

Florida district enhancing professional learning with interactive online approach

Gale eBooks: Professional Learning aligns with instructional framework, district equity and inclusion plan

Last year, Alachua County Public Schools (ACPS) adopted a strategy that promotes equity, diversity and inclusion for its 30,000 students, more than two-thirds of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch and more than half of whom are nonwhite.

To help teachers and staff continuously grow and to meet objectives of the District Equity Plan—the first step toward eliminating the district’s achievement gap by 2028—ACPS uses *Gale eBooks: Professional Learning*, an on-demand experience that is personalized for the district’s 2,000 educators.

“The resources available through *Gale eBooks: Professional Learning* help our teachers meet their professional learning goals as well as better meet the needs of every student they support,” says Bessie Criscione, supervisor of professional development for the Gainesville, Florida, district.

“It’s a phenomenal resource,” she adds. “They’ve taken our instructional framework and equity plan and aligned each eBook to those frameworks.”

Indicator, goal support

An ACPS teacher, for example, can easily access ideas for creating and facilitating “a classroom environment of respect and positive relationships where diversity is accepted,” which is one indicator under the Positive Culture domain of the district’s instructional framework.

Similarly, resources are aligned with each equity plan goal, such as increasing participation of



African American students in advanced and accelerated courses.

Variety of available materials

More than 50 collections—including those from ASCD, Corwin Press, ISTE and Solution Tree—address topics such as differentiation, supporting all students, culturally responsive teaching, and high-quality literacy instruction. Information can be shared via social media and email, and group studies no longer require the purchase of individual books for participants. Instead, everyone can access the same book, even simultaneously, at no extra charge. Materials are easily searchable, and content can be translated into more than 40 languages.

Gale eBooks: Professional Learning has been embraced by ACPS teachers, who not only requested online, self-paced trainings last year, but also requested professional development two years

ago that would help them more effectively communicate and build relationships with all students they serve, Criscione says.

‘4 Pillars of Effective PD’

The program follows Gale’s “4 Pillars of Effective PD.” It is embedded in everyday activities such as school- or district-level book studies; it includes targeted feedback and support; it is tied to evaluations; and it is ongoing and sustainable.

“We’re promoting and supporting job-embedded professional learning instead of a ‘sit-n-git,’ large face-to-face workshop,” Criscione says. “*Gale eBooks: Professional Learning* affords teachers the opportunity to quickly access the information they need—in their time frames and without leaving the comfort of their homes or classrooms—so they can integrate it quickly and see immediate results.”

“The resources available through *Gale eBooks: Professional Learning* help our teachers meet the needs of all students.”

For more information, please visit gale.com/4pillars

Share this story online at DAmag.me/alachua

