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Why Instructional Materials Matter for Maryland Students

The students of Maryland are a vibrant community of diverse learners, including a growing number of multilingual students and students from various racial and cultural backgrounds.¹ Instructional materials designed to best serve these students must facilitate enriching, culturally responsive, and language affirming environments for all students.

Students deserve the opportunity to engage with rigorous content that builds a strong foundation for their educational journey and empowers them with essential learning skills. High-quality literacy instructional materials offer students engagement with worthy and complex texts, tasks, and learning experiences which foster critical thinking abilities, language development, and amplify student voice and agency. Additionally, these materials prioritize the affirmation of students' cultural and linguistic identities, attending to inclusive learning communities that connect education to their real world experiences, and provide the support and skill to ensure students with diverse learning needs to thrive.

By aligning with College and Career Readiness standards and research-based approaches, high-quality instructional materials unlock and support knowledge-building that encourages active learning and leads to dynamic demonstrations of knowledge from students. Furthermore, these materials offer support for educators, equipping them with the necessary tools, content knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and research-based practices to effectively engage students and adapt to diverse community and school contexts. With this comprehensive approach, instructional materials in Maryland have the potential to create transformative learning environments that prepare students from kindergarten through graduation for a future of choice and opportunity.

¹ In 2022, Maryland's student population included 33% Black, 33% White, 22% Latinx and 7% Asian students, as well as 12% English learners, 12% students with disabilities, and an increasing proportion who face economic challenges ([Maryland Department of Education](#)).

Document Introduction

This framework serves as a valuable resource for educators and stakeholders across the education sector to identify key criteria in truly high-quality instructional materials. It outlines the essential elements of outstanding curricula and offers clear guidelines on the necessary instructional shifts and educator supports needed to foster meaningful learning experiences for students. To deliver the world-class education that the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future envisions, educators and leaders can rely on this framework in service of identifying research-based, high-quality materials that are necessary to provide students with rigorous instruction, nurture spaces that affirm their cultural and linguistic identities, and ensure students’ continued progress and success each year.

This framework is grounded in extensive research aimed at defining the content, instructional practice, and instructional design present in high-quality instructional materials. These research-based elements are central to the criteria within this framework and critical to support the kinds of learning experiences that Maryland students deserve.

Despite its strengths as a resource for identifying high-quality instructional materials, there are limitations for how this framework can be used. While the document presents crucial guidelines, it is NOT intended to be exhaustive in addressing all elements of instructional materials and practices needed to create an equitable experience for students. Additionally, this document is NOT a rubric, meaning it does not provide a checklist or a scoring system for evaluation of instructional materials. Instead, it offers guidance on the essential components of high-quality materials, encouraging educators to exercise professional judgment and adapt to their specific educational context. From this framework, a complementary ELA/literacy rubric has been designed to make these criteria measurable in service of evaluating the quality of instructional materials.

It is also important for educators and leaders to recognize any and all humanizing considerations beyond the framework that may be necessary based on the unique students, contexts of classrooms, and school/district conditions in their review and selection of high-quality materials using this framework. Overall, this framework serves as a roadmap, empowering educators to select and utilize the instructional materials that foster inclusivity, rigor, and relevance, ultimately resulting in enhanced student learning outcomes for all students.

DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This document, intended for use when considering K-12 ELA/literacy core instructional materials, is organized into four categories (Designed to Affirm Students; Grade-Level and Standards-Aligned; Instructional Design; and Educator Supports), with domains that highlight Key Criteria within each subsection.

While specific categories have been included for Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Pedagogy and Language Affirming Instruction, related considerations for affirming students are woven throughout the framework. Similarly, considerations for diverse learning needs and Universal Design for Learning have been embedded throughout to reflect the way that these practices must be interlaced in thinking about content, instructional practice and support for educators.

A collection of research and scholarship used to inform this framework is included as an Appendix.

Key Criteria for High-Quality Instructional Materials

DESIGNED TO AFFIRM STUDENTS

Affirming students creates opportunities for cultural and linguistic backgrounds to be an asset and a source of validation in the learning experience. In addition to a foundation of grade-level content, high-quality instructional materials must prioritize instructional practices that affirm students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds and support students with a range of diverse learning needs to thrive through literacy. This includes developing culturally responsive-sustaining learning communities that center who students are, use literacy as a tool for civic engagement, and connect learning to the world outside the schoolhouse walls. Literacy instruction must also intentionally affirm students' languages and language practices through a focus on building upon students' multilingualism, ensuring texts support language development, and designing language objectives that work in concert with content and literacy learning. Through these instructional choices, materials have the potential to deepen literacy learning, cultivate a sense of belonging, and recognize who students are and will grow to be.

Key Criteria for Culturally Responsive-Sustaining² Instruction

- **Affirm & Center Students:** Instructional materials affirm, engage, and center past and current knowledge of Black/African, Indigenous, Brown, and non-Western literary expressions and highlight multilingualism. Instructional materials are designed to encourage students to anchor learning in their individual experiences, backgrounds, and cultural knowledge to support and further literacy work. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. regular opportunities for students to share about who they are and what they know, bringing their unique funds of knowledge³ to their literacy experiences;
 - b. reflection and conversation within the context of the text or topic under study that affirm students' identities and experiences;
 - c. tasks that support students to express (orally, in writing, in media, and other formats) how text and topics under study do or do not impact their understanding of the world; and
 - d. tasks that require students to integrate what they have read and/or learned from others with their own knowledge, and synthesize ideas across texts.
- **Literacy as a Tool for Civic Engagement:** Instructional materials consistently include texts and tasks that prompt students to apply and develop their civic engagement skills and examine social context and current events, using literacy to question the world and the current status quo. This includes (all of the following):

² This conceptualization of culturally responsive-sustaining instruction is built on the evidence from its predecessors—culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining pedagogies. This scholarship underscores the importance of leveraging the diverse backgrounds of students as assets in the classroom that can and should be sustained through intentional instructional design. For more information about relevant scholarship, please see the citations section in the Appendix.

³ Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141

- a. opportunities for students to read, write, speak, and listen in an effort to think critically about the content/perspective of the text or resources;
 - b. attention to historical and social contexts in texts; and
 - c. opportunities for critically examining texts for influence, bias, and diversity of perspectives, and considering whose voice is elevated, and whose is absent.
- **Real World Connections:** Instructional materials consistently connect with students' lives, future goals, communities, and the world and nurture ways to engage in their own communities and beyond. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. use literacy texts and tasks to connect to current events;
 - b. engage in collaborative tasks and/or projects that involve real-world problem-solving through meaningful interactions with peers and their local communities; and
 - c. connect developing literacy skills and knowledge relevant to students' academic and personal goals.

Key Criteria for Language Affirming Instruction

- **Multilingualism in Literacy:** Instructional materials are deliberately designed to honor and build upon students' language(s) as an asset, encouraging students to use their linguistic repertoire to communicate with one another via reading, writing, speaking, and listening while engaging in literacy. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. sustained oral and written communication, including explicit encouragement to utilize a range of language practices and registers, and to use their full language repertoire through translanguaging⁴ so all students express themselves in a language they are comfortable with while working to learn literacy content and meet language objectives in the target language;
 - b. building vocabulary and understanding of new concepts in English and home language(s), including use of social and academic vocabulary; and
 - c. making cross-linguistic connections, including identifying and comparing similarities and differences between home language(s) and English (e.g., cognates) or registers and registers of instruction
- **Language Objectives & English Language Development (ELD) Coherence:** Instructional materials provide explicit alignment between language and content objectives to identify language goals that are embedded with content-based meaning. This includes language objectives for both expressive (writing and speaking) and receptive (listening and reading) communication, aligned to text and task. Core instructional materials should also consistently and meaningfully align language objectives, language standards (e.g., WIDA), and ELD

⁴ García, O., Johnson, S. I., & Seltzer, K. (2017). *The Translanguaging Classroom: Leveraging Student Bilingualism for Learning*. Caslon. For more see [Translanguaging Strategies](#), English Learner Success Forum.

curriculum and instruction. This includes aligning the content of core lessons and units with ELD standards and indicating specific literacy skills that teachers should amplify through ELD instruction.

- **Text Selection to Support Language Development:** Instructional materials utilize texts that (all of the following):
 - a) include authentic language;
 - b) contain rich vocabulary and syntax;
 - c) are written in home languages, when possible, and high-quality (e.g., not poor quality translations); and are formatted in ways that support meaning making and language development (e.g., text engineering).

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GRADE-LEVEL AND STANDARDS ALIGNED

Grade-level, standards-aligned content serves as a necessary foundation for equitable student experiences in the classroom. Engaging with this rigorous content from kindergarten through graduation sets students on a path to empowered lives, and instructional materials must be designed so that all students have access to this essential literacy work. This includes ensuring all students are empowered by secure foundational skills; engage with worthy texts and resources; tackle high-quality questions and tasks; develop their oral language and vocabulary; and pursue a volume of writing to express their learning and ideas to become independent readers and learners.

Key Criteria for Integrated Literacy

- **Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening:** Instructional materials demonstrate the interrelated components of literacy by highlighting the relationship between reading, writing, and speaking and listening throughout instruction. This includes instructional design that centers around students discussing and writing about what they read, as well as using their developing foundational skills to read and write.

Key Criteria for Foundational Skills Across Grade Levels

- **Systematic and Explicit Instruction:** Instructional materials focus on the interrelated but discrete foundational skills of language: print concepts, phonological (including phonemic) awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency. More advanced foundational skills study continues to attend to fluency with grade-level texts as well as morphology, syllables, and etymology. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. a clearly defined set of skills that is appropriate to the grade level (i.e., a systematic scope and sequence of foundational skills in the early grades and targeted skills in later grades to support students' continued development);

- b. explicit, research-based instruction designed in ways that are clear, authentic, specific to the language of instruction, and in service of meaning making; and
 - c. connections between languages (cross-linguistic connections) to support students' understanding and transfer of applicable knowledge between languages (e.g., sound, syllable, and word level).
- **Practice Opportunities and Resources:** Instructional materials contain abundant and research-based practice structures, tasks, and supporting resources that align with the sequence of taught foundational skills. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. provided within meaningful contexts;
 - b. a variety of engaging practice modes (e.g., games, puzzles, worksheets, songs, decodable texts) that support in and out of context practice, as well as decoding, encoding, and oral language development;
 - c. materials that can be used with or without teacher support; and
 - d. resources designed for distributed practice and cumulative review.
 - **Fluency:** Fluency is a particular focus of instructional materials. Materials contain research-based systematic and supportive instruction and practice for students to read grade-appropriate texts with a focus on accuracy, automaticity, and prosody including repeated reading and processes to make meaning from reading.

Key Criteria for Text & Resource Selection

- **Grade-Level Texts:** Instructional materials ensure that all students have extensive access and pathways to actively engage with authentic grade-level texts. These core texts for instruction are appropriately complex for the grade (based on quantitative and qualitative features⁵) to build students' ability to closely read. This includes texts for reading aloud in the early grades and use of full-length works across all grades.
- **Supportive Texts and Resources:** Instructional materials incorporate supportive texts and resources that include (all of the following):
 - a. texts at a variety of complexity levels that are sequenced around knowledge-building topics in order to support students' access to grade-level texts (i.e. do not assign students to static levels) and to support teachers in scaffolding materials designed to meet diverse learning needs;
 - b. a range of knowledge-focused topically-connected multimedia and art resources (e.g., videos, visual art, music, or virtual museums or galleries);

⁵ Council of Chief State School Officers and National Governors Association. (2013). Supplemental Information for Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: New Research on Text Complexity, Retrieved from <https://achievethecore.org/page/1193/supplemental-information-for-appendix-a-of-the-common-core-state-standards-for-english-language-arts-and-literacy-new-research-on-text-complexity>

- c. when supporting foundational reading, texts align with readers' needs at their developmental stage and allow direct practice of taught phonics skills (e.g. decodable texts aligned to the scope and sequence); and
 - d. guidance and student-facing resources for regularly engaging in a volume of reading with these resources.
- **Intentional Design:** Across the year, instructional materials contain texts that are appropriately balanced across literary and informational⁶. Texts build in complexity to support students increasing independence with complex texts and content within and across years. All texts include considerations for student accessibility.

Key Criteria for Questions and Tasks

- **Text-Based & Standards Aligned:** Instructional materials include text-specific questions, discussion prompts, and tasks to support students' access to complex texts, language, and ideas (including for texts in home languages or translated texts). This includes:
 - a. attend to each text's particular qualitative complexities (i.e., meaning/purpose, structure, language, knowledge demands);
 - b. spur the analytical thinking required by college- and career-ready standards at each grade level (i.e., attention to key ideas, details, craft, and structure);
 - c. addressing the audience, purpose, and genre of the text and prompt, as well as key language uses and language expectations.
- **Intentional Sequencing:** Instructional materials sequence text-based questions, discussion prompts, and tasks to support students in building mental models of texts as they read. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. build from students funds of knowledge⁷;
 - b. attend to the words, phrases, and sentences (including syntax) in texts so students acquire social and academic language;
 - c. embed checks for understanding (e.g., questions, tasks) of the text or topic under study to elicit evidence of student learning and to make student thinking visible;
 - d. engage in close reading of especially complex sections of text;
 - e. build mental models of texts as student read; and
 - f. integrate understandings across multiple texts.

⁶ National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). Common Core State Standards for ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Retrieved from https://learning.ccsso.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ELA_Standards1.pdf, 5

⁷ Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141

Key Criteria for Volume, Quality, and Range of Writing

- **Prominent, Authentic Writing Opportunities:** Instructional materials provide frequent experiences for students to write with an authentic communicative purpose and audience, connected to taught skills, texts, and topics under study. This includes:
 - a. regularly writing to sources;
 - b. short, focused research projects; and
 - c. crafting prose, sentences, paragraphs, and texts that allow students to communicate information and their ideas through multiple means of expression.
- **Explicit Instruction:** Instructional materials include attending to the discrete skills of writing across genres in ways that make the thinking, planning, and writing more visible. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. explicit instruction on paragraph and text structure within context (e.g., via structure-focused mnemonic devices, graphic organizers, etc.);
 - b. the use of relevant tools needed for access to effective construction and composition of writing;
 - c. sentence-level instruction in context (including grammar/usage); and
 - d. attention to the writing process, discipline- and genre-specific skills, and language development alongside development of writing skills⁸; and
 - e. addressing language-specific linguistic structures, including key language uses, language expectations, and organizational structure for the text genre and prompt.
- **Varied Writing Experiences:** Instructional materials address different types of writing (i.e., on demand, process, and research) and meet college- and career ready expectations for writing across genres⁹. This includes a focus on narrative, expository, opinion/argument, and blended forms of writing.

Key Criteria for Speaking, Listening, and Oral Language Development

- **Integrated Oral Language Development:** Instructional materials regularly integrate oral language, writing, reading, and discussion about grade-level texts, topics, and skills¹⁰. This includes:
 - a. attend to meaning and oral language development within foundational skills instruction;

⁸ “ELSF: ELA Guidelines, Guideline 1.2” ELSF | ELA Guidelines, <https://www.elsuccessforum.org/ela-guidelines>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

⁹ National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). Common Core State Standards for ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Retrieved from https://learning.ccsso.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ELA_Standards1.pdf, 5.

¹⁰ “ELSF: ELA Guidelines, Guideline 1.” ELSF | ELA Guidelines, <https://www.elsuccessforum.org/ela-guidelines>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

- b. writing activities that engage students in discussion and oral rehearsals as part of the writing process¹¹;
 - c. opportunities for listening comprehension through collaborative conversation about grade-level texts and topics; and
 - d. use expressive language (i.e., speaking and writing) with increasingly complex language and syntax, demonstrating growing proficiency in the language of instruction.
- **Prominent, Authentic Discourse Opportunities:** Instructional materials include frequent, sustained discourse for students to discuss texts and topics under study. This academic discourse simultaneously builds knowledge, vocabulary, and language skills to express ideas and comprehension.
 - **Building Vocabulary:** Instructional materials include explicit and research-based teaching of text-based vocabulary, including special attention to both academic and typically-connected, interdisciplinary vocabulary as needed (e.g., art, history, science, social studies). This includes (all of the following):
 - a. practice of newly taught words orally and in writing, including through multiple relevant examples that support students making connection with targeted words
 - b. student-friendly definitions;
 - c. morphological study;
 - d. visual representations; and
 - e. encouraging the use, review, and assessment of targeted words throughout the unit.

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¹¹ “ELSF: ELA Guidelines, Guideline 1.2” ELSF | ELA Guidelines, <https://www.elsuccessforum.org/ela-guidelines>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Instructional materials must attend to research-based instructional practices that support meaningful engagement for all students in order to be deemed high-quality. It is through this intentional design that instructional materials contribute to learning communities where students unlock knowledge; engage with peers as readers, writers, and thinkers; and regularly demonstrate their learning. This type of learning community builds students' literacy identities and experiences of joy in the literacy classroom.

Key Criteria for Building Knowledge

- **Knowledge-Building Focus:** Instructional materials center on building knowledge about self, others, and the world through regular interaction with knowledge-rich texts and literacy experiences. Units include topically-connected, interdisciplinary content (e.g., include art, history, math, science, social studies). Reading skills and strategies are primarily taught and used in service of building knowledge through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- **Inclusive Content:** Instructional materials utilize texts and resources that affirm expansive and diverse perspectives and identities, including content from a variety of community, cultural, and language backgrounds within and across school years. This includes texts and resources at each grade level that (all of the following):
 - a. elevate multiple perspectives;
 - b. provide opportunities to compare and contrast narratives and counternarratives;
 - c. inspire reflection, motivation, and civic engagement in response to ideas and content presented; and
 - d. engage students in learning about the joy, resilience, determination, ingenuity, and leadership of all groups and communities, including historically marginalized communities.
- **Systematic organization:** Instructional materials are built around knowledge-focused units that are topically connected and sequenced systematically, within and across grades, to connect to and build upon students' expanding knowledge bases.

Key Criteria for Student Agency

- **Metacognitive Processes:** Instructional materials apply a research-based approach to develop students' metacognition by directly teaching and supporting students to monitor understanding during reading and self-regulate during writing. This includes:
 - a. setting goals; self-monitoring growth; and reflecting on the impact of students' choices and ongoing development as readers, writers, and communicators;

- b. explicit practices to develop students' metalinguistic awareness around language use and choices¹² ;
 - c. modeling and developing strategies that support students in making their thinking visible through speaking or writing as they develop their understanding; and
 - d. supporting students with diverse learning needs in developing metacognitive strategies.
- **Choice:** Instructional materials prompt teachers to provide ample time to explore literacy concepts and content, during which students are provided regular opportunities to make choices about how to spend time, who to spend it with, and what materials are used (texts, topics, and tasks). This includes (all of the following):
 - a. choosing methods for expressing their understanding that best reflect their strengths as learners and their understanding of the content;
 - b. self-selecting texts or resources (e.g., selections that represent their interests, identities, or abilities);
 - c. tasks that invite students to identify and pursue their own questions; and
 - d. inviting regular student feedback about literacy experiences and instruction.
 - **Collaborative Learning:** Instructional materials engage all students in collaborative learning through a variety of researched-based routines, structures, and tasks that allow for whole group, small group, and independent thinking. Materials explicitly plan for students to demonstrate their curiosity and share their tentative thinking; ask questions; and adjust their understanding by building on one another's ideas through speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Key Criteria for Progress Monitoring and Supporting Students

- **Supports & Scaffolds¹³:** Instructional materials are designed to support a variety of student strengths and diverse learning needs in ways that are supported by research and do not interfere with their ability to engage with grade-level content. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. text and/or content-specific guidance on identifying and addressing potential individual students needs so that supports, scaffolds, and extensions can be effectively differentiated, including adjustments to content, process, or product;
 - b. supporting resources that provide reteaching of skills and concepts for students not yet proficient in grade-level foundational reading, writing, and language skills; and

¹² "ELSF: ELA Guidelines, Guideline 3." ELSF | ELA Guidelines, <https://www.elsuccessforum.org/ela-guidelines>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

¹³ Thoughtfully designed questions and tasks that provide access to grade-level, culturally responsive-sustaining, and language affirming experiences for students are one form of support for students and are addressed in other sections of this framework.

- c. supports and scaffolds that are designed to shift responsibility to students over time.
- **Simultaneous Literacy and Language Development:** Instructional materials include intentional language learning opportunities alongside appropriate, research-based supports for multilingual learners and students with diverse learning needs in order to develop literacy and language simultaneously. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. explicit instruction in writing, text structure, syntax (sentence structure), and cohesive devices (words that connect ideas in a text such as although, however);
 - b. embedded high-leverage language development supports that are aligned to the content and literacy goals (e.g., identifying cognates, sentence frames); and
 - c. teacher guidance for strategic grouping to support the development of language.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Instructional materials embed resources and frequent opportunities to monitor learning and respond to students' progress of grade-level literacy skills, the application of those skills, the development of language, and the growth of knowledge using their existing language resources¹⁴. Materials demonstrate how to diagnose critical student needs and draw clear connections to integrating supports and prioritizing instruction. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. embedded and consistent formative assessment practices for content, literacy, and language learning;
 - b. varied and multiple means of demonstrating integrated content, literacy, and language learning (e.g., podcast, mock interview, blogpost);
 - c. regular monitoring of grade-level reading proficiency;
 - d. regular monitoring of oral language development as well as specific, discrete language skills that are assessed within the content and literacy tasks; and
 - e. regular monitoring of writing over time (e.g., writing portfolios), including opportunities to demonstrate progress in home language(s) and target language.
- **Meaningful Feedback:** Instructional materials and teacher guidance provide frequent opportunities for feedback to advance content understanding, literacy skills, language development, and metalinguistic awareness, as proven effective by research and as appropriate to the type of literacy instruction. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. peer and teacher cycles of feedback, including communicating progress with affirming evidence of literacy progress;
 - b. normalizing mistake making and affirming effort and growth;
 - c. providing guidance for explicit, timely, informative, and accessible formative feedback to address partial understandings and alternative thinking about tasks, texts, and topics

¹⁴ "ELSF: ELA Guidelines 4.12, 5.14." ELSF | ELA Guidelines, <https://www.elsuccessforum.org/ela-guidelines>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

in ways that allow learners to monitor their own progress effectively and to use that information to guide their own effort and practice; and

- d. guidance on how and when to collect data, as well as how to respond to specific student strengths and needs.

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EDUCATOR SUPPORTS

To promote facilitation of meaningful learning experiences for all students, instructional materials ensure effective supports for educators. Throughout the instructional materials, explicit tools and resources focus on enhancing educators' depth of literacy knowledge for teaching and utilizing pedagogical content knowledge in planning for instruction and practicing responsive teaching to build on or extend students' critical thinking, fostering reflective practice, including the examination of their own identities, and employ research-based practices. In addition, resources are thoughtfully designed for ease of use and fit to community context.

Key Criteria for Educator Knowledge

- **Examine Self:** Instructional materials support teachers in examining their own identities, biases, and belief systems to help them understand how these factors might influence instructional choices and the lens through which they interpret student thinking. This may include reflection prompts, examples of educator thinking, or embedded professional learning.
- **Students' Linguistic and Cultural Assets:** Instructional materials support educators to see and to leverage students' linguistic and cultural assets, approaching these assets with a disposition of curiosity and appreciation. This includes prompting educators to learn about and integrate the knowledge, strengths, and resources of students, families, and the community - especially those who have been historically marginalized.
- **Supporting Language Development for all Learners:** Instructional materials build educators' understanding of research-based practices to support language development for all learners, especially for multilingual learners and students with diverse learning needs, including (all of the following):
 - a. building knowledge of how language works and how students' language develops, including oracy and language development standards;
 - b. use of home language, translanguaging, and developing cross-linguistic connections in order to deepen understanding of the linguistic features across languages and registers;
 - c. the simultaneous development of language, content, and literacy skills, including deepening understanding of instructional strategies that support this goal (e.g., embedding supports for vocabulary and nonlinguistic visual language supports); and
 - d. providing examples of sample student responses within the context of lesson content and task with a range of language proficiency levels

- **Supporting Literacy Development:** Instructional materials deepen educators' literacy knowledge for teaching through building educators' understanding of research-based practices to support literacy development including (all of the following):
 - a. the development of word recognition, language comprehension, and the metacognitive processes that support the development of these skills; and
 - b. the progression of writing skill development (i.e., handwriting and spelling to support sentence-, paragraph-, and text-level composition).
- **Text and Topic Knowledge:** Instructional materials support educators to engage students with rich texts and topics by providing (all of the following):
 - a. text analysis for anchor texts, including quantitative and qualitative complexity;
 - b. considerations for engaging a diverse group of students in anchor text/unit content in inclusive ways (e.g., guidance, explanatory content, or teacher notes), including navigating critical conversations to humanize the interactions within literacy work; and
 - c. explanations, examples of concepts, and/or additional resources to support teachers' in building their own knowledge of the content and topics under study.

Key Criteria for Usability

- **Design and Functionality:** Instructional materials are designed to support ease of student and teacher use. This includes (all of the following):
 - a. materials are scalable and accessible, and curriculum can be disseminated in a way that ensures equitable student, teacher, and community access;
 - b. a visually appealing design with an organized and logical format;
 - c. materials that are appropriately paced;
 - d. clear and concise educator-facing guidance that allows for timely lesson preparation; and
 - e. a variety of ways to engage with the content, including leveraging current technology and tools.
- **Adaptability for Context:** Instructional materials contain materials and/or meaningful suggestions for how to adapt for district, school, and/or classroom context. This may include varied selections for topics under study; flexibility to modify tasks to connect to local resources, organizations, or issues; or varied pacing suggestions based on number of school days or minutes of instruction.
- **Program Coherence:** Core instructional materials work in concert with (or have the potential to work in concert with) additional supplemental ELA/literacy materials (e.g., interventional materials). This includes, aligned and research-based content and instructional approaches across materials.

Research & Scholarship Supporting the Framework

A robust research and scholarship base underpins this framework. For more information about research-supported practice, see Student Achievement Partners' [Essential X Equitable Instructional Practice Framework™](#).

GRADE-LEVEL & STANDARDS ALIGNED

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