



UnboundEd's Approach to Building Leadership Capacity Through Curriculum Implementation

Why Focus on High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)?

As with any other profession in a changing landscape, teaching constantly adapts practices and tools to a dynamic educational context. With the widespread adoption of state standards, educators, publishers, policymakers, and professional service providers are turning to high-quality instructional materials to ensure that students meet the new standards. HQIM is a broad umbrella that includes both the techniques of delivering instruction — pedagogy — and the content itself — curricula — aligned to state standards.¹ High-quality curricula are a relatively inexpensive and effective investment² that can play an essential role in closing the opportunity gap for low-income students, Multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and others by ensuring that all students receive the instruction they need to be career and college-ready.³

1. Kaufman, Julia H., Sy Doan, and Maria-Paz Fernandez. 2021. *The Rise of Standards-Aligned Instructional Materials for U.S. K-12 Mathematics and English Language Arts Instruction: Findings from the 2021 American Instructional Resources Survey*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

2. Boser, Ulrich, Matthew Chingos, and Chelsea Straus. 2015. *The Hidden Value of Curriculum Reform: Do States and Districts Receive the Most Bang for Their Curriculum Buck?* Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

3. EdSource. 2020. "5 Reasons Instructional Materials Matter for Equity." EdSource. Retrieved June 16, 2022 (https://www.edreports.org/resources/article/5-reasons-instructional-materials-matter-for-equity?utm_medium=organic&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=top-5dec-2021).

UnboundEd's Approach to Building Leadership Capacity Through Curriculum Implementation

The Leadership Role

Our Curriculum Implementation Services utilize proven practices to get your educators the support they need to implement such a wide-ranging change. A key barrier to implementing large-scale change initiatives like curriculum implementation the unpreparedness of leaders to guide the changes.⁴ We, therefore, start by building leadership capacity around the adopted curricula.⁵ Leaders must understand the curriculum's content as stand-alone pieces and as part of a coherent whole to support their educators in its implementation.⁶ Additionally, our multiyear leadership support builds leaders' capacity to enhance your entire staff's ability toward independently sustaining curriculum implementation over time. Our emphasis on working collaboratively with you is driven by research that shows that when professional-learning providers like ourselves partner with dedicated educational leaders like superintendents and principals to implement changes, your teams are more likely to implement research and research based practices throughout your systems.⁷

Leadership on its own cannot implement curriculum, however. Leaders must cultivate wide and deep participation among staff to to change teaching practices effectively.⁸ This is especially important because resistance to and uncertainty about changes

can inhibit effective implementation.⁹ Professional development that engages many teachers versus servicing a single teacher is important for encouraging colleagues to work through how they can immediately implement and adapt the learnings to their classrooms.¹⁰ Moreover, teacher learning grows when leaders use formal opportunities and touchpoints like school leadership teams and/or professional learning teams to continue understanding where their team is in the implementation process and how leaders can support them to move to the next stage.¹¹ Ongoing formal opportunities that each last longer than a short workshop and continue over semesters and school years promote teachers' self-reported learning¹² and better fidelity to the program.¹³ That is why we focus on you supporting groups of teachers to implement your new curricula throughout Years 2 and 3 of our program.

“ Leaders must cultivate wide and deep participation among staff to effectively change teaching practices. ”

4. National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. 2020. High-Quality Curriculum Implementation: Connecting What to Teach with How to Teach It. Santa Monica, CA: Author.
5. Reeves, Doug. 2006. The Learning Leader: How to Focus School Improvement for Better Results. ASCD.; Hirsh, Stephanie. 2009. 4 Cornerstones of Professional Learning: Fundamental Principles Pave the Way for Educators' Actions. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.; NIET 2020.
6. Supovitz, Jonathan, Ryan Fink, and Bobbi Newman. 2016. "From the Inside In: Common Core Knowledge and Communication Within Schools." AERA Open 2(3): 1-18.; NIET 2020.
7. Honig, Meredith I., Nitya Venkateswaran, and Patricia McNeil. 2017. "Research Use as Learning: The Case of Fundamental Change in School District Central Offices." American Educational Research Journal 54(5): 938-971.
8. Reeves, Douglas B. 2012. "Envision a Better Future." American School Board Journal May: 42-43.
9. Coburn, Cynthia E. 2004. "Beyond Decoupling: Rethinking the Relationship between the Institutional Environment and the Classroom." Sociology of Education 77(3): 211-244.
10. Garet, Michael S., Andrew C. Porter, Laura Desimone, Beatrice F. Birman, and Kwang Suk Yoon. 2001. "What Makes Professional Development Effective? Results from a National Sample of Teachers." American Educational Research Journal 38(4): 915-945; Penuel, William R., Barry J. Fishman, Ryoko Yamaguchi, and Lawrence P. Gallagher. 2007. "What Makes Professional Development Effective? Strategies That Foster Curriculum Implementation." American Educational Research Journal 44(4): 921-958; Desimone, Laura M. 2011. "A Primer of Effective Professional Development." Phi Delta Kappan 92(6): 68-71.
11. NIET 2020.; Learning Forward. 2018. High-Quality Curricula and Team-Based Professional Learning: A Perfect Partnership for Equity. Oxford,
12. Garet et al. 2001.
13. Penuel et al. 2007.

UnboundEd's Approach to Building Leadership Capacity Through Curriculum Implementation

We not only help educators set up systems to support continued internal learning around HQIM implementation, but we also focus on ensuring all members of your team understand your new curriculum's resources and how to leverage them effectively and impactfully. Publishers cannot anticipate all the challenges educators face when implementing their curricula,¹⁴ so we work to understand your teams' unique situations to help troubleshoot any issues that may arise. Research shows that professional learning focused on content is especially associated with increased teacher learning.¹⁵ Moreover, we work to make sure each

member of your team aligns their instruction to your educational program's core grade-level content and in continuity with each other's work throughout the system,¹⁶ as research shows that coherence between professional development opportunities, teaching practice, and the overall curriculum is critical for effective professional learning to occur.¹⁷ We also understand — and research shows¹⁸ — that curriculum implementation is not a one-size-fits-all process. We make sure to understand your unique context and mold our offerings to match them to make sure your team gets the most out of our services.

The Importance of Collective Efficacy in Curriculum Implementation

Ultimately, we aim to strengthen teachers' collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is characterized by organizational members' beliefs that their colleagues can take some series of actions to accomplish goal(s) together.¹⁹ In education, this looks like teachers who believe they can take steps together to improve student achievement.²⁰ Collective teacher efficacy challenges deficit-oriented thinking — the belief that learning issues are a product of student problems²¹ — that can forestall curriculum implementation with an empowered view of educators who can better their practice to work towards common goals that increase their students' learning. Case studies illustrate how instructional leaders such as principals can prepare teacher-leaders to draw on their experiences



14. NIET 2020.

15. Garet et al. 2001; Penuel et al. 2007.

16. TNTP. 2022. *Instructional Coherence: A Key to High-Quality Learning Acceleration for All Students*. New York.

17. Desimone 2011; Garet et al. 2001; Penuel et al. 2007.

18. Kennedy, Mary M. 2016. "How Does Professional Development Improve Teaching?" *Review of Educational Research* 86 (4): 945–980.; NIET 2020.

19. Bandura, Albert. 1997. *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

20. Goddard, Roger D., Wayne K. Hoy, and Anita Woolfolk Hoy. 2000. "Collective Teacher Efficacy: Its Meaning, Measure, and Impact on Student Achievement." *American Educational Research Journal* 37(2): 479–507; Goddard, Roger D., Wayne K. Hoy, and Anita Hoy Woolfolk. 2004. "Collective Efficacy Beliefs: Theoretical Developments, Empirical Evidence, and Future Directions." *Educational Researcher* 33(3): 3–13.

21. Pak, Katie, Polikoff, Morgan S., Desimone, Laura M., and Garcia, Erica Saldivar. 2020. "The Adaptive Challenges of Curriculum Implementation: Insights for Educational Leaders Driving Standards-Based Reform." *AERA Open* 6(2): 1–15.

UnboundEd's Approach to Building Leadership Capacity Through Curriculum Implementation

evaluating data and making changes to their practice to influence their colleagues to take similar steps, and improve each others' beliefs in their colleagues' capacities to teach their students.²² By shifting focus from deficit thinking about what educators and their students lack toward what educators can accomplish together to support their students, teachers raise their shared expectations for collaboration, set higher goals for their teaching, and attend to actionable strategies and actions to improve student learning.²³ Most importantly, research consistently finds that

teachers' shared beliefs are more significantly associated with better student outcomes than the students' socioeconomic status.²⁴ In sum, when teachers are supported by leaders to understand their curricula's details and connections and create frequent opportunities to help each other overcome challenges in delivering new standards-aligned instruction, their confidence in their collective abilities to impact student achievement increases. Teachers can then have the kinds of impacts they believe they can make.

Implementing a new curriculum, especially one that includes HQIM, is not easy. Our curriculum implementation services support your leaders in developing continuous improvement systems and practices alongside regular professional learning. Focusing on cultivating your team's content expertise will strengthen their collective beliefs in each other's power to serve their students effectively. When teachers focus on those shared beliefs through access to and understanding of the same HQIM, they can better meet the needs of every student.

22. Brinson, Dana and Steiner, Lucy. 2007. *Building Collective Efficacy: How Leaders Inspire Teachers to Achieve*. Washington, DC: The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement.

23. Donohoo, Jenni, Hattie, John, and Eells, Rachel. 2018. "The Power of Collective Efficacy." *Educational Leadership*: 41–44; Donohoo, Jenni and Steven T. Katz. 2019. *Quality Implementation: Leveraging Collective Efficacy to Make "What Works" Actually Work*. Dallas, TX: Corwin. 24. Bandura, Albert. 1993. "Perceived Self-Efficacy in Cognitive Development and Functioning." *Educational Psychologist* 28(2): 117–148; Eells, Rachel Jean. 2011. *Meta-Analysis of the Relationship Between Collective Teacher Efficacy and Student Achievement*. Dissertation; Goddard, Roger D., Wayne K. Hoy, and Anita Woolfolk Hoy. 2000. "Collective Teacher Efficacy: Its Meaning, Measure, and Impact on Student Achievement." *American Educational Research Journal* 37(2): 479–507; Tschannen-Moran, Megan and M. Barr. 2004. "Fostering Student Learning: The Relationship of Collective Teacher Efficacy and Student Achievement." *Leadership and Policy in Schools* 3(3): 189–209.

24. Bandura, Albert. 1993. "Perceived Self-Efficacy in Cognitive Development and Functioning." *Educational Psychologist* 28(2): 117–148; Eells, Rachel Jean. 2011. *Meta-Analysis of the Relationship Between Collective Teacher Efficacy and Student Achievement*. Dissertation; Goddard, Roger D., Wayne K. Hoy, and Anita Woolfolk Hoy. 2000. "Collective Teacher Efficacy: Its Meaning, Measure, and Impact on Student Achievement." *American Educational Research Journal* 37(2): 479–507; Tschannen-Moran, Megan and M. Barr. 2004. "Fostering Student Learning: The Relationship of Collective Teacher Efficacy and Student Achievement." *Leadership and Policy in Schools* 3(3): 189–209.