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Importance of High-Quality Instructional Materials

This document summarizes the importance of high-quality instructional materials and includes a curated library of research.



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Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Importance of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)

- Access to high-quality instructional materials are critical to excellent instruction.
- A growing and compelling research base suggests that high-quality instructional materials can yield improvements in student learning outcomes equal to or greater than many interventions that are often more costly.¹
- A high-quality [instructional material] can give educators within a school and across a school system a common foundation to organize the work they're undertaking at the classroom level and collaborate to develop together...According to Brian Pick, Chief of Teaching and Learning in DCPS, Cornerstones "are about bringing equity to the district—a shared experience creating a floor, but not a ceiling, around the teaching and learning that happens in our classrooms." ²
- Research shows that students in general gain months of learning when teachers use stronger instructional materials. Additional research shows that students in low-income schools were likely to be exposed to weaker math content and materials that were not aligned with standards. So, if students are given access to high quality instruction and materials the achievement gap should be diminished. Finally, there is ample research to show that adopting high-quality materials is not only effective, but also cost-neutral. It is no more expensive than current materials and many materials are available on-line for free!³

For more research on high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), please see the next page for the most recent edition of our curated HQIM Library

¹ Allan, S., & Leifer, R. (2017, August 23). How High-Quality Instructional Materials Can Drive Teacher Growth - K-12 Education. Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/blog/high-quality-instructional-materials-can-drive-teacher-growth/>

² Allan, S., & Leifer, R. (2017, August 23). How High-Quality Instructional Materials Can Drive Teacher Growth - K-12 Education. Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/blog/high-quality-instructional-materials-can-drive-teacher-growth/>

³ Mississippi Department of Education. (n.d.). High-Quality Instructional Materials. Retrieved November 04, 2020, from <https://www.mdek12.org/HQIM>

High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) Library

Source Link	Topic	Summary Quote
How States Can Support the Adoption & Effective Use of High-Quality Standards Aligned Instructional Materials	Impact of high quality, standards-aligned instructional materials paired with professional development anchored in the specific curriculum.	“..the choice of instructional materials has an effect on student learning — an impact that can rival that of teacher effectiveness. Coupled with professional development focused on utilizing these materials, the positive effect can prove to be even stronger.”
The Hidden Value of Curriculum Reform	Curriculum reform is a low-cost, high-return educational investment.	“As education researchers Matthew Chingos and Grover (Russ) Whitehurst argued in a 2012 paper, curriculum reform is one of the best areas for productivity gains, since instructional materials can provide relatively high increases in student achievement for relatively low costs...Yet for too long, researchers, academics, and other education reformers have simply not focused on curriculum and its associated effectiveness.”
What the Research Says about Quality Instructional Materials	Research compiled by Achieve	A high quality, aligned-to-standards curriculum coupled with professional support for educators can significantly improve student performance. This document highlights some critical research to support the claim.
Curriculum Research: What We Know and Where We Need to Go	Rigorous research confirms that curricular choices matter	“The overarching conclusions from the Johns Hopkins’ review are that curriculum is deeply important, that a teacher’s or district’s choice of curriculum can substantially impact student learning, and that—as a result—the paucity of evidence upon which sound instructional, purchasing, and policy decisions can be made is a matter of deep concern and urgent need.”
Leverage high-quality instructional materials	Teachers deserve both high-quality instructional materials and the learning team structures to support implementation.	<p>“A 2012 report from the Brookings Institution compared selected interventions, including placement of math or reading Teach for America educators, placement of more effective math or reading teachers with students, or providing a better curriculum. The curriculum had a statistically better outcome over all other interventions. And something to consider is that placing a curriculum is a sustainable intervention (Chingos & Whitehurst, 2012).</p> <p>In 2016, researchers from the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard estimated that in 4th- and 5th-grade math, switching to a top-ranked textbook would translate to student achievement gains of 3.6 percentile points — larger than the improvement of a typical teacher’s effectiveness in the first three years on the job when he or she is learning to teach (Kane, Owens, Marinell, Thal, & Staiger, 2016).”</p>

Why are High-Quality Curricula Not Reaching More Students?	<p>HQIM are desired by teachers and essential to student learning.</p>	<p>Access to quality materials is not a silver bullet, but it is a fundamental component for student learning... When teachers don't have access to great content they hunt for it online, spending an average of seven to 12 hours a week on the task. In a survey by Scholastic, teachers cited high-quality instructional materials as a top funding priority, more important than digital resources, intervention programs, and even higher salaries.</p>
High-Quality Curricula and Team-Based Professional Learning: A Perfect Partnership for Equity	<p>Video Summary of report</p>	<p>When all students experience high-quality teaching, they are more likely to learn. When all classrooms are filled with high-quality instructional materials, students are more likely to learn. Establishing these conditions for all learners will help close achievement gaps.</p>
Are U.S. Teachers Using High-Quality Instructional Materials?	<p>States may be able to make a difference in the materials that teachers use.</p>	<p>Teachers in states participating in the High Quality Instructional Materials and Professional Development Network were more likely to use high-quality materials.</p>
How High-Quality Instructional Materials Can Drive Teacher Growth	<p>A high-quality curriculum can give educators within a school and across a school system a common foundation to organize the work they're undertaking at the classroom level and collaborate to develop together.</p>	<p>A growing and compelling research base suggests that high-quality instructional materials can yield improvements in student learning outcomes equal to or greater than many interventions that are often more costly....According to Brian Pick, Chief of Teaching and Learning in DCPS, Cornerstones "are about bringing equity to the district—a shared experience creating a floor, but not a ceiling, around the teaching and learning that happens in our classrooms."</p>
The Elements: Transforming Teaching through Curriculum-Based Professional Learning	<p>Teachers deserve the highest quality professional learning to support the implementation of new instructional materials and curriculum.</p>	<p>When we refer to high-quality instructional materials, we mean those that include specific learning goals and lessons aligned to content standards, student-centered approaches to inquiry-based learning, research-based teaching strategies, teacher support materials, and embedded formative assessments to effectively help teachers implement instructional units and courses that are integrated, coherent, and sequenced...Putting high-quality instructional materials and curriculum-based professional learning at the core can help us meet the challenges of the moment and continue to drive improvements in teaching and learning that reach all students. We can capitalize on the investments states and systems have already made in adopting new standards by better connecting teachers with curriculum developers and professional learning providers. In providing these supports, we can give teachers what they so clearly want and what research and evidence from the field indicate they — and their students — need.</p>