



# 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.

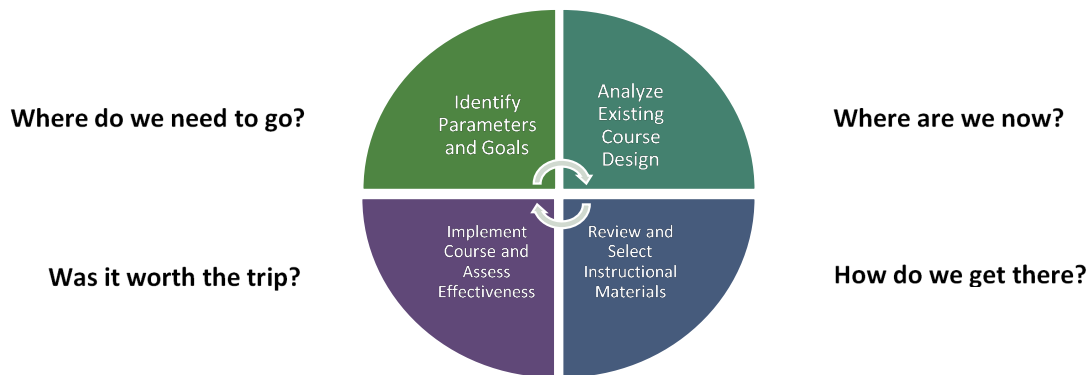
These instructional materials, used to help students meet state learning standards, may be printed or digital, and may include textbooks, technology-based materials, other educational media, and assessments. They may carry different licensing types from open to all rights reserved.



## 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