BACKGROUND

The Canyon Independent School District (Canyon ISD) serves two communities: Canyon and Amarillo, Texas. Within the 732-square-mile district, there are 15 campuses with a total population of approximately 11,000 students. The community is well known for its commitment to children and education. Many new families move into the area because of the reputation of the schools and the quality of life it offers.

Chris Norton has worked for the Canyon ISD for 19 years. In his current role as director of innovation and instruction, he is part of the Curriculum and Professional Development (PD) department. Their goal is to ensure that all students receive a quality education through the implementation of a well-balanced curriculum and effective teaching strategies.

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

CUSTOMIZING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“It’s hard for teachers to sometimes tailor their professional development to meet their goals,” said Norton. He added that what teachers learn needs to directly impact how they plan lessons moving forward.

To assist with this effort, Norton’s department began to seek digital resources that could align with the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). This system focuses on “providing continuous, timely and formative feedback to educators so they can improve their practice.” The Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc., and Impress collections that are available through the Gale eBooks: Professional Learning platform met Canyon ISD’s requirements.

Gale also partners with other top publishers, such as ASCD, Corwin Press, Times 10 Publications, and Stenhouse Publishers—allowing users access to thousands of digital titles.

“The PD collection has given our teachers another option to choose eBooks that benefit them professionally and give them ideas to directly impact instruction,” said Norton.
“All feedback about the book studies has been positive. Teachers that have participated have enjoyed the format, the flexibility, and the freedom to choose between planned book studies or the option to choose their own book from our library.”

Chris Norton
Director of Innovation and Instruction
Canyon Independent School District
Canyon, TX

BRIDGING THE GAP
TYING eBooks DIRECTLY INTO GOALS

“Thanks to the T-TESS alignments set up by Gale, our principals are able to search for books or sections of books that align to the domains and specific dimensions of T-TESS,” said Norton. “Teachers and principals can use this feature to search for books to read and tie them directly into their T-TESS goals that they set for the year.”

According to Norton, the addition of Gale eBooks: Professional Learning was also a game changer when it came to their summer PD book studies. “We built Google Classrooms for our staff, and each curriculum director chose a different book to lead during the summer,” said Norton. “We were able to place links to the digital books directly into the Google Classrooms.”

Not only did they have the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues, but Norton added that the teachers were able to reflect on what they read and talk about implications for change in their classrooms—whether that’s via in-person or remote instruction.

THE RESULT
CREATING A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

“I love when teachers learn so much and feel the change it makes in their own instruction and that they want the same change for all of their fellow teachers,” said Norton. “The Gale eBooks: Professional Learning collection is a great tool to hand principals to give teachers individualized professional development. It brings a whole new meaning to differentiated instruction for our staff and truly allows teachers to have access to an amazing digital professional development library at their fingertips.”

The bottom line: Teachers don’t have to spend time searching for titles that meet teacher evaluation models, such as the T-TESS, Danielson Framework for Teaching, or Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model. Gale has done the work for them! Gale’s Professional Learning Framework Alignments eliminate the time-consuming process of manually aligning PD resources with teacher evaluation guides. In addition to saving time and being cost-effective, these resources give educators a voice and choice to pick evaluative content aligned to the dimension in need of critical focus.