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the duration appear to be sufficient to promote understanding of and implementation of new instructional practices (e.g., contact hours, program length, follow-up assistance)?</li> </ul>				

1.10 Does the program provide clear guidelines about integrating instructional practices with reading programs currently in place?				
1.11 Does the program provide clear guidelines for teaching diverse learners (e.g., English language learners, students with special needs)				
1.12 Does the program provide clear guidelines for teaching students who are not making adequate progress?				
1.13 Does the program include clear guidelines for using assessment data to track student progress and inform instruction?				
<b>2. PROCESS</b>				
2.1 Does the program have a coherent instructional design?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are program goals and objectives clearly defined?</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there an appropriate number of activities per objective?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the activities reinforce and extend the content (e.g., opportunities to practice instructional strategies and techniques)?</li> </ul>				
2.2 Does the program include alternative delivery modes (e.g., online, CD ROM, video, face-to-face)?				
2.3 Does the program provide multiple opportunities in a variety of formats for coaching and follow-up assistance to participants?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom observation and feedback</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeling lessons and strategies</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of study groups, action research, etc.</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of classroom practices (learning centers, flexible grouping, lesson planning)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing the needs of students who are not making adequate progress (e.g., English language learners, students with learning disabilities)</li> </ul>				
2.4 Does the program use a combination of learning models to promote the development of new skills?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of theory and rationale for content and instruction</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of models in action</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice of new strategies and techniques in a safe environment</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of instructional practices with classroom support</li> </ul>				

2.5 Does program ensure fidelity in delivery of content?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenter/ Trainer qualifications</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tools or guidelines for determining if presenters/ trainers are experienced and knowledgeable in SBRR and Reading First</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainer Manual(s) (e.g., detailed trainer notes, processing activities)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic presentation of content</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the program has the train-the-trainer model, are there certification measures to ensure fidelity of delivery (e.g., observations, survey of participants, required number of trainings, etc.)?</li> </ul>				

2.6 Does program include evaluation measures to determine participant progress in attaining program goals?				
2.7 Does the program promote the link between student achievement and teacher implementation of the PD Program?				
<b>3. CONTEXT</b>				
3.1 Does the program promote a collaborative relationship among teachers, coaches, and administrators?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzing data</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing instruction</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecting on practice</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning communities</li> </ul>				
3.2 Does the program provide clear expectations regarding required resources and local support necessary for program success?				

3.3 Does the program require schoolwide participation and commitment?				
3.4 Is there evidence of research based success measures used to determine efficacy of the program?				
<b>4. Materials</b>				
4.1 Are materials/resources well organized?				
4.2 Are materials/resources appealing and user-friendly?				
4.3 Are materials/resources error-free?				
4.4 Will teachers have access to the necessary materials/resources to implement instructional practices?				

<b>5. Other</b>				
5.1 Is a matrix included that crosswalks program components with Florida's reading competencies?				

## Resources

Florida Department of Education. (2002) Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol. Online: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/profdev/pdstandards.htm>

Learning First Alliance. (2000). Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide. Online: [www.learningfirst.org/readingguide.html](http://www.learningfirst.org/readingguide.html).

National Staff Development Council. (2001). Standards for Staff Development: Revised. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. (1999). Professional Development: Learning from the Best. A Toolkit for Schools and Districts Based on the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, USDOE.

Killion, Joellen. (2002). What Works in the Elementary School: Results-Based Staff Development. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Sparks, Dennis. (2002). Designing Powerful Professional Development for Teachers and Principals. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

## GLOSSARY

**Goals:** General results desired from a program of instruction.

**Objectives:** Measurable statements detailing the desired accomplishments of a program

**Coaching:** A process of supporting teachers in implementing new classroom practices.

**Follow-up:** Assistance and/or resources provided to ensure implementation of professional development.

**Train-the-trainer model:** A capacity building plan to develop master trainers who then deliver the program information to users.

**Certification Measures:** A process to validate a particular expertise or credential usually involving observations or demonstrations of competence.

**Learning Communities:** A group in which members commit to ongoing learning experiences with a deliberate intent to transform teaching and learning at their school or within their district.