

# READING, LANGUAGE, & LITERACY (RLL)

## Best Practices in PLC

### Learning, Thinking, & Collaborating with Colleagues

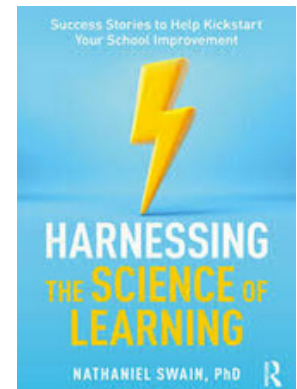
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are most effective when they are focused, collaborative, and grounded in evidence of student learning. At their core, PLCs should center on four essential questions: What do we want students to learn? How will we know if they've learned it? How will we respond when they haven't? How will we extend learning for those who have?

#### Factors to Consider

Strong PLC meetings begin with clear norms and defined roles. Establish agreements for participation, time management, and decision-making. Rotating roles—such as facilitator, timekeeper, and note-taker—help maintain shared ownership and accountability.

Bring relevant student data to every meeting. This might include common formative assessment results, student work samples, or progress monitoring data. Focus discussions on specific learning targets rather than general impressions. When reviewing data, look for patterns, identify strengths and gaps, and share instructional strategies that produced positive results. Action planning is critical. Each meeting should end with clear next steps: instructional adjustments, intervention plans, or enrichment opportunities. Assign responsibilities and set timelines to ensure follow-through.

## What are we reading?



**Harnessing the Science of Learning**  
By Nathaniel Swain

### Building Trust

Productive PLCs depend on a culture where educators feel safe sharing challenges and successes. Celebrate growth, reflect honestly, and keep student learning at the center.

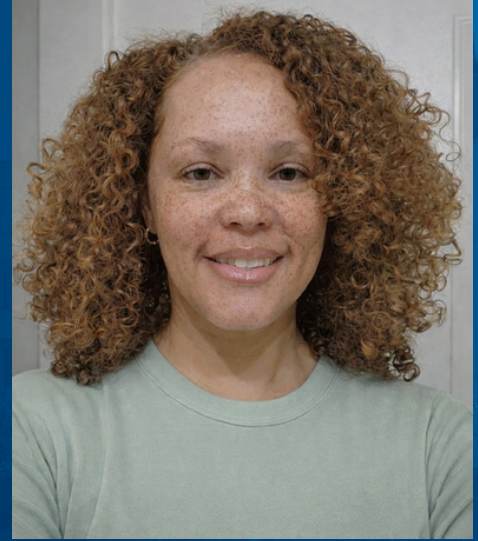
When PLCs stay focused and collaborative, they become powerful engines for continuous improvement.



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## Nichole Ramirez

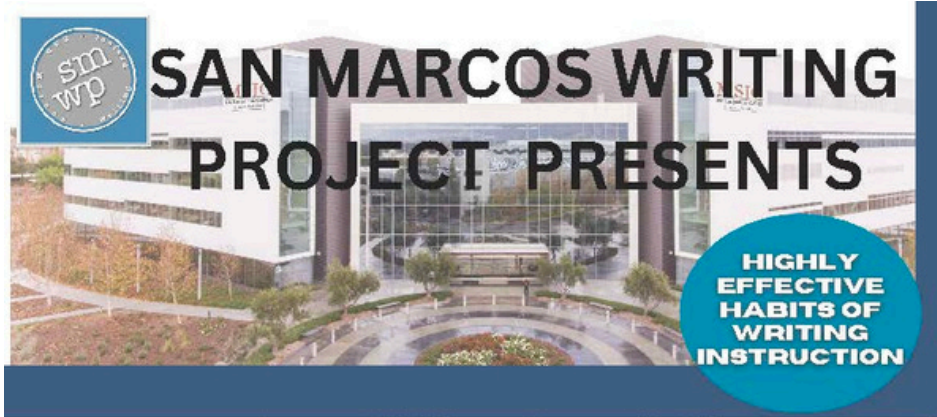
We are excited to celebrate Nichole Ramirez this month. Nichole's Culminating Experience was a research study investigating the impact of reading whole-class novels on student engagement. The results were clear--reading novels and engaging deeply with them leads to more student engagement. [Click here](#) to read Nichole's thesis in all its glory. Read on for Nichole's story in her own words!



The Reading, Language, and Literacy program at CSUSM has greatly influenced me, both as an educator and as a person. Throughout the program, I found myself thinking more deeply about my students, my instruction, and the role literacy plays in shaping a child's identity. The coursework and conversations pushed me to slow down, reflect, and really consider what meaningful reading experiences should look like in an elementary classroom. Most importantly, it helped me reconnect with why I became a teacher in the first place.

This program also helped me grow in confidence. I learned to trust my professional instincts while grounding my decisions in research, and I began to see myself as someone who could contribute to larger conversations about literacy and equity. Completing my capstone project, which focused on student engagement through full-length texts, showed me that thoughtful, authentic reading instruction can make a real difference for students. Seeing my students respond so positively reminded me that change is possible, even within the constraints of curriculum and standards.

The RLL program significantly influenced my future goals. It sparked a desire to continue learning and advocating for better literacy instruction, which has led me to pursue a doctoral degree in reading and literacy. I am deeply committed to improving elementary reading instruction in California, and this program gave me the foundation and confidence to believe that I can be part of that work. I am thankful to CSUSM for offering the Reading, Language, and Literacy program, but I am most grateful for the opportunity to be part of a learning community that challenged, supported, and inspired me as an educator.



**June 11th - June 17th**

On the Temecula campus of

**MSJC**

*Whether you are new to teaching or would like to improve on your current writing skill level, this 5-day, in-person writing institute will meet your needs. We will have daily demonstrations, practical resources, and time to plan and collaborate.*

**Cost: \$75 (non-refundable): Please Pay At <https://bit.ly/4plhJAG>  
Space is limited to 30 participants**

**5-Day Institute: 9am - 3pm**

*Thursday, Friday, Monday, Tuesday,  
Wednesday*

**3 Follow-Up Meetings in  
Oct., Jan., March**

APPLY AT



by June 8, 2026

Contact Information: Dr. Laurie Stowell • [lstowell@csusm.edu](mailto:lstowell@csusm.edu)

The RLL program is  
**now accepting applications**  
for cohort 2.8.

Help us spread the word!



## SUMMER PD AT CSUSM



# SAN MARCOS WRITING PROJECT PRESENTS

**HIGHLY  
EFFECTIVE  
HABITS OF  
WRITING  
INSTRUCTION**

**June 22nd - June 26th**

On the campus of

**CSUSM**

*Whether you are new to teaching or would like to improve on your current writing skill level, this 5-day, in-person writing institute will meet your needs. We will have daily demonstrations, practical resources, and time to plan and collaborate.*

**Cost: \$75 (non-refundable):+ daily parking**

**Please Pay At: <https://bit.ly/4plhJAG>**

**5-Day Institute: 9am - 3pm  
3 Follow-Up Meetings in  
Oct., Jan., March**

**APPLY AT**



**by June 15, 2026**

Contact Information: Dr. Laurie Stowell • [lstowell@csusm.edu](mailto:lstowell@csusm.edu)