

Solution Series

FOCUS ON CURRICULUM

PUBLISHERS RESOURCE GROUP, INC., THE ACCOUNTABILITY COMPANY

Key Ingredients for Efficient Customizations

The movement toward alignment of classroom materials to state standards received a strong push from President Bush when he signed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. All states are now required to develop academic standards and to align their curricula and state assessments to those standards.

Although states have commonalities among their standards in many areas, each state has a perspective on what should be emphasized in the curriculum. For example, New Mexico's language arts standards are specific about the different writing forms as well as about the structure and organization of the different writing forms students are expected to produce. On the other hand, Louisiana's language arts standards require only that students write for a variety of purposes, with no specific writing forms mentioned.

With more than 50 interpretations of what knowledge and skills each student should know and be able to demonstrate, standards are very different in spite of their similarities. This fact makes customizing product an expensive proposition. However, by planning ahead, you can economically customize your program to meet the needs of multiple state markets.

Begin by identifying the markets in which you plan to sell your instructional program and prioritizing those customizations. You can decide to introduce customized product for states all at once as a series, or you can introduce them individually according to textbook purchasing schedules. Knowing up front how you will introduce your product can help you make important decisions before you've even begun to develop it.

Competitive Analysis

When competing against established programs, consider analyzing those instructional programs' strengths and weaknesses with a competitive analysis. The data you gain by looking at other programs will give you helpful ideas on how to build the most innovative features into your program before the marketing and sales process begins.



Teachers will be using state standards more than ever to guide their classroom instruction.

Predevelopment Correlations

Similarly, take the time to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your own program. Is it aligned to state and national curriculum standards? As a case in point, if you are thinking of submitting a product for the Texas textbook adoption process but are unsure whether the current copyright of your program matches the state standards, a predevelopment correlation can provide that information. It can also identify which of your components are the most closely aligned to Texas's curriculum and areas that may need to be adapted before sub-



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mitting for adoption. This can be important information when deciding whether or not to submit, considering a new copyright, or developing a new program altogether.

Scope and Sequence

Take your predevelopment correlation one step further by creating the document to help guide your development plans—a scope and sequence. A scope and sequence provides a master plan for development that identifies the key concepts and skills associated with a particular subject area and grade level. A thorough plan for customizing programs to several different markets can be efficiently created by analyzing and compiling key state and national standards, test objectives, and the scope and sequences of best-selling products.

Efficient Integration of Customized Product

If you will be introducing a product to several states, consider preparing a matrix of several sets of state standards to find commonalities among those standards. Using this information to develop a scope and sequence will ensure that your product meets state standards for multiple markets without costly rewrites. These matrices can also be used to simultaneously develop test preparation materials customized to the testing programs of several states.

Point-of-Use Correlations

Teachers will be using their state standards more than ever to guide their classroom instruction. Correlations embedded within the teacher material can help teachers select particular activities that may meet standards or help them develop standards-based lesson plans. Correlations can be positioned on interleaf pages, on each page, or even adjacent to each activity in print or online products. These types of correlations are often prepared during the development process shortly after content is finalized, so it can be incorporated into the final design before going to print or posting online.

PRG Can Help

Publishers Resource Group, Inc. (PRG), has a wealth of experience in standards alignment services to ensure that your educational product meets stringent state standards during the planning, development, marketing, and sales process. We specialize in listening to your needs and helping you determine what type of alignment will help you reach your publishing goals and produce the highest return on your investment. For more information or for a free consultation, contact Vice President of Business Development Ron Reed at 512/328-7007 or RReed@PRGaustin.com.

Helpful Terms

WHAT IS A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK?

A curriculum framework is a document that sets out what students are expected to achieve in a given subject area or grade level.

WHAT IS A BENCHMARK?

A benchmark indicates the knowledge and skills level students are expected to attain by the end of a given grade.

WHAT IS A STANDARD?

A standard indicates the level of requirement or attainment a student is expected to achieve.

WHAT IS A CONTENT STANDARD OR LEARNING OBJECTIVE?

Content standards and learning objectives specify what a student is expected to learn.

WHAT IS A PERFORMANCE STANDARD?

Performance standards specify what a student is expected to do to demonstrate a concept or skill.

WHAT IS A SCOPE AND SEQUENCE?

A scope and sequence is a map of an instructional program, detailing what is taught and when.

WHAT IS AN ALIGNMENT?

An alignment indicates the degree to which instructional materials match or address standards or test objectives and vice versa.

WHAT IS A CORRELATION?

A correlation is a specialized index that shows where a program meets a given standard or objective.

Analysis of Competing Programs



Predevelopment Correlation



Scope & Sequence Creation

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	Chapter 1-3	Chapter 4-6	Chapter 7-9	Chapter 10-12	Chapter 13-15
Reading	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Listening		✓	✓	✓	✓
Practicing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Writing	✓				
Revising			✓		✓
Presenting				✓	

Development of Core Program



Efficient integration of aligned content facilitates later development of cost-effective supplements.

- Test Prep Materials to Multiple States
- Online Lesson Plans
- Customized Student Workbooks
- Professional Development for Teachers, etc.