

Teachers Pay Teachers Response

12/9/19

Teachers have told us that improving lesson plans to meet individual student needs and to be more engaging is the most challenging and time-consuming work they do. That's what Paul Edelman, TpT's founder, experienced as a first-year teacher, and why he was motivated to start an online marketplace for teacher-created resources. The challenges teachers face have only grown since Paul was in the classroom. It's no wonder why more than 80% of U.S. teachers use TpT to easily access high-quality, affordable materials for their classrooms, and connect to a community of expert educators from all over the world.

TpT empowers educators to teach at their best by unlocking the collective wisdom of teachers. What makes TpT unique is the breadth and depth of our catalog. With more than four million resources, teachers can find exactly what they need to match their individual students' needs. The Fordham Institute evaluated 100 resources out of 250,000 ELA resources available for high school grades. We have no way of knowing which resources Fordham chose, but we are confident that teachers know how to select the resources their students need.

One of the many reasons teachers have come to rely on TpT is that time saved creating a resource is time that can be invested back into differentiation. In a recent [research study](#) TpT conducted, we heard how much teachers and administrations value differentiation as an instructional strategy. Ninety-five percent of principals said that differentiation would ideally happen everyday. The barriers that stand in the way are real: lack of time and lack of resources were the top two challenges we heard.

That's where TpT comes in. Our research confirmed that 98% of teachers who completed our survey* reported using TpT at least once a month to differentiate, and 67% reported using resources from TpT to differentiate instruction at least once a week. The top three differentiation approaches with TpT were doing activities and lessons at varying levels, supporting individual or small group instruction, and scaffolding lessons or activities. The fact that TpT resources --which represent the collective wisdom and expertise of so many teachers-- enable differentiation in this way is just one example of how effective they are in practice.

When we say TpT exists to unlock the collective wisdom of teachers, it means two things in practice. First, it means that we rely on the expertise of the 150,000+ teachers who create the resources on our site, and second, that we rely on the millions of teachers who use them in the classroom. Every year, we collect reviews on resources from millions of educators, now totaling 50 million reviews. This signal is critical in understanding the quality of the resources.

It's so critical that improving our ratings and reviews system has been a major company-wide priority. In January, we'll launch a new version of the review system to do exactly what the researchers suggest -- get even clearer feedback from the people who are actually using the resources in the classroom. With this information, we'll do an even better job surfacing our best

resources, and matching the right resources with the right teacher at the right time to meet students where they are.

Teachers and administrators both care about standards alignment. That's why we surface it prominently, invest in systems and technical solutions that help Teacher-Authors tag their resources appropriately, and starting in January we'll allow our users to give feedback on the accuracy of the standards tagging. Just this month, we launched a new feature and teachers can now see the Common Core State Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards and most states' standards as well.

There are specific findings in this report that contradict the research we've done over the last decade with the millions of teachers who use TpT. The resounding feedback about TpT resources is that they are engaging for students. When surveying teachers, 76% say that teacher created content is the best content for engaging their students.

Given that input we decided in July to study the effects of TpT's instructional materials on student engagement. We began our survey by asking broadly if the materials teachers had used from TpT were engaging. According to surveyed teachers**, the materials they've used from TpT have been engaging for their students (97%). Nearly all teachers agreed they can find engaging materials on TpT most of the time (98%). Teachers also reported that they can find materials at the appropriate level that will engage their students most of the time (97%).

Teachers and administrators trust TpT for a reason. It's because they find high-quality, standards aligned materials that support effective instruction. There's always room for improvement. We're never done improving what teachers find on TpT -- just the opposite. We're more committed than ever to continue to surface the best of what teachers have to offer, to make sure students have access to the education they deserve.

**Our teacher survey on differentiation (n= 601) was taken by a nationally representative sample of K-12 educators from the Teachers Pay Teachers (TpT) community. Our principal differentiation survey (n= 206) was distributed to a nationally representative sample of school principals from an MDR principal panel.*

***Our teacher survey on student engagement (n= 343) was taken by a nationally representative sample of K-12 educators from the Teachers Pay Teachers (TpT) community. Our principal student engagement survey (n= 165) was distributed to a nationally representative sample of school principals from the TpT database and an Agile principal panel.*