

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TEAM REPORT
2012-2013**

PLT Title

Best Practices for Writing Lab Reports

Blurb for PLT Conference Brochure

The purpose of the PLT was to create a curriculum for the teaching of scientific writing. During the conference, we will be sharing our data on how students improved in their lab report writing techniques. Our curriculum will be on display, including the rubrics used to assess student progress and samples of student work.

Contact Information (Write * next to facilitator's name.)

Name	School	Grade Level or Subject
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PLT SMART Goal

Develop a lab report writing curriculum to be implemented during Terms 2 and 3. Create 5 point rubrics for the more difficult sections of a lab report (introduction, procedure, data and calculations, conclusion). This curriculum will have students writing quality lab reports for Term 4.

Key Actions

1. Create and Implement Five Point Rubrics for the four more challenging sections of a Lab Report
 - Procedures
 - Introductions
 - Data and Calculations
 - Conclusions
2. Students will give their first attempt at the given section – They will receive specific feedback from the teacher
3. Students will be given the rubric
4. Students will give their second attempt at the given section – They will receive peer feedback according to the rubric
5. Students will give their third attempt on the given section
6. Teachers will record scores based on the five point rubric for the first and for the final try. Compare Data

Findings

- Students did significantly better when provided with a rubric.
- When writing procedures, students improved the most on learning how to write in the past passive tense and not use words like “I and we”.
- When writing introductions, students did better on writing in the past passive tense than they did previously on the procedure writing.
- The biggest improvements on introduction writing were seen in “explaining key concepts and vocabulary” and included sources of information.
- When completing the data and calculation sections, students did a great job in recording qualitative and quantitative data, however, they had difficulties in organization, labeling charts and graphs, and showing all work.
- When writing conclusions, students showed the largest improvements in discussing sources of error and including information about what future experiments could be performed.
- The smallest improvements were made in the category of summarizing the results. However it is important to note that this category had the highest initial score (students did well without the rubric).

Recommendations / Next Steps

1. Incorporate the Common Core into the rubrics
2. Create a specific timeline for all Chemistry Teachers to follow that gives 2 weeks for each section
3. Choose common lab experiments for students to practice each section (Clear, Complete, and Concise Writing, Use of Past Passive Tense, Writing “In your own words”)