

Session Transcript: 28-05-2020 University of Penn - C-SAIL 20/20 Breakout #4

SPEAKER:

Welcome everyone, thank you for joining us in this breakout session, Professional Learning and the FAST Experience. We are going to get started momentarily. Thank you.

SPEAKER:

Welcome everyone to today's presentation on professional learning in the FAST Experience. I would like to turn things over to Mike Garret to begin. Mike?

SPEAKER:

Hi. I am Mike Garret, VP at EIR and I would like to welcome you to our webinar. Looking forward to a really exciting conversation. As Folkes said in the plenary session, time is a precious resource and it is definitely a precious resource during our 35 minutes here, what is the time very efficiently in the discussion. I will now turn to Tony Smith principal researcher at AIR, Tony and I co-lead the fast study we co-moderate the session.

SPEAKER:

Thanks Mike, we can go ahead and move the slides. Great. I'm going to quickly go over a couple logistics before we get started. You all had your microphones muted right now and will be throughout the session if you do have questions, there is a questions box in your GoToMeeting panel where you can type your questions and then I will keep monitoring those questions post the questions of the session. Also as with the case for the opening session with the Closed Captioning, that you can find at the link there and the link is also in the chat box. With that, let's go ahead and get started and I will turn it over to Mike.

SPEAKER:

Thank you. Now I would like to learn a bit more about who is attending. To do that we will launch a poll, if the poll could be put up, I would like each of you who is participating to click on your role that will give you a few seconds to respond.

I will give you just a few more seconds to click. Okay, thank you, we will now close the poll. And I would like to share the results. This is very exciting, we've quite a distribution, teachers, coaches, district and school administrators, providers, and researchers. I am really looking forward to having an excellent conversation which we get all these perspectives. Now, I would like to turn to the next, next slide. I will introduce our panelists. First, Robert Berreta who is the principal of elementary school in Philadelphia and why don't the panelists, why don't you turn on your cameras and I'm going to turn off my camera. Robert Berreta, a major school in Philadelphia which is a school that participated in the study, Kelli Koch and-- in Pickerington Ohio which is one of our partner states, Louisa Marine who is an and structural coach focusing on math.

Louise is in charge for online learning at a community college. Who is distinguished Prof. of teacher education and Dir. of the School of education at the University of Delaware, Jennifer Quinn who was an instructional coach in the fast program focusing on English language arts and she is a former teacher. And Sarah Wilson who is an associate Prof. in the Department of Education leadership at the School of education at the University of Connecticut. Let's get started with a question for panelists. I'm going to oppose the first question to Robert and Louisa. The fast program focused on improving teacher's understanding of their state standards and aligning their instructions with standards. In particular, what do you think what challenges do you think teachers face in aligning there and structures with standards? What knowledge skills or resources do you think teachers need in order to overcome these challenges?

SPEAKER:

I am happy to jump in here. First, thanks for having me here. I think teachers face tons of challenges in trying to align instruction to the standards. They have the hardest job in the world. I think with one of the challenges and certainly principles and the central office folks not providing teachers with the right resources. There are certainly a lot of bad curriculum out there with really amazing marketing but I honestly think that the biggest obstacle is the standards themselves. They are incredibly vague in my opinion and we've been plummeting them for 10 years, and I think I have spent 10 years unpacking, unwrapping, and breaking down standards, I think I have unpacked enough standards to fill a warehouse with suitcases.

It reminds me of sort of the technical challenge on the great British baking show if you ever watch the great British baking show, they've the technical challenge where they give their bakers is very sort of vague recipe and they are like here, make this recipe and the bakers are like we don't really know what it is and they are like that is part of the challenge. A couple of the bakers produce this great quality pastry but you get a lot of sort of inedible baked goods as a result. I think unfortunately we set teachers up to produce a lot of inedible baked goods unfortunately.

SPEAKER:

To build on that, I think with elementary school teachers, they are required to teach multiple subjects. I only taught math and I taught different grade levels but that gave me the opportunity to learn more about my standards, do more with them year after year were elementary school teachers were saying teach math, teach science, teach reading, teach language arts and all of the subjects and master all of these. On top of the fact there is so much packed into one standard, they have to learn and master breakdown multiple different subject areas of standards as well. I think that is part of the problem and math specifically, one standard can cover 4 or 5 different solution strategies or different topics and trying to wrap that all into one, is easy for teachers to miss pieces or not understand what exactly this piece means, as Robert said before because they are written in a way they are supposed to be vague but they are trying to be specific and it is open to interpretation so everyone interprets a differently.

SPEAKER:

Are there other panelists who would like to talk about pastries or multiple subjects

SPEAKER:

I would like to echo the sentiments of so many people today, time is just so precious to teachers, I found as a teacher just incredibly willing to do that hard work to unpack standards to dig into them and the time to do that is certainly something to consider.

SPEAKER:

Tony, are there questions from the attendees, I want to encourage attendees to pose questions or comments for our discussion in the chat box.

SPEAKER:

We don't have any questions but folks, please go ahead and send them along.

SPEAKER:

I am wondering if panelists, if you have seen good examples of well aligned instruction and if so, what made that possible?

SPEAKER:

I will jump in on this one. I think one thing to sort of Louise's point teachers having especially elementary teachers having to teach a boatload of standards. One of the things that has really been helpful where I work is starting 2nd grade we help teachers become subject specific so they can over years develop expertise in a small instead of a small set of standards. I think I was crunching some numbers earlier and there was like 50 standards in ELA alone, given the core standards and each one of those needs be broken down to many other different sort of recipes that you would then bake in order to continue my pastry analogy here, that has been really helpful because overtime each becomes experts in knowing those standards really well, I think everything I have seen helps teachers a lot is when they can see exemplars, I'm going to double down on the great British baking show and say at the start of each of the segments, they show the viewers this is the pastry that everybody is going to try and make your today, with the little cartoon drawings and they show you how it can be made, you already have this exemplar pastry in mind. Then the bakers can bake towards that and I think when there are really great exemplars of the standards and where we expect students to go that has been really beneficial for teachers because now they have this vision in mind and they create the path.

SPEAKER:

Going back to time, I think teachers can be more successful or almost create more time if they have the opportunity to form a learning community. Some of the schools that I worked in or that I worked with, they had a group of 4th grade Mac teachers and spend time together planning things. They all have common lesson plans and tests and were able to spend more time cleaning out the activities and unpacking the standards and really looking at the alignment verses where there is one fourth-grade teacher in the school by herself and she saw another fourth-grade teacher a year ago and in the fall, just meeting them. I think allowing opportunities for teacher collaboration across grade levels

especially in grade levels is really important and really gives teachers the opportunities to better the alignment.

SPEAKER:

Yes.

SPEAKER:

I just want to do a quick add to Roberts point, hoping to do that alignment and that collaboration time is met to standards and sort of highlight within the building or even models of exemplary practices.

SPEAKER:

That is a great point, just to build a little bit on that, I really do appreciate the perspective, in my previous slide, I was in elementary school teacher as well. I would say, completely agree with some of the challenges that are identified in terms of time but also really having to deal with multiple subjects, for example, that makes it even more complicated. I would kind of flip that a little bit around and say it presents a nice opportunity for teachers thinking about ways in which they can attack the standards from multiple angles. I do a lot of work with computer science and computing and GSS and one of the standards has to do with computer thinking which comes from both math and science.

Just building those cross curricular connections I think, that it's taking elementary school teachers. The other thing I would like to add is it is important to have the alignment of the grade level but also important to have that vertical type of alignment, just making sure that teachers continue to build, it has been covered and what comes next and what kind of terminology students bring in. So thank you.

SPEAKER:

Speaking of what comes next. I would like to thank you for this excellent foundation for our discussion and move to Tony who is going to talk a bit about the approach to alignment that we are using in the FAST study and that we will discuss how it fits with the views you just laid out. I will turn over to Tony and if the panelists could all turn off your Webcam temporarily while Tony is speaking and then it will come back on. In the next slide.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Mike. I do want to note that we did get a question during the time which is exciting. We will make sure to return to that after in the next section. To give you a preview was a question about tiered support for teachers. I understand the question correctly, it was about we used to your support at times for students who are just learning in general and what do we think about that use for teachers. Let me think on that as I go through this next little bit. What I am going to share is a little bit more detail on those tools to support reflection that we use in the instructional coaching as part of the fast program. That I did in the opening session, those were the instructional logs and the recordings of teachers lessons. Just as a reminder again these are described in more detail in her hand out, I have a picture there within the handout and ahead note is also in your go to webinar

Control Panel.

I will go ahead and start with the log, next slide. For study and for the fast program, there housed within the online portal we developed as part of a study in each teacher had their own account to that portal. When they went into complete they were asked to report on the instruction that they gave were implemented over a time period, usually a month or reveal a bit longer than a month and when they went into the log, looked very much like that survey and extra curriculum I described in the opening session, a list of topics whichever they were focused on and they were asked to give the level of emphasis they gave to those topics at various levels of cognitive demand over the course of the long period. Then when they were finished with all of that, they got a report in their account that showed the alignment of their instruction to their state standards that report looks like what is on the next slide.

We call it a colourmap, that is a picture that is also in your hand out, if you want to follow along you can look in your hand out there is a lot going on here, let me sort of explain it. At a high level, what you are seeing here is a picture of a teacher's reported instruction on the left and a picture of the standards on the right. Now as we dig in closer and look at what is really going on, you see in the middle column something called topic categories, we see some math categories listed there in that column. Incidentally, if you click on those categories, you get an identical map or you get another map where the categories aren't the middle column but the topics are for now we will stay at the category level.

Then if you look at both sides of that column, the little column we see the cognitive demands for math going across. Within each of the cells, you see a number, those numbers or percentages if we start by looking at the leftmost upper cell under instruction, the 4.18, that represents, what that is saying is that the teacher reported focusing ultimately 5% of her instruction in the number and concepts category at the recall perform procedures level. Then if we look on the other side at the same location, you see if your .2 what that saying is true .2% of the content and the standards focuses on number concepts at the recall performance level. The colour of the cell represents how much emphasis the teacher placed on it or the standards have on it. The darker the cell means more emphasis. So stepping back out the teachers were looking to do was to try and make their instruction picture on the left look like the right in terms of the pattern and colours.

If we look at this one right now, they don't look identical, and set for example, if you look at operations you see colours on the right but not on the left. What's going on here is the teacher has not yet covered operations. So over time, that might, that will fill in, and will probably cover operations during the year and if she did fill in more logs, the logs continue to fuel over time and the left-hand side keeps updating as teachers complete more logs. The right side stays static.

Then what happens in the individual coaching sessions, is that the coach talks to the teacher about where we see things matching up or where we see gaps and then talks a little bit about why those gaps might be there is because we have not yet covered those in instruction or because you did cover up you sort of missed a piece and we will figure out a way to go back and cover it. That is one

part of what happens in the coaching sessions in one tool they use. If we go to the next slide, you will see a little bit of information on the video and also part of those coaching sessions. For this activity, teachers record a lesson in their classroom and the video gets uploaded to their account in the same online portal. They also provide a little bit of information about the lesson, the standard they are focused on and they also complete one of those logs. The coach then is the same coach that works for the teacher throughout the year and the coach has access to the teachers account, you go in and watch the video, you see the information the teacher provided, and then identify a couple short video clips from the teachers video that they can use to talk about strengths and areas for growth and improving the alignment with the state standards.

We usually pick about 2 or maybe 3 clips about 2 or 3 maybe 4 minutes apiece. So then during the coaching session in addition to discussing the map, coaching the teacher watch the video clip and then discuss it together. The end of the coaching session they put all the pieces together and discuss the next steps for the upcoming instruction. That gives you a little bit more of a sense what those tools look like and how those coaching sessions move forward in the FAST program.

I'm gonna go ahead, I think we thought about a 2nd pull but maybe we should go ahead and keep going the conversation with the panelist. I'm going to turn it back over to Mike, who will talk about some of these tools with the panelist and then just a reminder we do have a question here that everybody has been thinking about that we want to get back to.

SPEAKER:

Thank you for that excellent discussion and how the FAST intervention work. Now I asked the panelist turn the cameras back on, and I ask Jennifer to talk a little bit about tools that you have used or being discussed and the tools in particular do you think tools of this kind would be helpful in supporting alignment?

SPEAKER:

Sure, yes. I would say definitely, the tools, the instructional log and the opportunity for teachers to get the type of feedback. I think it is very important for them to be able to kind of tell where they stand. Most definitely, I believe they could be very useful. There is also, a body of literature that makes it clear that coaching more broadly kind of can also be very effective in supporting reflection.

On practice, there is a bit of help for teachers to assess their practice for support of the virtual coach. I would say that is also even more so beneficial for novice teachers as they begin to make changes in their practice and using it as a tool to help conversations with that with a coach. One area where in my need additional work is a selection of clips. If I understand correctly in the FAST the coach selects a video clip then the conversation with the teacher.

There is some work that indicates... It actually could serve like support and help teachers show what segments they want to use on and it is also based on their ability to select excerpts from their practice in their age of understanding of the materials. Perhaps one area that might merit more study is the teachers click where they want to discuss and how their selections might fall over time. I'm

going to start here and elect Jennifer.

SPEAKER:

Thank you. Thank you, I had the same idea, I think that both of these tools in my experience using them, both video and the instructional logs really were useful in that they promoted reflective conversations and they promoted teacher reflections. What I found was that like you said, teachers would watch the video and we were selecting clips for this study but a lot of times teachers had their own idea just from watching their own videos and teachers were very reflective on their own. I think with the video, like you said, it helps everybody be in a shared place. To discuss the implementation of the plans and the classroom not just the intention but the implementation of them and then it keeps everybody really focused.

Keep a focus on alignment and alignment to instruction, to the standards. But I think that is interesting that teachers would be able to select clips and keep it focused alignment. To the standards. The instructional logs, I want to add, were also really helpful and having discussion, not just about not just about the topic content of the standards but helping teachers to really think about and pay attention to the cognitive demands that the standards require. As we were digging into one particular standard at a time, that log was really helpful as a visual and also just getting everybody thinking, we are time but characters at what level of cognitive demand is the standard calling for that and paying attention to that in instruction really helped with reflection.

SPEAKER:

I want to jump in for a 2nd and return to the question that Amy Carol in the audience asked. Wait, the question, maybe it isn't Amy Carol. What I think the question here is about different teachers may have different needs and how do we address teachers were at a different level of alignment and the tools we are talking about, do they do that or assume every teacher is in the same place, and I will open that up to the panel, what do you think?

SPEAKER:

I have been considering that question with that very discussion and I have a different perspective because I was not part of the FAST program for some I am an instructional coach in Ohio and listening to those tools I would love to get my hands on them. We really pushed teachers forward. We try to do a lot of videoing but the tool I have with the chart and trying with data would be amazing. I also thought about tearing, I'm lucky to have this one building, many coaches are torn between a district. The coach and the principal can't be seen as the only leaders in the building and we have to invest in our teachers and realize their expertise in other ways. Maybe more intense training comes from the coach, invest another teacher leaders also and provide that tiered level of support.

SPEAKER:

Tony and I have talked about this a fair amount. Within FAST, any touring was implicit, the coach with the teacher individually on-the-fly thought about what was appropriate. It wasn't built in explicitly as it would be for tiered instructions for students in the classroom. I'm wondering if any of you have

ideas about more explicit identifying teachers, maybe a teacher has never seen the pie, as Robert said. The teacher needs to see the pie, another one like me, I see the pie but I can't make it. That is different.

SPEAKER:

In certain systems that I study where I study, they are coaching approaches, principals have explicitly sort of met with coaches to help identify sort of focal sets of teachers to work with at the different points in the year. That is one sort of a system of routine that could then enable the coaches to focus more on certain teachers than others. At the same time, sometimes I can contribute to a certain tension where educators will feel I am in trouble if I'm the one being coached, it takes skillful work I would argue but the principal and the district leaders to set up, this is how coaching is going to benefit everyone and how folks can get different tiers of support at different rates.

SPEAKER:

I also did think that the instructional logs in a way, were used to differentiate, the type of coaching that teachers received. In a way, it was embedded in the log. If the coaches seen those sort of aspects or practice of standards don't show up, and they use that as a cue to focus a discussion on that. Your point as to kind of see the pie might be helpful is that cognitive demand, may be that is a point where Tony can speak a little bit more about it, but whether teachers understand what is cognitive passed in math in LA and the variations of it, so to speak.

SPEAKER:

Yes. Let me transition to one final set of questions here which I think link as we were talking about. As Tony described in the plenary session, the preliminary results we had to indicate that the fast intervention had a pretty large effect on teachers alignment in math, somewhat smaller affect but still noticeable but not significant effect and at least in the first year, no impact of achievement, we haven't analyzed the 2nd year achievements yet because it took a long time to get these achievement scores.

Why did things come out this way? And what did it take to get an impact on achievement which is of course the whole point. I would like to ask Kelly to respond first and then Sarah and that we will open it up.

SPEAKER:

I was considering this and looking back in the work on effective PD and I was looking at the FAST program and reflecting on that. I could check off each box. She went through exactly what she was talking about through professional development. One thing I noticed, one of the last sustained variation over time, I think continuing with the teachers and developing the more would make an effect and another issue was, teachers struggled with having so many initiatives and I find in our school district as well, there are so many things that they are having to learn a new every year and I always hear can we just have one thing new this year? I could see that having an effect, possibly 2, they couldn't just focus on what they needed to do. And I also was wondering, I wasn't part of the

study, but student involvement with the standards, getting them involved and invested in what they know, we have done a lot of work with strategies and tried to focus on teacher clarity. Starts with the better understanding of the standards but that we have to get the kids to know what are they learning and why are they learning it, kind of building up student investment, I think would also have an impact on their achievement. And that's from my outside looking in, that's part of what I was considering for the next question.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, Sarah?

SPEAKER:

I'm going to continue with the time theme and continuing with the baking theme, we sometimes have bakers who run out of time. On the baking show. On a more serious point, the time factor, and correct if any of this is sort of incorrect, the data was collected on fourth-graders and the intervention was focused on fourth-grade teachers and it is something that I tend to think about is if that is the case, what was happening 3 years prior? The intervention did not sort of progress, it was the nature of ELA and math instruction and sort of foundational early literacy skills, and reading instruction.

I sort of have to wonder-- if we want to move the needle to the 5th grade, the really important thing that's going to need to happen with kindergarten and first grade to sort of see games down the road and again, I think this fits into the extended duration and need for professional learning and also for this consistent goal and focus for the whole school, so the whole school is focused on this unlined instruction and demanding sorts of pedagogy that doesn't just begin at 4th grade. I'm not trying to just a study but input that begins much earlier and we see those results by the 4th and 5th grade.

SPEAKER:

Other panelists, would you like to weigh in on time or the pie or the grade levels? Or other things?

SPEAKER:

I share a little bit about the vertical alignment peace, having been a middle school teacher, we can trace back to where certain topics might have fallen off work standards have changed, now we have to cover in addition to in the coaching a lot of the 4th grade teachers, they could tell you the same thing, 2 years ago we switched from this curriculum to this curriculum so we don't really know what happened and we hear this teacher never taught math so now we have to make sure we teach it at the 2nd and 3rd grade level so we can get it to the 4th grade level so they can be ready. There is a lot of alignment that needs to be done and it's not always a friendly conversation because teachers are so used to being attacked for lack of a better word for not covering what they are supposed to or teaching what they are supposed to so it's hard to have those conversations but they are necessary.

SPEAKER:

Louise said that also it feels like this COVID closure and return to school is going to bring up a whole host of issues related to coverage, I really appreciate how you laid out these different ways in these different kind of permutations of the conversation about coverage and challenges with that.

SPEAKER:

One other thing I would like to make is this idea of dosage that was brought up again in the opening panel. I think that is important, it goes to Kelly's point that the professional development did include all the right elements or the right ingredients, cooking-- but I think how much of it you get, it did seem that perhaps the dosage was a little bit on the low side. And I think that comes back to this idea of Kelly spoke about student body and the standards but I think that it's also very important and addressing those ideas of our beliefs. I have seen that in my own work as well, they have the standards but they don't feel that they are covered with their students or the contents or that they work in, it is not confusing to make accommodation of certain standards and they are less likely to be invested in them.

I think those 2 elements could also be considered as to why we are seeing them. The outcomes that we are seeing for standardized assessments.

SPEAKER:

As Tony had explained, intended were 5 cycles per year but actually for teachers who participated, there were only about 5 cycles total, not 5 per year, about half. Part of it was it was difficult to find the time, even for teachers who would buy in which gets that how you structure but speaking of finding time, I want to turn things to Tony to see if there are more questions from our attendees?

SPEAKER:

There was what I thought was can be a question than Sarah, you ended up answering it.

SPEAKER:

I hope the audience will send Tony some questions. I have a couple more related to what we just have been talking about. One is the student perspective, one potential critique I think one could have of the fast intervention is focused on teacher's knowledge and teacher moves but it didn't look explicitly at the students work except indirectly as it is reflected in the videos. This is something that you had raised just now in the conversation. I wondered, how could one bring the student into the, the student we care about, not that we don't care about the teachers but ultimately, students, I am wondering if you have ideas about how to bring the students into the PD, more?

SPEAKER:

Maybe instructional products might be a proxy to bringing the students in, for example, I was a coach and the teacher reviewed the video clips the teachers are asked to bring some of the student materials with them, I think might actually forgo the discussion more explicitly, student outcomes.

That is just something to consider. I would say that especially during the reflection, we do know that reflection is hard for teachers, and often times if it is not scaffolded in specific ways, tends to be a lot more descriptive and less analytical. I think the use of student products-- and analytical understanding of how their work might represent standards.

SPEAKER:

And to piggyback on that, I know we gave instruction around her building and a lot of times we go into the rooms we are looking at what the students are doing and all of our notes are on what the students are doing, not even were looking at what the teachers are doing to make it less also but I am wondering if that could be part of it to as you are watching a video, simply watching the video of the students and their reaction and what they are doing and the work they are producing. It might be another way to look at it.

SPEAKER:

This instruction was very short on the teacher part and we observed a lot of student work and student interaction and it was really helpful because you could see the students that were missing a piece and so you could work with the teacher on how to get those students where they needed to be, you could see the students that were aware they should be or above and you can kind of encourage the teacher to employ them as a student leader in the classroom especially since they do a lot of work. It also helped show where the holes were, where the teacher might have been missing a piece, it came up a lot in division because we were all taught long division, and it might be hard to wrap your head around we had teachers, the students can get it, they can do long division and then we would look at the work that the students had done, the algorithm was the only part of the standards that had been addressed. We were able to back up and teach the teacher partial quotients and these other strategies, we saw the next time and the students were able to pick it up.

And what we met again they were like they understand it now. Those pieces are extremely important and helpful.

SPEAKER:

I just want to see if there are any questions that have emerged from the audience?

SPEAKER:

I think there are a few coming in.

SPEAKER:

I will give Jennifer the chance, go ahead and jump in.

SPEAKER:

Often the clips we would choose and talk about with teachers or centered around what the students were actually doing. I think that really help the teachers as well because when you are in the moment teaching, you might see things totally differently than when you go back and watch the same group where you were there just listening to the students hold the discussion or talk about what they were learning. I think the teachers really benefited from seeing the student perspective in their videos as well.

SPEAKER:

One of the comments, I think I'm going to get this right, it's talking about this idea of student focusing

on the coaching on students in the FAST program, the coaches were remote-- and they were getting what they could see in the video. You could argue, put the video on the students, but it does bring up a bigger question about as we shift potentially into more of a virtual setting, how does coaching work in this setting, particularly if you want to pay attention to the students, the difference between a virtual coach versus an in person coach and difference between refocus a camera. I think that might be some of the question there.

SPEAKER:

I see we have reached 1:14 PM which is the time when we are supposed to turn back to the host. I really, this has been an outstanding discussion. I have many more questions and no time to ask them. I want to thank the panel and this question about how to look at student work in a remote setting, I think is really a crucial one and especially in today's environment. Thank you all, you can contact us by email if you would like to talk about FAST or these issues further. With that, I will turn things over to Tony for a few last comments.

SPEAKER:

He just popped back on. Thank you so much to our panelists and our attendees and the great questions it was a wonderful discussion, really excited to hear all the ideas about these issues. As a reminder, we will be having our closing session at 1:30 PM Eastern time and that is gonna be a conversation between Andy Porter. Please pop in for that. If you haven't already registered to get your unique link to join that, there is a URL right there on the side and as a reminder, we are recording all the sessions and they will be made available.

Thank you all for joining us and we look forward to an interesting conversation in a few minutes.

SPEAKER:

Thank you all very much, thank you Tony for making the fast intervention happen.

SPEAKER:

And all the coaches.

SPEAKER:

And all the coaches. Absolutely. Thank you everyone.

SPEAKER:

Bye-bye.