

TRANSFER INTO PRACTICE: INDEPENDENT STUDY & PROFESSIONAL STUDY GROUPS

Introduction

K-12 professional development is inquiry-based and follows the principles of Design 2004. Respect for teacher professionalism, rigor and continuous improvement characterize all professional development activities. *Transfer Into Practice* is a category of professional development opportunities developed by Albemarle County schools to help teachers and administrators attain the following essential understandings:

- Professional development is part of a systemic design to meet the needs of 21st century learners.
- Continued improvement in student learning and achievement is contingent upon teachers' use of best practices in daily instruction and assessment.

Design Principles for Professional Development

Professional development for Albemarle County schools:

- is inquiry-based, analytical and reflective in nature;
- supports collaboration and subject area integration where natural and appropriate to deeper understanding of content area knowledge, concepts and skills;
- integrates technology;
- ties program and project effectiveness directly to student learning and achievement;
- incorporates student literacy development into *all* learning activities;
- is based upon a respect for the diversity of all learners; addresses and accommodates differences in culture/ethnicity/gender, learning styles and achievement levels and,
- defines professionalism in terms of rigor and continuous improvement.

Parameters for Study Groups and Independent Studies

Prerequisite: Participants in Study Groups or Independent Study must have completed at least one required course in literacy, mathematics or differentiation or have been waived from participation. Principals may also designate participation in a particular study group.

- Study groups should consist of no fewer than three people.
- Individuals who engage independent study will choose a "reflective partner" to review progress and help with reflection and evaluation.
- The building principal will approve study group or independent study plans and verify project completion and evaluation.
- Plans will be reviewed by the appropriate subject area coordinator.
- Project/study results will be communicated within and across schools. Suggested formats are: portfolio, submission of articles for publication in professional journals, conference presentation, video production, providing professional development for other educators, development of exemplar curricular units, maps, etc.
- **Study groups should meet for at least 15 hours. Independent studies should be the equivalent of 15 hours.**
- Up to \$100 in seed money will be given to each professional **study group** by the ARC. Use of funds to support group activities will be decided by the Professional Study Group, but could be spent on items such as books for group members, etc. Access to this ARC funding is through the group's designated leader.

Transfer Into Practice: Study Group

Transfer Into Practice Professional Study Group

A Professional Study Group is a group of at least 3 educators working collaboratively in a very disciplined way to focus on an issue central to improved student learning and achievement.

Participants develop projects that allow them to apply principles and strategies learned in previous coursework to classroom practice. Project development is based on design principles that reflect this division's commitment to inquiry learning and reflection, literacy development, equity and diversity, data based decision-making and continuous improvement.

Steps To Organizing a Professional Study Group

1. Identify group members and leader (s.)
2. Develop your group plan using the *Transfer Into Practice* planning sheet.
3. Submit your group plan to the principal for approval and subject area coordinator for review.
4. Forward a copy of the approved plan to ARC.

15 recertification points per group member - an additional 5 points for group leader

2 days staff development credit

Transfer Into Practice Independent Study

Teachers may individually develop and implement a semester-long plan for systematically and intentionally integrating what they have learned from previous coursework into daily instruction and assessment. Plans are based on five design principles that reflect this division's commitment to inquiry learning and reflection, literacy development, equity and diversity, data based decision-making, and continuous improvement. A "reflective partner" will support teachers as they implement their independent study plan, assess progress and engage in reflection.

Steps To Organizing an Independent Study

1. Identify a [reflective partner](#) or contact the subject area coordinator for assistance.
2. Develop your plan using the *Transfer Into Practice* planning sheet.
3. Submit your plan to the principal for approval and subject area coordinator for review.
4. Forward a copy of the approved plan to ARC.

15 recertification points

2 days staff development credit