National Urban Alliance for Effective Education

# NUA/IPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
## 2004-2005

The NUA/IPS Professional Development Plan for 2004-2005 main focus is the Vanguard Plus process. The Vanguard Plus process is an extension of the IPS/NUA Literacy Initiative and Vanguard process. Schools enrolled in the process will go deeper into the research-based Eight Elements of the Vanguard Process to become self-sustaining, with internal capacity to foster and maintain high intellectual performance of students and staff. The Vanguard Plus process will take the form of action research. Schools will monitor student and teacher performance in on ongoing way that is meaningful, measurable and doable.

A specific Professional Development Plan will be developed for each of the participating schools. The Plan will address needs identified based on the building's NCA plan, student data, principal interviews and teacher surveys. Based on data collected from the ten participating schools, common areas of need have been identified. The following plan is an umbrella for the individual site specific plans.

## GOALS
The goal of Vanguard Plus is the achievement of high intellectual performance through literacy. The definition of literacy is based on Elliot Eisner's definition of literacy…' the ability to construct, create, and communicate meanings across disciplines in many forms of representation.' The focus will be on the upper elementary grades and middle school, grades 4 – 8.

- Teachers will utilize components that are proven effective and engaging. The focus will be upon strategies included in the *IPS Literacy Framework*.
- Instruction will be differentiated to meet individual student needs.
- Teachers will employ habits of mind, Reciprocal Teaching, Mastery Projects and formal operations in order to change patterns of learning.
- Students will construct, create and communicate meanings across disciplines in many forms of representation.
- Schools will track student performance in an ongoing way that is meaningful, measurable and doable.
- Schools will build the capacity to sustain the process.

The strategies incorporated into the design of Vanguard Plus were selected based on:
- District literacy goals and learning standards
- The ISTEP English/Language Arts Essential Skills
- Current research on the brain and learning processes
- The cultural learning patterns of IPS students
- Indianapolis Public Schools Strategic Plan
- The schools' NCA plans and goals
- The *IPS Literacy Framework*

## THE AUDIENCE
The audience for the overall professional development plan includes the principal and teachers in the ten Vanguard Plus schools.  The grade span addressed is grades 4-8.  The teachers have classes that include students of color, students for whom English is a second language, and students whose achievement is below grade norms and below their own potential.

The primary focus of NUA is to help underachieving students succeed. This is accomplished by focusing on strategies that engage the students, heighten intellectual performance, and enable students to:

- comprehend and respond meaningfully to challenging texts they read and hear in school, and
- develop and refine their ability to express their understandings and ideas orally and in writing.

IPS personnel (principals, teachers, etc.) will be trained on how to prepare for instruction by analyzing the text the students will be reading, and how to design instruction that will help learners read the text with ease and comprehension. Instruction should reflect principles of learning and the NUA strategies that reflect those principles of learning so that the students will be actively engaged, will have a chance to learn by doing, and will take away clear understandings of not only how to use the strategies and apply the principles but also why they are worth using and applying.  Rationales should be based on culture, language, and cognition.

## SITE-BASED SUPPORT VISITS
Site-based support is the essence of the Vanguard Plus process.  Working with the staff of the Vanguard Plus schools, NUA consultants will:
- Design, monitor and revise site-specific professional development plans.

- Assist principals in observing and creating practices that ensure achieving goals of the plans and assessing student growth
- Assist teachers in the development and delivery of standards-based lessons that focus on student outcomes of high intellectual achievement.
- Provide demonstration lessons in classrooms that model culturally responsive practices to reverse underachievement.
- Observe and coach teachers in strategies and practices to differentiate and monitor student learning
- Guide peer coaching and collaborative planning
- Monitor and assess evidences of student growth through informal, on-going assessments and mastery projects.
- Provide support for principals on how to monitor the student and teacher growth.
- Assist in the documentation of growth through the use of technology

## ANALYZING STUDENT TEXTS

When working with teachers of students who are significantly behind, NUA realizes that one of our tasks is to raise their awareness of the complexity of the reading process when reading challenging texts. Another point, often overlooked when guiding teachers of underachieving students, is the need to help them understand and apply not only the teaching strategies and other specific instructional practices of highly successful urban teachers, but their planning processes as well.

Successful teachers of students who are not performing up to the expectations of their grade level are acutely aware of the necessity for teaching, to some level of mastery, a group of prerequisite skills and knowledge that form a foundation for effective reading of texts for meaning. As part of their plan to prepare students to read a text, they routinely analyze each text for specific elements and features that, if not mastered by students, may cause incomplete or otherwise unsatisfactory comprehension. Successful teachers also study the text for differentiation possibilities, opportunities to make cultural connections, and options for engaging students and motivating them to read and think deeply.

Therefore, one aspect of the training will be the planning process by successful teachers of underachieving students. Participants will be lead through a process, using their texts, that few, if any, of them have had experience in completing. They will practice what successful teachers of underperforming urban students do as they prepare to teach a series of lessons using a text that is challenging for their students. NUA consultants and IPS Literacy Instructors (NUA Certified

Instructors) will model the complete process, demonstrate each step and guide teachers as the teachers complete each step using their texts.

In order to do the modeling, NUA consultants and IPS Literacy Instructors will prepare the following, all of which are explained below:
 A. a copy of the text as a Panel Book
 B. a list of prerequisite skills and knowledge
 C. several Thinking Maps
 D. a list of troublesome words
 E. a listing of critical knowledge and important concepts
 F. a list of questions to provoke deeper thinking
 G. identifying cultural connections

**A. Making a Panel Book**
First, using transparent tape, and copies of the text participants will be shown how to tape the pages of each chapter together in a row to make a panel book.

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**B. Listing Prerequisite Skills and Knowledge**
Participants will learn how to scan the text for general categories of prerequisite skills and knowledge that students will need in order to read successfully with excellent comprehension. For example, the prerequisite list would include 10-12 GENERAL headings, such as:  1) meanings of words, 2) how to decode a significant number of words 3) some geography facts 4) correctly identify the antecedents of the pronouns, etc.

**C. Creating Thinking Maps**
Participants will then be trained on how to look at each chapter and decide how it is organized (e.g., sequence, categories, cause and effect). They will then determine which Thinking Map(s) could be used to help students understand this organization? They will be instructed on how to sketch out these Maps and think about how to explain your reasoning to the students, i.e., why you chose those particular Maps to represent the organization of information in the text.

**D. Identifying Troublesome Words**
The next practice to be modeled is to list the words and phrases that underachieving students would have trouble decoding, i.e. words that they would

not be able to read at a level of fluency that allows them to free up mental processes for concentration on comprehension of the text.

### E. Identifying Critical Knowledge and Important Concepts
The next step is listing the critical knowledge and important concepts that are essential to understanding the text. For example, if the text is about flight and aerodynamics, some critical knowledge might be the chronology of the beginnings of human flight, the names of some of the early inventors and pilots, etc. Some of the important concepts might be lift, thrust, drag, etc. They will be shown how to include any prior experiences that might help students comprehend the text. For example, in reading the text about flight and aerodynamics, students who have had the experience of going to the airport and traveling on airplanes have an advantage over students who have never even been inside an airport and have never been on a plane.

### F. Generating Questions to Provoke Deeper Thinking
Participants will then be trained to reflect and list the questions teachers might ask of students to invite them to think more deeply about the philosophical aspects of the text content. For example, if the text mentions an important leader, they might ask:  What is leadership? What makes one a leader? Why do humans create leadership roles? Are you a leader? Can animals be leaders? What determines whether a person is a good leader or a poor leader? What does morality have to do with leadership? Was Hitler an effective leader?

### G. Identifying Cultural Connections
Making the cultural connections for underachieving students is another area that will be examined.  Training activities will help participants think of how you could make connections between the text and the culture(s) of the participants' students.  Culture refers to not only to ethnic and racial connections, but what might also be relevant and meaningful based on age or issues of concern or interest.  List these ideas.

### DESIGNING INSTRUCTION
Once participants understand the process of analyzing the text in light of the needs students are likely to have, the training will move on to the next phase – designing the instructional activities that they will use in the classroom to address the students' needs.

This chart below summarizes the attributes of an effective NUA classroom, which include the content and activities, the way the activities are sequenced, and the way the physical environment is designed and used.

# ATTRIBUTES OF AN EFFECTIVE NUA CLASSROOM

| Pedagogy | CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION |
|---|---|
| Engaging Content | *WHAT you teach* |
| Skills/Standards | Identified based on student needs/standards |
| Text Selections | Texts on which presentation is based |
| Anchor Information | Important concepts, information, vocabulary |
| Strategies | Strategies you demo that develop skills of focus |
| Research Base | Research support; principles of learning |
| | |
| Engaging Activities | *HOW you teach* |
| Learning Activities | Experiential, hands-on, culturally-relevant |
| Reflection | Pauses to process and apply learning |
| Feedback | Response to workshop, consultant |
| | |
| Choreography | CLASSROOM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT |
| Flow | Seamless flow from one activity to the next |
| Transitions | Clear connections between activities, content |
| Pacing | Not too fast, not too slow; just right |
| Supplies | Management, distribution of handouts, supplies |
| | |
| Geography | PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT |
| Space | Use of room to maximize comfort, attention |
| Seating | Seating arrangements conducive to interaction |
| Equipment | Placement, usefulness, functionality |
| Display of Work | Charts, etc., created during session |

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM PEDAGOGY

ENGAGING CONTENT

ENGAGING ACTIVITIES
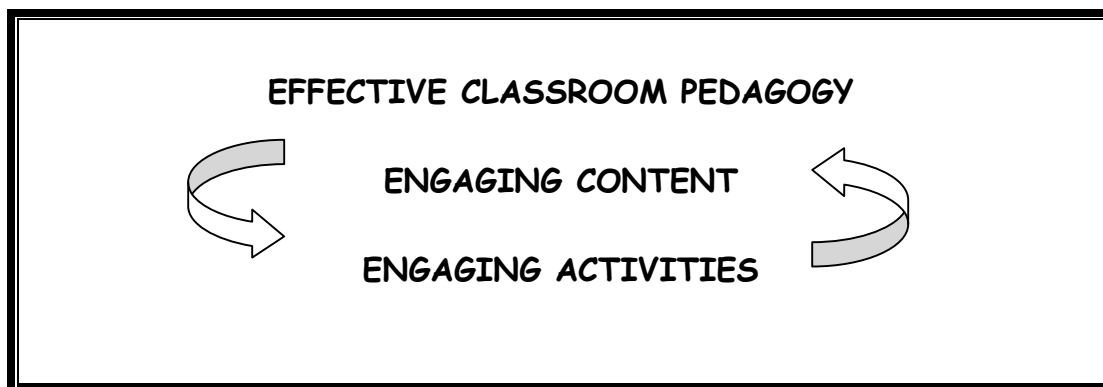
# PEDAGOGY:
## THE CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES OF AN NUA CLASSROOM

Effective pedagogy in an NUA classroom includes engaging CONTENT and engaging ACTIVITIES so that participants have a productive and rewarding experience.

## ENGAGING CONTENT

- **Emphasis on literacy skills and standards**
  NUA classrooms address the core literacy skills: reading comprehension, sight vocabulary and meaning vocabulary, word recognition skills, reading fluency, content-area reading skills and study skills, writing fluency, and grade-appropriate writing skills. Each of these is reflected in the state and local standards that are in effect in NUA districts. Also, each skill that underachievers need to develop and refine has one or more prerequisite skills that need to be considered and addressed when focusing on the target skill/standard. Recognition of the prerequisites, as well as the target skills, is critical in the design of classroom instruction.

- **Well-chosen text selections**
  NUA classrooms are based on materials the students read, hear, or view and to which they can respond in interesting ways. Teachers will be trained to select texts that are appropriate for the students they work with so that the material will be relevant. Consultants will model for teachers how the texts they choose help students identify culturally with the content of the text and/or use what they know in the context of their own cultures to relate to and comprehend the text. (See *Criteria for Selecting Texts*)

- **Anchor Information**
  NUA classrooms focus on key concepts, principles of learning, vocabulary, or other important, anchor information that leads to the design of coherent lessons for the students. The anchor information comes from the main text selection that is used with the recognition that understanding that information may require attention to prerequisite knowledge of or experience with the concept/content of focus.

- **Use of core NUA strategies that effectively build literacy skills**
  NUA classrooms focus on core NUA strategies that develop the literacy skills that are most critical to constructing and communicating meaning. The primary focus is on reading and writing strategies that help underachieving students reach their potential. Strategies are combined in classrooms according to a clear, lesson-oriented framework. Ordinarily, the framework is Before/During/After reading because most classrooms focus on getting students into, through, and beyond a reading selection.

- **Base of research/principles/standards**
  The strategies teachers use in classrooms are based on research-based knowledge of the process of learning and the process of developing literacy. For example, a strategy might be based on what is known about brain functioning, on literacy research, on learning standards, on NUA frameworks, and so on. Consultants will make the base explicit in the course of showing teachers how to use a strategy. Teachers will need to do the same for students.

## ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

- **Experiential, hands-on, culturally-relevant learning activities**
  In an NUA classroom students are actively involved in learning literacy strategies by doing them. Teachers show, rather than tell students what to do. The hands-on activities maintain interest and model important aspects of effective teaching.  The design of activities also enables teachers to make explicit the ways that learning can be made relevant to the culture of the learners. There are two primary ways of making culturally-relevant connections to students through text:  (1) provide text with which learners can identify, and (2) provide activities that encourage learners to use what they know in the context of their own cultures to relate to and comprehend the text they are asked to read.

- **Opportunities for reflection**
  Periodically in an NUA classroom, students pause to reflect. Reflection may involve talking with others, writing, or in other ways representing learning. The goal is to give students time to internalize the information and ideas they get from the classroom instruction and to think ahead to how they might use the knowledge and transfer it.

- **Opportunities to give feedback**
  Students have opportunities to give feedback during and at the end of the classroom activities. They appreciate being able to ask questions and raise

concerns during the learning experience. Teachers may also plan specific activities to elicit feedback from students about an activity or strategy they present.

## CHOREOGRAPHY:
## THE DESIGN AND FLOW OF THE CLASSROOM

Effective choreography in an NUA classroom includes attention to four main elements within the classroom design:  flow, transitions, pacing, and management of supplies and materials.

- **Flow**
  The activities in an effective NUA classroom flow smoothly from one to the next, providing participants with an engaging, stimulating experience. The sequencing of the activities is based on a clear framework. For instance, if the framework for the classroom is Before/During/After reading, the first activity will introduce a before-reading strategy, the next will introduce a during-reading strategy, and the third will be a post-reading activity, all of which will use the same text as a base, effectively modeling how to move students into, through, and beyond a reading selection.

- **Transitions**
  An effective NUA classroom has clear, logical transitions from one activity to the next. The teacher makes these explicit by telling or showing students how each activity is related to the previous activity. When transitions are clear, the overall experience for the student is of a coherent, connected whole, not a series of disjointed activities.

- **Pacing**
  An effective NUA classroom moves at the right pace to maintain interest and attention while also allowing enough time for students to understand what is being presented, to ask questions, and to think about how they might use what they are learning. The pace of a classroom seems to slow, from the studentss' perspective, when the teacher is talking to them and seems to move more briskly when they are engaged in collaborative work. What's needed is a balance of teacher talk and hands-on activities.
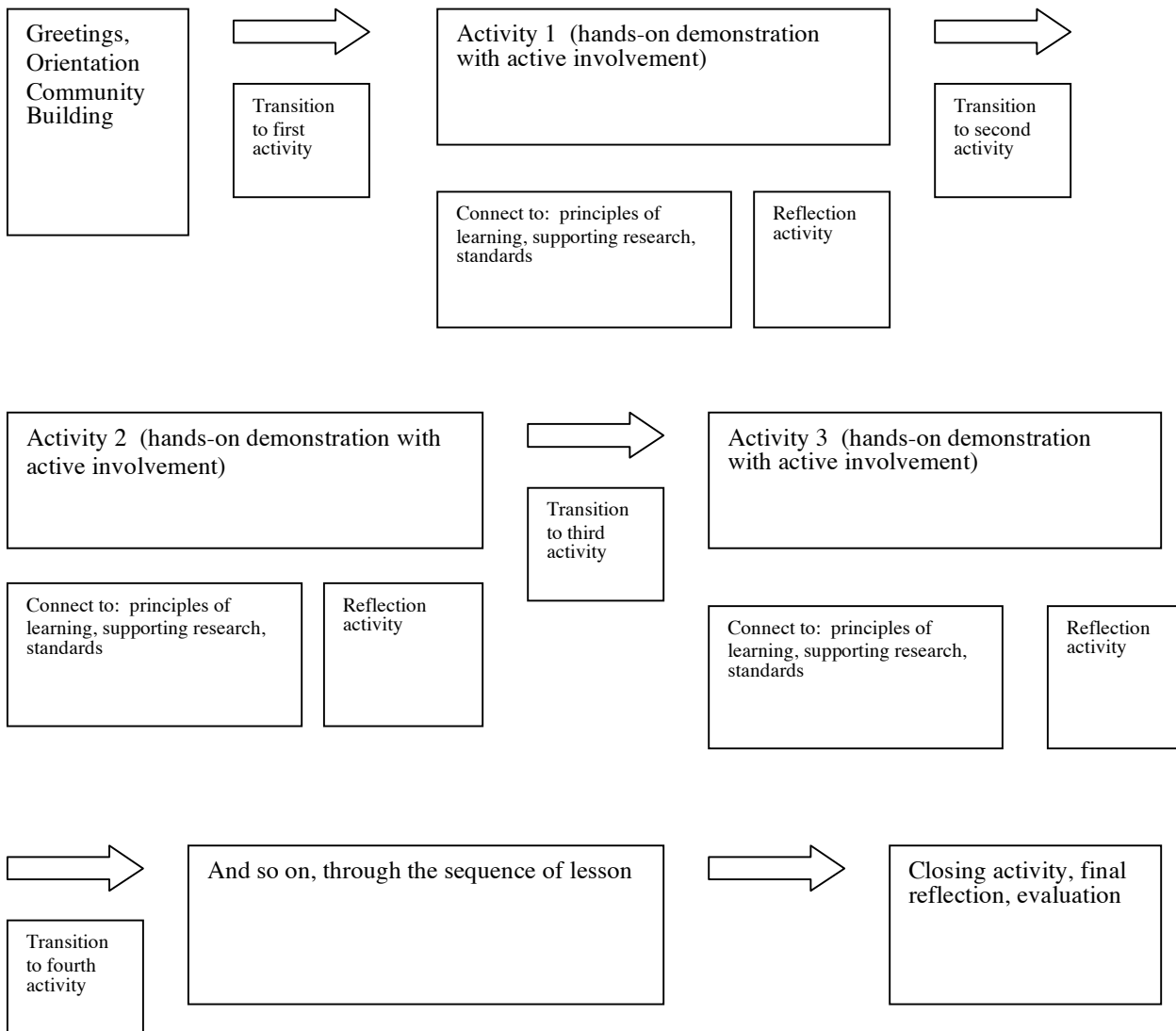
- **Supplies**
  In an effective classroom, handouts, supplies, and other materials are distributed efficiently so as not to detract from the content of what is being presented. For example, the teacher enlists help from one or more students to distribute materials.

# CHOREOGRAPHY:  The Flow Map

Once teachers decide on the content of their classrooms, they need to give thought to the overall flow and timing of activities, including the transitions they will make between activities. A Flow Map like this is a useful tool for this planning.

## Title (focus of lesson, e.g., Relevance)

| Greetings, Orientation Community Building | → Transition to first activity | Activity 1 (hands-on demonstration with active involvement) | → Transition to second activity |
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| | | Connect to: principles of learning, supporting research, standards | Reflection activity |

| Activity 2 (hands-on demonstration with active involvement) | → Transition to third activity | Activity 3 (hands-on demonstration with active involvement) |
|---|---|---|
| Connect to: principles of learning, supporting research, standards | Reflection activity | Connect to: principles of learning, supporting research, standards — Reflection activity |

| → Transition to fourth activity | And so on, through the sequence of lesson | → Closing activity, final reflection, evaluation |
|---|---|---|

NOTE:  Each activity enables students to experience the strategy and makes explicit the relevant principles of learning, supporting research, and standards.  Opportunities for reflection are built in to each activity.  Transitions between one activity and the next are clear; there is a logical reason why one activity follows another.

# GEOGRAPHY:
## THE DESIGN AND USE OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Besides pedagogy and choreography, NUA teachers also need to think about how they will organize their rooms, what equipment they will need, and how they will use seating arrangements and displays to make the room an effective learning environment. Here are some issues to address:

- **Space**
  Teachers often move between two or more focal points in the room during the course of the lesson, e.g., the image from a projector on one wall, a flip chart near another wall, and posters or charts on a third wall. By intentionally moving around the room during a lesson the teacher avoids a "lecture" style of presentation, which is not the most effective way to maintain interest and attention.

- **Seating**
  Because students will be actively engaged, the seating in the room is best organized to facilitate small group work and interaction.

- **Equipment**
  Classrooms ordinarily have an overhead projector and a flip chart. Any additional needs need to be arranged and teachers need to be prepared to set it up and work equipment.

- **Displays of work**
  Posters, charts, or other displays should be put up in the room. It's also a good idea to have students create and post work in the course of the lesson activities. For instance, small groups may generate Thinking Maps on large pieces of chart paper and post their Maps on the walls. Room displays that include student-created work model effective learning practices while personalizing the classroom environment.

In summary, the teachers in Vanguard Plus will develop coherent lesson plans that:

- demonstrate a suitable framework for planning lessons, e.g., before reading, during reading, after reading
- model good questioning strategies
- show how reading and writing can be connected
- show how you can make connections between the students' culture and the content and/or activities of your workshop
- demonstrate how to differentiate instruction at one or more points in a lesson
- demonstrate how what you are doing influences students' language development at one or more points in the sequence
- call attention to how the strategies reflect the standards and principles of learning, i.e., how the strategies support learning.