



Course Design and Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption Toolkit

Introduction

The importance of carefully crafted course design and the selection of effective instructional materials that are well aligned to Washington State K–12 Learning Standards cannot be overstated.

- District course designs should be regularly reviewed to ensure their ongoing alignment with state law, teaching and learning standards, and research-based best practices.
- Selection and adoption of appropriate instructional materials for all content areas must be well planned and implemented in every Washington district to assure equitable access to high-quality core instruction and, as appropriate, strategic and intensive intervention supports matched to student needs.

It is our hope that this guide serves a twofold purpose:

1. To provide a cyclical strategy for the regular review of courses based on district needs.
2. To provide state policies, guiding questions, useful resource links, and district examples, that will help define best practices for considering instructional materials both for supplemental use by individual teachers and schools and for core-instructional materials for a district.

In many cases, districts may be in the position of knowing for certain they will be adopting new core instructional materials. If that need is a given, districts may spend less time in the initial phases of the cycle or include considerations that are addressed in a later phase earlier in the process. For this specific case, the document tries to call out where those changes might occur.

Please note that core instructional materials adoption process examples for specific content areas are included in the Appendices. These documents include content-specific resources.

The contents of this guide are not all-inclusive or exhaustive in the type of considerations and resources needed to fully implement a system for regular course design. Districts differ throughout the state, and an exact process for one district may not be effective in another. **This resource can and should be adapted meet the goals of the district.**

This guide is an evolving document. Resources will be added as they come to our attention. District policies and guides with respect to course design and instructional materials selection and adoption are most appreciated.

Course Design is the process that includes identifying and sequencing essential content supporting students' skill development towards state learning standards. Course design involves providing appropriate instructional materials, professional development, and support systems for teachers as they implement the course.

Instructional Materials include all materials designed for use by students and their teachers as learning resources to help students to acquire facts, skills, and/or to develop cognitive processes. Types of instructional materials include core, alternative core, intervention, supplemental, and temporary supplemental.

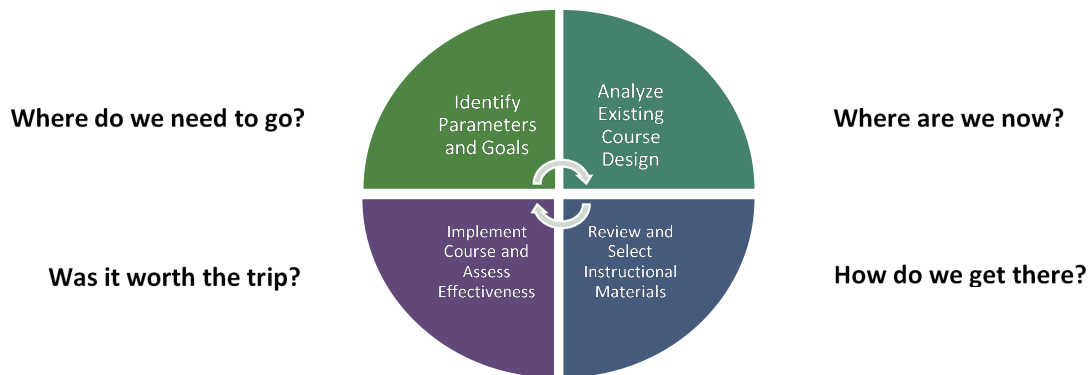
These instructional materials, used to help students meet state learning standards, may be printed or digital, and may include textbooks, technology-based materials, other educational media, and assessments. They may carry different licensing types from open to all rights reserved.



Course Design Review Cycle

Gone are the days of the seven-year review cycle. Districts are now recommended to establish a regular cycle of course design review based on student need, updated content, rapidly changing demographics, and funding.

[Washington State School Directors' Association](#) Policy and Legal News, April 2015



Phase 1: Identify Parameters

- Identify applicable state laws and federal guidelines - learning standards, graduation requirements, etc.
- Know the rules of the road – gather school board policies related to instructional materials selection and adoption and district procurement procedures.
- Define what an effective course will look like - agree upon success metrics and reporting tools.
- Understand your district capacity with regards to budget, time, staff, and technology.
- If a core instructional material s adoption is pending, much of the initial planning for the effort may be done during this phase.

Phase 2: Analyze Existing Course Design and goals

- Understand where are you currently – consider effectiveness of course design and alignment of instructional materials to state learning standards by analyzing student data, soliciting input from teachers, and leveraging existing instructional materials reviews.
- Based on the assessed needs, consider your options. Choices will fall along a spectrum that includes a minor instructional materials refresh, selecting appropriate instructional materials to fill gaps, or a complete course overhaul.
- If a core instructional material s adoption is pending, assemble the instructional materials review team and develop your communications strategy.

Phase 3: Review and Select Instructional Materials

- Know your district needs – consider student population, technology capacity, professional learning strategy, district educational priorities and goals
- Search critically
- Review with recognized rubrics for the evaluation of instructional materials
- Understand your level of permitted use

Phase 4: Implement Course and Assess Effectiveness

Repeat cycle on based on student need, changing demographics, and funding

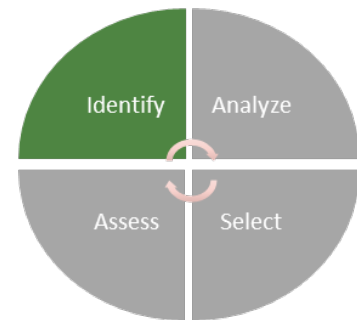


Phase 1: Identify Parameters and Gather Resources

Where do we need to go?

Effective planning and gathering the current laws and requirements are essential when considering instructional materials and supports for your district courses. Below are key elements to identify and links to resources that districts may find helpful.

If a core instructional materials adoption is pending, much of the initial planning for the effort may also be done during this phase.



Laws and Requirements

Make sure district is adhering to applicable Washington state laws and Federal guidelines:

- legal requirements for school instructional materials selection
- course graduation requirements
- federal accessibility requirements
- professional learning requirements

Legal requirements for district selection and approval of instructional materials | [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 28A.320.230](#)

Textbooks and instructional materials—Instructional materials policy—Elimination of bias | [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 392-190-055](#)

District school directors' responsibilities | [RCW 28A.150.230](#)

Regulations, guidelines to eliminate discrimination | [RCW.28A.640.020](#)

Tribal history and culture | [RCW 28A.320.170](#)

High School Civics Course - [RCW 28A.230.094](#)

Basic education - Goals of school districts | [RCW 28A.150.210](#)

Basic education - Minimum instructional requirements | [RCW 28A.150.220](#) –

Professional learning | [RCW 28A.300.600](#)

[Washington State Graduation Requirements](#) | [OSPI](#)

[Graduation in Washington Toolkit](#) | [OSPI](#)

[Multiple Pathways to Graduation](#) | [OSPI](#)

[Special Education Resource Library](#) | [OSPI](#)

Roles and Responsibilities for Course Design and Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption — [doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [OSPI](#)



Washington State K–12 Learning Standards and Guidelines

Content-specific state laws may be found on the web page for each content area.

Content areas in the Basic Education Act where standards must be taught:

- The Arts
- English Language Arts
- Health and Physical Education
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

Content areas that relate to the goal in the Basic Education Act that schools must integrate technology literacy and fluency and understand the importance of work and finance:

- Computer Science
- Educational Technology
- Financial Education

Districts must implement the related learning standards in any stand-alone educational technology, computer science, environment and sustainability education, or financial education courses.

Standards form additional content areas not named as a primary goal in Basic Education Act must be integrated to the maximum extent possible. See [RCW 28A.655.070](#)

[The Arts](#) (2017)

[Career and Technical Education Pathways](#)

[Computer Science](#) (2018)

[Early Learning and Development Guidelines \(birth through 3rd grade\)](#)

[Educational Technology](#) (2018)

[English Language Arts](#) (2011)

[English Language Proficiency](#) (2013)

[Environment and Sustainability](#) (2009)

[Financial Education](#) (2016)

[Health and Physical Education](#) (2016)

[Mathematics](#) (2011)

[Science](#) (2013)

[Social Studies](#) (2018)

[World Languages](#) (2015)

District Policies

Know the rules of the road. Gather school district policies for:

- instructional materials selection and adoption
- ownership of teacher-created content
- use of open educational resources
- district procurement/acquisition procedures

School board policy on instructional material selection and adoption

Model Policy: [Course Design, Selection, and Adoption of Instructional Materials](#) | [Washington State School Directors' Association \(WSSDA\)](#)

District policy with regard how to handle teacher-created content

Model Policy: [Course Design, Selection, and Adoption of Instructional Materials](#) | [Washington State School Directors' Association \(WSSDA\)](#)

Model Policy: Copyright and Open Licensing Policy — [pdf](#) | [OSPI](#)

District procurement procedure for core instructional materials.

Consider any guidelines/restrictions/impacts for print, digital, blended, or Open Educational Resources (OER).

OER Considerations for School Districts — [pdf](#) | [OSPI OER Project](#)



Success Indicators/Metrics

Based on district educational goals for success, define what an effective course will look like. Identify and agree upon indicators of success, monitoring tools, and reporting process.

Consider:

- professional learning
- equitable delivery of quality content to ALL students

[Washington State Testing Overview](#) | [OSPI](#)

[Social Emotional Learning, Standards, Benchmarks, and Indicators](#) | OSPI Workgroup

[Freshman Success Best Practices and Strategies](#) | [OSPI](#)

OSPI-Developed Assessments:

- [the Arts](#)
- [Social Studies/Civics](#)
- [Health and Fitness](#)
- [Education Technology](#)

District benchmarks or assessments

Teacher performance assessments and observations

[Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program](#) | [OSPI](#)

If your district is certain that new core-instructional materials will be chosen:

Begin the planning process for a formal instructional materials review and adoption process outlined in [Phase 3: Select and Adopt Core Instructional Materials](#)

This course of action SHOULD NOT happen every time you review your district course design.

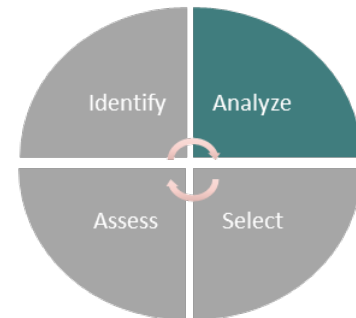


Phase 2: Analyze Existing Course Design

Where are we now?

Course designs should be evaluated, adapted and developed on a continuing basis to determine if your instructional materials across the spectrum from supplemental resources to core instructional material meet student needs.

Though not always possible, a comprehensive review of kindergarten through grade 12 course design and instructional materials is the most effective and thorough approach to curriculum improvement. An advantage to a K–12 approach is to bring coherence to district efforts for overall school improvement by encouraging vertical and horizontal alignment of standards, instruction and assessment across the system.



Course Design Committee

Assemble a team to examine the alignment to [Washington State Learning Standards](#) and effectiveness of existing course design.

A course design committee could consist of:

- district curriculum director
- teachers and data coaches
- as appropriate, external content area expert

Current Data

Look at current data to identify current course strengths and challenges

[Washington State Report Card](#) | [OSPI](#)

District level assessments

Interim assessments for Smarter Balanced

Survey Stakeholders

Solicit teacher feedback on current material alignment, effectiveness, and fidelity.

Content Area Need Survey — [pdf](#) | [Washougal School District](#)

Student Survey of Curriculum and Learning
[pdf](#) | [Mead School District](#)



Assess Instructional Material Needs

If there is agreement that there is an identifiable need for new instructional materials (based on data, committee examination, and teacher feedback), assess the gap between where the district/school is currently and where they need to be to meet state and district goals.

Document the process for analysis of existing course design and communicate the need to district stakeholders.



Minor Refresh – Supplemental Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are in good shape, aligned to standards, student performance is good, and teachers are prepared. District would like to include supplemental resources to increase engagement or to focus on specific ideas.



Fill Gaps – Supplemental Instructional Materials

Current instructional materials do not quite meet standards but with some additions they could. This may include adding resources like lessons, units, or formative and summative assessment tasks.



Complete Overhaul – Select and Adopt Core Instructional Materials

Existing instructional materials are out-of-date, not aligned with standards, and ineffective tools for students and teachers. A new option is required.



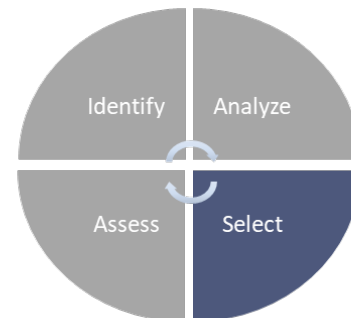
Phase 3: Select and Review Instructional Materials

How do we get there?

There's a growing body of research finding that instructional materials can have as large an impact on student outcomes as teacher quality or reduced class size (see Research Links below). Because of this, it is important to help provide guidance to state, district, and school level leaders in the selection of instructional materials that are aligned to standards, address education goals and are accessible for all students.

Today's instructional materials include resources delivered via different methods and carrying different types of licenses outlining permitted use. Remember that the criteria used to judge quality and alignment to state learning standards needs to be the same, regardless of whether the materials are print or digital, open or all rights reserved copyright.

For the purposes of this document, we'll be focusing resource suggestions towards the goal of selecting and adopting new core instructional materials; however you will find the section on [review instruments](#) useful for supplemental resource selection as well.



Research Links

[Don't Forget Curriculum, Brown Center Letters on Education](#) | Brookings Institution

[Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core](#) | Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings Institution

[The Hidden Value of Curriculum Reform](#) | Center for American Progress

[Implementation of K–12 State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy: Findings from the American Teacher Panel](#) | RAND Corporation



Definitions

Instructional Materials are all materials designed for use by students and their teachers as learning resources to help students to acquire facts, skills, and/or to develop cognitive processes. These instructional materials, used to help students meet state learning standards, may be printed or digital, and may include textbooks, technology-based materials, other educational media, and assessments. They may carry different licensing types from open to all rights reserved.

Core Instructional Materials are the primary instructional resources for a given course. They are district-approved and provided to all students to help meet learning standards and provide instruction towards course requirements.

Alternative Core Materials are the primary instructional materials for a given course that are used with a subset of students. These materials are intended to replace approved core materials and may be used for specialized course offerings or flexible learning environments.

Intervention Materials are designed to support strategic or intensive intervention for students who are at risk of not meeting established learning standards. Intervention materials are used with students to accelerate progress toward particular learning goals based on systematic assessment, decision-making, and progress monitoring.

Supplemental Materials are used in conjunction with the core instructional materials of a course. These items extend and support instruction. They include, but are not limited to, books, periodicals, visual aids, video, sound recordings, computer software and other digital content.

Temporary Supplemental Materials are those items used in conjunction with the core instructional materials of a course that are of interest or value for a short period of time and are chosen within district-established guidelines.



Select and Adopt Core Instructional Materials

Understand District Needs and Capacity

Establish district learning goals – quality criteria beyond alignment to state learning standards. Some potential areas to consider:

- Equitable delivery of quality content to ALL students. Consider your teacher and student demographics and identify any specific instructional material considerations.
- Teaching behaviors your district has defined as important and that instructional materials need to support.

Technology considerations if used to deliver content (e.g. student access to devices and internet in school and at home).

District comfort level with pulling together resources to create their own course curriculum? Availability of appropriate material available?

Determine if piloting or field testing is advisable

District capacity to provide professional learning opportunities. Consider teacher experience level and union contract's position about materials and professional development around curriculum/instructional materials.

Roles and Responsibilities for Course Design and Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption — [doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [OSPI](#)

Knowing Your Starting Point Data Inventory — [doc](#) and [form](#) | [EdReports](#) and California Curriculum Collaborative

Building an Effective Process for Evaluating Instructional Materials — [doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [Chief Council of State School Officers \(CCSSO\) ELA and Math State Collaboratives](#)

District policy regarding the selection and adoption of instructional materials.

Model Policy: [Course Design, Selection, and Adoption of Instructional Materials](#) | [Washington State School Directors' Association \(WSSDA\)](#)

[Accessibility](#) | [SETDA Guide to Quality Instructional Materials](#)

OER Considerations for School Districts [pdf](#) | [OSPI OER Project GoOpen Launch Packet](#) | [U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Technology](#)

Material Adoption Tips from Washington districts — [pdf](#)

Material Adoption Tips from OSPI — [doc](#) and [pdf](#)



Identify and Engage Stakeholders

Define roles and responsibilities of stakeholders impacted by instructional materials selection and adoption.

Craft a communications strategy that outlines goal, purpose, and timeline to key stakeholders within district, within community, within review team, and across instructional materials developers.

Template communications plan

[pdf](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)

Template timeline

[doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)

Assemble an Instructional Materials Review Committee (IMC)

Select a diverse team that can evaluate the material through different lenses.

Develop a collective understanding of the process with the team of reviewers.

Build solid understanding and calibrate around what good instructional materials look like prior to beginning review.

[Preparing a review team \(IMET\)](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)

[Establishing norms of collaboration](#) | [Thinking Collaborative™](#)

Article: [Building the Right Review Team](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)

Survey Stakeholders

Obtain feedback from teachers and students on their needs and wants in a new core instructional material.

Sample Math Instructional Material Teacher Survey

[doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [Fife School District/Student Achievement Partners](#)

Sample ELA Instructional Material Teacher Survey

[doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [Fife School District/Student Achievement Partners](#)



Determine Review Instruments

Define the instructional materials options that will meet your district need.

Determine what rubrics and review instruments will be used to make the final selection.

Establish acceptance criteria for instructional materials.

[Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool \(IMET\)](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)

Full –course review

[EQuIP Rubrics](#) | [Achieve](#)

Deeper dive into individual lessons and units - ELA, mathematics, and science

[Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies](#) | [OSPI](#)

Deeper dive into individual lessons and units – social studies

District Example: Math Materials Alignment Criteria

[xls](#) | [Spokane Public Schools](#)

Technology Review Guiding Questions — [doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [OSPI](#)

Administration Review Guiding Questions — [doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [OSPI](#)

Screening for Biased Content in Instructional Materials — [pdf](#) and [interactive form](#) | [OSPI](#)

Train the Instructional Materials Review Committee

Build an understanding the content-specific Washington State Learning Standards

Define the instructional practices that your district has identified as important and that the instructional materials need to support

Understand the IMET and/or EQuIP review process.

Full-course Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool:

IMET Training Materials [ELA](#) and [mathematics](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)

PowerPoints, Facilitators' Guides, and Participant Activities

Lesson/unit Instructional Materials Rubric:

[EQuIP Training Materials](#) | [Achieve](#)

Examine Existing Reviews from Trusted Sources

Narrow the field of instructional materials options to review to a manageable level for your district.

[Independent Reviews of Instructional Materials by Educators](#) | [EdReports](#)

[Curricular Resources and Annotated Reviews](#) | [Louisiana Department of Education](#)

[Reviewed Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Library](#) | [OSPI OER Project](#)



Obtain Materials to Review

Clarify what you want

- Be specific about materials, professional development, etc., the publishers/developers need to provide
- Determine tech specs if applicable

If appropriate, build in time to provide guidance prior to developers submitting materials (may be combination of RFP or other formal document along with webinar or other opportunity for publishers to ask questions, etc.)

Direct publisher contacts

[Openly licensed options for district adoption consideration \(ELA, mathematics, science\)](#) | [OSPI OER Project](#)

Vendor Technology Checklist

[doc](#) and [pdf](#) | [Puyallup School District](#)

Conduct Review

Establish regular meetings of review committee

Assign reviewers material review assignments and due date

Clarify reporting procedure and arbitration pathway if reviewers disagree on scores.

In addition to the review of the full core instructional material, have a team from each grade review a selected unit from each curriculum using the EQuIP review process.

Report progress with stakeholders as decided upon in communication plan

Final Recommendations and Reporting

Generate documents to communicate process.

Document reviewer results and metrics used to identify recommended curriculum.

Communicate recommendations and next steps to key stakeholders (teachers, parents, district admin, principals, IT, etc.)

Present to Instructional Materials Adoption Committee and/or school board and follow your district procurement process to obtain materials.

District procurement/acquisition procedures

[Acquisition Policies for Washington](#) | [SETDA](#)



Create an Implementation Strategy

Consider initial resource training, sustained professional learning, and resources and strategies to help families support students with their learning.

[Aligned Blog](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)
[Active Implementation Hub](#) | [National Implementation Research Network \(NIRN\)](#)



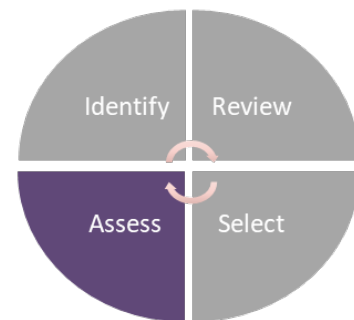
Phase 4: Implement Course and Assess Effectiveness

Was it worth the trip?

Are educator supports in place to promote successful implementation and continuing professional learning?

Were the changes you made impactful to teaching and learning in a positive way?

Do the selection instructional materials support shifts in instruction and evidence of student engagement and achievement?



Assessment

Ongoing assessment of effectiveness of curriculum.

[Washington State Report Card](#) | [OSPI](#)

OSPI-Developed Assessments:

- [the Arts](#)
- [Social Studies/Civics](#)
- [Health and Fitness](#)
- [Education Technology](#)

[Smarter Balanced Assessment System](#)

ELA and mathematics

[Mathematics Assessment Resources](#) | [OSPI](#)

[ELA Assessment Resources](#) | [OSPI](#)

[Science Assessment Resources](#) | [OSPI](#)

Ongoing Implementation

Refine your implementation strategy that includes initial resource training, sustained professional learning, and resources and strategies to help families support students with their learning.

Determine how you will measure the effectiveness of your professional learning strategy with the instructional materials.

[Instructional Practice Toolkit and Classroom Videos](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)
math, ELA

[Aligned Blog](#) | [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)

[Reviewing is a Journey](#) | [Granite Falls School District](#) and [Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core](#)



Appendices

A: [Mathematics Core Instructional Materials Adoption](#)

B: [English Language Arts Core Instructional Materials Adoption](#)