Title of Project: Powerful and Personalized Professional Development

Project Abstract (< 100 words): Rural schools are faced with financial challenges that urban and suburban schools do not encounter. Rural administrators must be resourceful in seeking professional development. As the Indiana Department of Education now requires an evaluation tool that includes the student achievement scores of a teacher’s class, CLEAR proposes the use of on-line support through modules of professional development as well as opportunities to review recorded lessons to reflect with the teacher. This online professional development promises the opportunity to allow access to the trainer for clarification of information and provide a venue for the staff to obtain tailored support.

Project Personnel:
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1. Describe the partnership created and the methods you used to sustain the partnerships.

This Synergy Grant’s initial focus morphed into one of being teacher focused versus administrator focused in that CLEAR provided hybrid professional development which included both in person meetings and online modules through Blackboard Learn for teachers only. Frontier teachers were issued an iPad to both access the online learning modules and for use in their classrooms to progress monitor and to record actual lessons to submit online. Based on these submitted lessons, CLEAR collaborated with all three participants to engage in reflective practice around the literacy professional development. CLEAR’s online professional development supported to teachers to “develop and sustain the intense energy and leadership within their school community to ensure the achievement of all students (Frontier Teacher Effectiveness Rubric, Professional Leadership Domain).” As teachers learned how to stay abreast of best practices in literacy via distance learning, their students’ achievement was examined via local assessments. For CLEAR, the information gleaned from further research of this online professional development’s impact helped determine that human capital should be spent on such endeavors.

2. Describe the activities you completed this year for your Synergy Grant in relationship to the partners’ strategic plans.

The following is a list of activities involved in this grant project:
• September 2012– Frontier teachers came to Purdue to collect iPads and receive half-day training from CLEAR regarding iPad use, accessing Blackboard Learn and an overview of best practices of the 90-Minute Block.
Individual online modules included webinars, chat sessions, discussion board, analysis of videos (provided by both CLEAR and participants for reflection):

- September 26, 2012 – Baseline literacy practices
- October 1, 2012 – Knowing your students as readers
- October 16, 2012 – Interactive read aloud, Guided reading
- October 25, 2012 – Observation of sample videos of guided reading
- November 28, 2012 – Benchmarking
- February 6, 2013 – Reading behaviors within the text
- March 8, 2013 – Prompting in guided reading
- April 9, 2013 – Problem solving
- May 7, 2013 – Year in review

Surveys were conducted three times (beginning, middle, end) throughout the year.

3. Describe your plans, if any, for continuation, scaling up, and/or institutionalization of the project next year.

Based on discussions with the principal, CLEAR has determined that a needs assessment will be conducted to determine the specific hybrid professional development topics needed by teachers throughout the school. As well, this survey will help determine how to best differentiate this professional development to meet the needs of all teachers involved.

4. Summarize any impact data you have collected on your project, especially impact on P-12 students, teachers, principals, etc.

Essentially, this project revealed that teachers and students benefit greatly from personalized professional development. Additionally, it became clear that teachers appreciated the convenience of online delivery of professional development, as well as the personal interaction provided during onsite visits. However, what also emerged was the need to include some component of accountability that not only encouraged teachers to implement and follow the plan outlined in the initial expectations, but that would also provide meaningful support for them as they did so. Therefore, creating both a plan for the professional development and a plan for being accountable, which includes how teachers can get additional support or feedback, is possible only through meaningful collaboration among teachers, administrators and CLEAR staff. In the bigger picture, this is especially important for our work with all P-12 partners.

5. Summarize your plan for disseminating the results of your project to state and national audiences.

We plan to submit proposals to submit at local and state conferences (e.g., Indiana Teachers of Writing, Indiana State Reading Association, Indiana Association of School Principals, etc.). As
well, CLEAR plans to build on this study and to develop additional research projects, as well as professional development that aligns with these findings.

6. **What suggestions do you have for future Synergy Grant participants or for the project administrators?**

   The trick is to find participants who are truly committed to a partnership that BEGINS with a Synergy Grant, rather than that is perceived as separate effort.