

Correlation of Teacher Created Materials Publishing's Professional Development Services to the National Staff Development Council's Staff Development Standards



NSDC's Standards for Staff Development (Revised, 2001)

Context Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. (Learning Communities)
- Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement. (Leadership)
- Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. (Resources)

Process Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. (Data-Driven)
- Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact. (Evaluation)
- Prepares educators to apply research to decision making. (Research-Based)
- Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal. (Design)
- Applies knowledge about human learning and change. (Learning)
- Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. (Collaboration)

Content Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement. (Equity)
- Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately. (Quality Teaching)
- Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (Family Involvement)

Correlation of TCM's Professional Development Services to NSDC's Standards for Staff Development

Quality Professional Development Aligned with NSDC Context Standards

- Develop and promote professional learning communities.
- Develop and promote school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.
- Identify and access appropriate resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

A supportive context forms the foundation of effective professional development. Professional development that is ongoing, site-based and led by participating teachers is more effective in changing teachers' instructional methods than the formerly popular method of teachers attending one-time conferences or workshops led by experts away from school (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001; Guskey & Huberman, 1995; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009). Teacher Created Materials Publishing recognizes this and has designed its professional development services based on the work of these researchers and others.

Developing Professional Learning Communities

First, all of Teacher Created Materials' professional development and technical support services foster collaboration and learning through professional learning communities (PLCs). Most importantly, all services are custom-designed to meet the needs of each customer. Therefore, schools with existing professional learning communities are supported with expert coaching and training from Teacher Created Materials consultants. This can include both content knowledge and instructional strategies support. Coaches also provide support and services to existing professional learning communities in areas such as data-driven instruction and looking at student work. In schools, this involves ongoing strategy coaching with individual teams and may also include presentation of workshops or courses on specific content or instructional strategies to support explicit team learning needs. These workshops are different from traditional 'sit and get' training, because they are on-demand and focus on filling gaps in teachers' understanding. This is the kind of training recommended by NSDC (2001) in the content standards, because it supports teachers at their individual levels.

Additionally, Teacher Created Materials' services also support the formation and development of professional learning communities. Teachers who are engaging in the work of professional learning communities guide their own learning, but often require extensive modeling with protocols in order to promote productive dialogue (City, Elmore, Fiarman & Teitel, 2009). Teacher Created Materials provides this support in all of its professional development offerings. Our expert consultants engage teachers in shared learning activities and incorporate cycles of reflection to foster the kind of collaboration that is needed for teachers to truly learn. Moreover, our professional development engages teachers in meaningful collaboration focused on both content and instruction. Educational leaders agree that this is necessary for changes in teachers'

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practice to occur (Boudett & Steele, 2007; DuFour & Eaker, 1998, Elmore, 2007). Sessions are customized to the needs of individual teams of teachers so that communities within a single school can learn at their own pace.

Developing School Leaders

Helping school leaders to become instructional leaders is no small task, and numerous studies highlight the importance of principal leadership in supporting professional learning communities (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Morrissey, 2000). Principals and district leaders must encourage professional learning while improving student achievement. This is done through ongoing evaluation of professional development activities (NSDC, 2001). Teacher Created Materials supports school leaders by working very closely with administrators in the planning and evaluation of all professional development activities and technical support services. The company's Academic Officers are former educators and administrators who consult with districts in the initial planning stages of all professional learning activities. They utilize their expertise to help these leaders identify learning goals for teachers and plan customized training and coaching that will have the highest impact. This can include gathering data on teachers' professional learning needs, which researchers contend is an important step for principals to take (Hord & Hirsch, 2009). After the initial planning stage, the professional development consultants who will lead the training or coaching also work with school leaders to further customize the work for teachers. For example, after an academic officer helps a principal plan a series of professional development activities, the consultant who will lead the work will gather supporting curriculum and assessments in order to plan specific professional development activities. Consultants will then communicate directly with school leaders throughout the entire professional development program to adjust instruction as needed. This balance between supporting leaders in planning high quality, sustained professional development while keeping them informed of ongoing progress is crucial to their ongoing development.

Resources to Support Adult Learning and Collaboration

Finally, the essential structural conditions must be in place in order to provide high quality professional development services. These resources include expert coaching, evaluation, and materials to support teachers' instruction in the classroom. One of the largest studies of professional learning communities identified supports and barriers to their development, which include team coaching (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas & Wallace, 2005). The coaching provided by Teacher Created Materials comes directly from the research literature and is based on the gradual release of responsibility model developed by P. David Pearson and Margaret C. Gallagher (1983). Coaches assist school leaders and teachers in facilitating their own learning and in evaluating the progress of their work with both formative and summative assessment.

Moreover, the instructional resources published by Teacher Created Materials provide the support necessary for teachers to implement newly learned teaching strategies in their classrooms. This scaffolding is especially important in order for the new content to be internalized (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The support resources published by Teacher Created Materials Publishing include instructional strategy guides, such as *Applying Differentiation Strategies*, and professional books such as *Helping English language Learners Succeed*. These resources are used in coaching and training sessions to support adult learning. They then serve as

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resources that teachers can collaborate with as they plan. Teacher Created Materials' coaching model promotes co-planning and co-teaching, and these materials serve as scaffolds for participants in this process.

Quality Professional Development Aligned with NSDC Process Standards

- Establish and prioritize adult learning needs based on needs identified from disaggregated student academic and non-academic achievement data
- Utilize a variety of sources of information to guide improvement and determine effectiveness
- Engage practitioners in the use of research to make decisions
- Facilitate practitioners' knowledge and skill development in identification and use of appropriate learning strategies to accomplish intended goals
- Build, develop and sustain knowledge and skills needed for collaboration

Effective professional learning must be driven by both student and teacher data. This includes student assessment data, ongoing evaluation of professional learning activities, and action research. Strategies used for professional learning must also match the needs of participants. One format is not beneficial for all learners. Therefore, a variety of approaches and methods are required. Approaches can include coaching and webinars, while methods can include case teaching, collaborative lesson design and looking at student work. Finally, educators need to learn how to collaborate in order to effectively work together towards common goals (R. Elmore, personal communication, May 11, 2010).

Data Driven Professional Learning

First, professional learning must be planned based upon the skills participants' currently have and the achievement of their students. Districts often focus on standardized assessment data to drive instruction, and this can be a valuable starting place for determining students' needs. Disaggregation of standardized assessment data is used by Teacher Created Materials to help professional development leaders identify subpopulations requiring additional support. Moreover, item analysis of test scores helps identify skills in which all students need more support. Teacher Created Materials' consultants use this to identify areas for improvement, while additional data, such as classroom tests and observational assessments help determine potential causes for standardized test performance. Data such as this can be used throughout the professional learning cycle to focus professional learning efforts (NSDC, 2001).

Educational leaders also often want to evaluate the progress of students as a result of professional development opportunities provided to teachers. This means that professional learning cannot be evaluated with the quick, unscientific surveys often referred to as "smile sheets". Rather, varied evaluation tools are needed (NSDC, 2001). Teacher Created Materials has developed a comprehensive evaluation system in its thirty years as an educational leader. Evaluation tools we utilize included content knowledge assessments for teachers, personal reflections, focus group meetings, classroom observation, and teaching logs. Teacher Created Materials also created pre and post assessments for students to take. These assessments are used

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to guide professional learning activities in addition to guiding teachers' instruction.

The third component of data driven professional learning included in Teacher Created Materials' professional development programs is pilot testing and research. Rigorous standards must be established in order for this kind professional development evaluation to be effective (Gusky, 1992). All of the materials used in our professional development programs are research-based and controlled experimental trials have been conducted on its core curriculum products. Furthermore, Teacher Created Materials' consultants assist customers in developing their own action research based on its professional development services. The company has its own in-house research specialist and also works with leading educational researchers to conduct research on the effectiveness of its programs. The in-house research specialist works with school districts to establish high quality pilot studies of professional development that are used for formative and summative evaluation.

Varied Instructional Approaches

All of Teacher Created Materials' professional development services include a variety of teaching strategies. We provide individual and small group coaching and supplement face-to-face meetings with video conferencing and webinars. These interactive experiences allow teachers to get intermediate feedback in order to adjust classroom implementation more readily. This combination of strategies is most effective for teacher learning (NSDC, 2001; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009). As previously described, coaching experiences include co-planning and co-teaching in order to support teachers most effectively. The gradual release of responsibility model applied to professional learning also supports teachers at their individual levels of readiness.

Within each learning session, Teacher Created Materials consultants will also use a variety of instructional techniques in order to maximize learning among participants. Sessions include a minimal amount of direct instruction. Instead, small group activities are implemented, teaching strategies are demonstrated, and hands-on activities in which participants practice teaching strategies to one another are used. These types of learning activities involve teachers as active participants in each session, which is a well-established criterion for effective learning.

Developing Collaboration Skills

It is not surprising that teachers must have trust in one another and among other stakeholders in order to in order to collaborate and engage in the work of new reform efforts (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). However, the literature on collaboration in schools suggests that other essential conditions for cultivating collaboration include shared goals, resources, accountability, and authority, in addition to voluntary participation (Friend & Cook, 1990). It is especially important then, to provide teachers with specific instruction in collaboration skills. Teacher Created Materials does this in its coaching and in ongoing professional development services. Discussion protocols are provided to facilitate equal sharing among teacher teams. Further, facilitation and modeling from Teacher Created Materials' coaches teaches participants how to engage in collaboration during professional development sessions in daily teacher interactions.

Professional Development Aligned with NSDC Content Standards

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P U B L I S H I N G

- Assist educators to cultivate an understanding and appreciation of all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.
- Expand practitioners' content knowledge and provide them with research-based instructional strategies designed to insure students meet rigorous standards.
- Develop practitioners' knowledge, skills and use of an assortment of classroom assessments appropriately.

The content of Teacher Created Materials' professional development services ensures that teachers are prepared to teach diverse learners and hold high expectations for their performance. This includes the use of classroom assessment tools that gauge achievement and inform instructional practices. While, the importance of meeting the needs of individual learners is well established (Gusky & Huberman, 1995), putting this into practice is often more difficult than expected. Teacher Created Materials uses a variety of strategies in its professional development, but it also provides leaders with the skills they need to implement the same practices in their own classrooms.

Understanding and Appreciating All Students

The content knowledge required of teachers does not just include subject-matter expertise. It also includes the knowledge of students as learners and ways in which the classroom environment and can be adapted to be more conducive to student learning (NSDC, 2001). The professional development services provided by Teacher Created Materials teach educators how to teach students from diverse backgrounds. The materials and strategies used in professional development and coaching sessions include specific strategies on how to scaffold instruction for English language learners, for example. These students require strategies such as total physical response, visual displays and environmental labeling in order to learn most effectively (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). Teacher Created Materials' professional development sessions include materials and professional books that are written by leading researchers. This ensures that sessions meet the latest standards for effective instruction for today's diverse learners.

Classroom environments must also be supportive in order for students to learn. Balancing both the learning environment and teaching strategies is especially important for student learning (Calderon, 1997). Instruction in creating a comfortable classroom environment can include individual workshop sessions provided by Teacher Created Materials consultants, but it is also embedded in the regular, ongoing professional development services we provide. This job-embedded approach, promotes better understanding for teachers. Coaches provide modeling for teachers in creating a supportive environment in which all students are willing to participate. Discussions among groups of teachers and Teacher Created Materials' consultants allow teachers to learn how they can change their practice immediately.

Promoting Rigorous Academic Standards

We know that children's belief in their own efficacy is an important predictor of their career paths in adulthood. (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, Pastorelli, 2001). Teachers' belief in their efficacy to improve student achievement is related to their teaching (Woolfolk & Hoy as cited in Isiksal & Cakiroglu, 2009), and is one of the most important determinants of student success (Midgley, Feldlaufer & Eccles, 1989). Therefore, professional development methods must improve teachers' belief in their ability to improve student performance. The systemic coaching provided by Teacher Created Materials, in addition to the ongoing professional development services we provide, helps teachers become confident in teaching new strategies. Education reforms lead to new expectations for teaching such as the use of data to inform instruction. Our professional development sessions and coaching teach educators how to implement new pedagogical strategies with fidelity and confidence in their classrooms.

Our support services also include the technical assistance required to help school leaders change teachers' beliefs and practices. These services can also include assistance with curriculum alignments and correlations. Audits of local curriculum and resources can help administrators establish high standards for academic achievement and ensure that all of the state content standards are being addressed through their districts' curriculum materials.

Using Various Classroom Assessments Appropriately

Teachers need to understand and use a variety of assessment tools in their classrooms in order to affect student achievement (NSDC, 2001). Assessment forms the foundation of all of Teacher Created Materials' professional development services and materials. Each professional development experience includes discussion and modeling of effective ways to conduct pre- and post assessment in addition to ongoing assessment. Many of our professional development programs include materials that have diagnostic pre- and post-tests in addition to short assessments designed for rapid, ongoing assessment of student progress.

Teachers are also taught how to use a wide variety of assessments including criterion-referenced tests, norm-referenced tests, and informal assessments. These include existing standardized test data, quizzes, teacher-created tests, portfolios, observational checklists, and examination of student work. Professional development strategies utilized in Teacher Created Materials' professional learning workshops model how assessments can be woven throughout the curriculum. Alternative assessments such as student conferencing are also taught so teachers can identify the needs of individual learners that may not be evident through traditional assessment tools. The use of this wide variety of assessments ensures that teachers are capable of targeting all students' needs and addressing them with unique teaching strategies.

Conclusion

The context, process and content of professional learning and technical assistance services are facets of adult development that must be considered for it to be valuable. Teacher Created Materials is a leader in providing professional development services, because we have used our more than thirty years' experience to guide our efforts while still remaining abreast of current research and practice. Professional development must be based on rigorous research, yet it must also remain accessible for teachers. Our combination of professional learning services and materials supports teachers and school leaders so their work can have the greatest impact on students' academic and non-academic achievement.

Additional Criteria

- Meet the needs of diverse student populations
- Insure sustainability through supports that include modeling, coaching and specific problem-solving
- Reflect recent and relevant research
- Enhance communication
- Provide for differentiated learning opportunities for adults
- Result in adult learning that must results in improved achievement for all students
- Promotes continuous learning

The professional development services provided by Teacher Created Materials meet all of the above additional criteria. Many of these were described in previous items, but they will be described in more detail here with their research base.

Supporting Diverse Student Populations

Students from diverse populations have special needs when it comes to education. They often require different instructional strategies; yet teachers struggle with ways to support them ((Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). Teachers need to first understand the diversity represented in schools today. The professional development services from Teacher Created Materials inform teachers about the types of diversity they may encounter in the classroom, such as English Language Learners and students identified as learning disabled or gifted. Specific instructional strategies are taught through our professional learning programs to give teachers the knowledge and skills needed to support a variety of students. The professional resource materials included in our professional development programs are also filled with a plethora of instructional strategies and model lessons for teachers to use when implementing what they have learned.

Modeling, Coaching and Problem Solving

As previously described, on-site coaching for teacher teams and individuals is a strong component of Teacher Created Materials' professional development programs. Using the gradual release of responsibility model, professional development sessions always include a balance of direct instruction, demonstration, modeling, and application. Instructional strategies are first taught to teachers through discussion and mini-lecture. The professional development consultant then demonstrates the strategy while participating teachers assume the role of students. This allows them to understand the strategy from a student's perspective. The teaching of the strategy is then modeled for the teachers and includes an explanation of the teaching moves the instructor makes based on continuous observational assessment of students' understanding. Finally, teachers are given the opportunity to apply what they learned by practicing the strategy with their peers and collaborating to plan implementation of the strategy in their classrooms. In classroom coaching further supports changes in instructional practice by giving teachers the on-the-job guidance and problem-solving support they need to establish the teaching strategy in their pedagogy.

Reflecting Recent and Relevant Research

Teacher Created Materials works with current educational research leaders to evaluate its own programs and create professional development resources that are based upon recent research. Renowned researchers such as Dr. Timothy Rasinski of Kent State University, Dr. Edward Fry, Dr. Ruth Yopp provide professional development services by Teacher Created Materials and they are contributing authors of our print resources. Moreover, the company has been a leader among supplemental education providers its dedication to research. The company has conducted rigorous research of its work for over a decade, including controlled experimental trials. This is far beyond what many supplemental providers have done. Moreover, the research director of the company works with numerous research professionals to ensure the company's methods reflect current research. Several professional development providers from the company are researchers themselves. Consequently, the company has adapted its professional development services in recent years to include coaching and long-term site-based professional development. These methods have been well established in recent years as among the most effective formats for adult development (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009).

Enhancing Communication

Educational leaders agree that communication among all stakeholders in education is crucial today. Teachers often express difficulty in understanding the viewpoints of their students' parents. However, as Harvard Professor Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) found, both teachers and parents often bring their own past experiences as students to their conversations in school today. Understanding others' perspectives is an important piece of communication that is often not taught to educators today. Teacher Created Materials' professional development and technical support services support teachers and school leaders in effectively communicating with one another and key stakeholders like parents. Our professional development resources include sample parent letters that include specific activities parents can do with their children at home to promote student learning. Additionally, professional development sessions on topics such as working with diverse learners also engage teachers in identifying effective ways to communicate with school leaders and parents about students' specific needs. Sessions also include protocol activities for teachers to practice having difficult conversations with stakeholders in ways that promote cooperation and collaboration among these stakeholders.

Differentiating Learning for Adults

Adults, like students, have different learning styles and needs. Therefore, professional learning must match the needs of individual teachers (Bowgren & Sever, 2010). Instruction provided by Teacher Created Materials is differentiated through methods and strategies. The combination of consultation, professional development sessions, and coaching provides different levels of support for different teachers. For example, a veteran teacher may be very comfortable with classroom management techniques, but a novice teacher may require in-classroom coaching in order to master new skills. The content and activities within professional development sessions are also differentiated. Teacher Created Materials' professional development consultants use formal and informal assessment data such as teachers' college coursework experience and surveys to identify gaps in content knowledge that need to be filled. They also model differentiating for learning styles by providing activities that address multiple learning styles

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within one session. At any given age, adults can be at different stages of intellectual development and this must be addressed in teachers' professional development activities (Wagner, et. al). The methods and strategies Teacher Created Materials uses in its professional development services meet this need.

Adult Learning that Results in Improved Student Achievement

The theory of action behind professional development efforts in K-12 schools today is that professional development will lead to improved teaching, which will then raise student achievement (R. Elmore, personal communication, May 10, 2010). This is often very difficult to evaluate, however. Despite the limitations of scientifically ruling out all other factors that impact student achievement, Teacher Created Materials has conducted qualitative and mixed-methods research on its professional development services and resources. Fully detailed reports of these studies are posted on the Internet at www.tcmpub.com/research. Most importantly, however, the research conducted by Teacher Created Materials indicates that its professional development and coaching services, when used in combination with its supplemental materials, improve student achievement. Even when control classrooms were used, these studies indicate that statistically significant gains were observed in classrooms receiving Teacher Created Materials training and resources. For example, one study from Philadelphia showed that students in classrooms that received professional development and resources from Teacher Created Materials had nonfiction reading scores that were statistically significantly higher than control classrooms.

In addition to these studies, research conducted by an independent researcher examined the professional development services Teacher Created Materials provided for history teachers across the United States from 2007 to 2009. Interview results showed that district leaders reported overwhelmingly positive results from the professional development services provided by the company.

Promoting Continuous Learning

All of Teacher Created Materials professional development and technical support services are built upon a model of continuous cycles of learning. Ongoing professional development models the importance of continuous learning for participants. Moreover, when the company works with school districts for ongoing professional development, teachers engage in cycles of inquiry in which they learn new strategies, try them in their classrooms, collect student data, and then regroup to debrief their progress and plan for continued improvement in instruction. This is well-established as an effective model for continuous improvement (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992).

Even more importantly, when Teacher Created Materials provides specific content or skill instruction to teachers, the company remains open for participating teachers to contact its professional development specialists with ongoing questions or support requests. This ensures that teachers continue to apply their new learning in their classrooms. Additionally, the company's use of webinars, podcasts and Web technologies provides teachers with opportunities for ongoing support and enhancement. Webinars allow teachers to have regular contact with professional development specialists and experts to ask questions. Podcasts and archived webinars on the company's website are free of charge and support teachers in continued learning after they receive face-to-face professional development.

Conclusion

Teacher Created Materials is dedicated to improving teacher practice and student performance. We support leaders and teachers with our variety of resources and professional development models. The customization of all of our professional development and technical support services further strengthens our ability to improve teaching and learning for all.

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