

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ALC TEACHERS TO
ASSIST GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

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Project Description

In order to complete my degree of Masters of Arts in Education, I decided to do a capstone project based on the following research question: *How can ALC classroom teachers use best practices to teach Gifted and Talented Students and traditional ALC students at the same time, and how can a school use professional development to train teachers on the best practices?*

The project I created is a three-phase professional development series. Using research-based practices I created a professional development series that was based on the turnaround training method. When using turnaround training, one or two people would be provided with training from experts in the field that pertains to the professional development a school district wants. Those people would then become the experts and provide teachers and staff with a professional development session and supports in order to actively practice what they have learned through the resources provided. In this scenario, I would be the expert in best practices for gifted and talented students, as I have received a certification from Hamline University in Gifted and Talented Education. The professional development series also uses other best practices for professional development such as collaboration, reflection, and online learning.

The professional development series happens in three phases. The first phase is the front loading of knowledge about best practices that ALC teachers can use in the classroom to help support their gifted and talented students. This phase is lecture and discussion based and is given in the format of a PowerPoint presentation. The second phase of professional development is the active practice phase. During active practice teachers who participated in phase one would choose one or more best practices to try in the classroom. They then can use a website that provides a variety of resources to help them plan how to use the best practices in the classroom.

The website also has weekly reflections that should be completed by the participating teachers, and a data sheet for teachers to fill out while actively practicing their chosen method. The third phase of the series focuses on reflection and large group data collection. Participating teachers will attend a final meeting with the professional development leader in which they will share their data about how active practice went in their classroom and make decisions on whether to keep using the best practices for gifted and talented students in their classrooms, and problem solve and modify their practices to keep them realistic and achievable.

Ultimately this project strives to achieve better academic equity in the ALC classroom. Alternative learning centers do not usually provide gifted and talented programs for their students, yet allow students who have been previously labeled gifted and talented to attend classes and even open enroll in their schools. Providing these students with an opportunity to more effectively learn can end up boosting morale and motivation in the classroom leading to an overall more pleasant learning environment for all students.

The website below contains all three phases of the professional development series. Phase one's PowerPoint can be found on the home tab. The tabs labeled *Best Practices Resources and Examples*, *Active Practice and Reflection*, and *Reflections* contain tools to complete phase two. Phase three's PowerPoint can be found within the *Conclusions* tab. References used in this capstone project can be found below, in the phase one PowerPoint, and within the website's *Reference List* tab.

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