Massachusetts CURATE Project: *Cu*rriculum *Ra*tings by *Te*achers

 English Language Arts and Literacy Rubric, 6-12

Purpose of the Rubric

The CURATE rubric is designed for use by CURATE panelists to evaluate core ***curricular materials*** for English Language Arts/Literacy; Mathematics; Science and Technology/Engineering; and Digital Literacy and Computer Science and may also be used by educators in other contexts.

***Core curricular materials*** are comprehensive resources designed for use with *all* students to access grade-level content and standards in a given class over the course of a year or semester.

Through the use of the rubric, CURATE aims to elevate curricular materials that are high quality. A further distinction to clarify is connected to skillful implementation and aligned professional learning. The CURATE rubric evaluates for the content of the materials but **does not and is not intended** to measure implementation or professional learning. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) believes ***high quality instructional materials (HQIM)***are aligned to the Massachusetts content and practice standards, empower culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, and exhibit a coherent sequence of target skills, instructional practices, and understandings. These materials are accessible for all students, including students with disabilities, students working above and below grade level, English learners (ELs), and students of color. HQIM should strongly support teachers in their everyday work to be inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining.Curricular programs that receive an overall rating of ***“meets expectations”***or ***“partially meets expectations”*** via CURATE are considered HQIM. Although materials may be rated “high quality” this does not mean they are perfect. Materials rely on the skillful implementation of teachers who need to consider their local contexts and student needs. Schools or districts should also consider their local priorities and their student and teacher needs when analyzing CURATE reports since the challenges reported may impact districts differently.

Guidelines for Review

* Review and document all evidence before deciding on ratings.
* Consider quantity as well as quality of evidence for each indicator.
* Consider evidence of high quality as well as evidence of low quality.
* Do not feel compelled to weigh each indicator and criterion equally.
* Do not consider provided examples to be exhaustive or restrictive.
* If evidence is lacking for an indicator, flag it for further data collection.

Sources of Evidence

* The product itself: unit and lesson plans, teacher guides, student-facing resources, associated software, and other components
* Other credible and comprehensive reviews of materials, such as those by [EdReports](https://edreports.org/)
* Perceptual data, such as survey responses and focus group findings, from educators with experience using the product in schools
* Information—such as product specifications and videos of teachers using the product—provided by its developers or publishers
* Research findings: see criterion 5 below for guidance on how to evaluate and interpret research on a product’s efficacy

Definitions of Ratings

* **3: Meets Expectations** – Most or all evidence indicates high quality; little to none indicates low quality. Materials may not be perfect, but Massachusetts teachers and students would be well served and strongly supported by them.
* **2: Partially Meets Expectations** – Some evidence indicates high quality, while some indicates low quality. Teachers in Massachusetts would benefit from having these materials but need to supplement or adapt them substantively to serve their students well.
* **1: Does Not Meet Expectations** – Little to no evidence indicates high quality; most or all evidence indicates low quality. Materials would not substantively help Massachusetts teachers and students meet the state’s expectations for teaching and learning.
* **?: Insufficient Evidence** – More evidence is needed before a rating can be justified. If you are unsure about a rating because you lack relevant information, be sure to choose this option instead of “defaulting” to a rating of Partially Meets Expectations.

Rubric Structure

| ***Domains*** | Standards Alignment | Classroom Application |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Criteria*** | Text Quality & Organization | Classroom Tasks & Instruction | Accessibility for Students | Usability for Teachers | Impact on Learning |

Rubric

| **Domain: Standards Alignment** |
| --- |
| **Criterion** | **Indicator** | **Notes and Tips** | **Further Reading** |
| **1. Text Quality and Organization***Note:* This rubric was developed for CURATE, which evaluates materials that have previously been reviewed for alignment to college- and career-ready standards. If using this rubric to review materials not already screened for some degree of standards alignment, consider adding or expanding indicators to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. | 1. **Texts exhibit grade-appropriate complexity and are worthy of students’ attention.**
 | * Assess text complexity against grade-level expectations, not student reading levels. All students should have access to grade-appropriate text every day.
* Focus here on texts used for core instruction, not independent reading or remediation.
* Leveled texts do not count as grade level complex texts.
 | * [Text Complexity and the Growth of Reading Comprehension](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06QRG-ReadingComp.pdf)
* Curriculum framework: guidance on text complexity in 6–12 (pp. [124–127](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=127))
 |
| 1. **Materials include texts of varying genres and types of complexity.**
 | * In addition to looking for variation in genre at every grade, check grade-level standards for expectations related to specific genres.
* Within the program, students at each grade level are expected to read shorter texts *and* extended texts: “well-written, full-length novels, plays, long poems, informational texts chosen for the importance of their subject matter and excellence in language use (p. [12](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=15)).”
* *Types of complexity* include levels of meaning or purpose; text structure; format and text features; use of conventions, diction, and syntax; and knowledge demands.
 | * Curriculum framework: guidance on range of reading, listening, and viewing in 6–12 (pp. [122–123](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=125))
* Curriculum framework: guidance on types of complexity in 6–12 (pp. [124–126](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=127))
 |
| 1. **Materials include texts representing various cultures and perspectives.**
 | * Determine the extent to which students are represented and reflected in the curriculum, and the extent to which they’re exposed to many identities such as, but not limited to: race, ethnicity, language, religion, family structures, ability, gender, and sexual orientation.
* Full representation goes beyond tokens and stereotypes; it is nuanced and multidimensional.
	+ To what extent are different identities central to a story/text?
	+ To what extent do the characters accurately portray the histories and experiences of their cultures?
* Consider time period (setting, publication date), authors and places represented, as well as representation of primary and secondary sources that represent multiple perspectives
* Standard 10 for reading literature expects that students engage with texts representing varied cultures and perspectives each year. “Diversity” should not be limited to one unit.
 | * [Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials](https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/assessing-bias-standards-and-curricular-materials) (p. 9-15) (Coomer, Skelton, Kyser, Thorius, & Warren, 2017)
* [Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/atn293/ejroc/CRE-Rubric-2018-190211.pdf) (New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, NYU, 2019)
 |
| 1. **Materials include coherent sets and sequences of texts that help students build knowledge systematically.**
 | * Each unit should center on a coherent topic or theme to support students in building a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise.
	+ Knowledge encompasses both literary content (e.g., theme, character, setting), as well as topical content (the topic or theme explored throughout a unit).
* Unit length should provide sufficient time for students to build knowledge on a topic or theme through the use of high-quality complex text, including content-rich nonfiction**.**
* Building knowledge systematically means:
	+ Knowledge of the topic, concept, or information is built in layers through repeated exposure to the same topic from different perspectives or entry points.
	+ Text-based tasks require students to repeatedly hear and use key vocabulary related to the topic.
	+ Text-based tasks require students to discuss and/or write about the topic and use the vocabulary.
	+ The assessments provided in the materials require students to apply/use knowledge gained in the unit.

Building knowledge in this way is especially important for English learners.* Topics in ELA curriculum need not align to state standards for other subject areas, though alignment is worth noting where it exists.
 | * Curriculum framework: sample text set for middle (p. [128](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=131)) grades
* [ELA Guidelines: Area of Focus II, Sustained Language and Content Support](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5e73a4231ef80672d63be713_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (ELSF p. 11)
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| **2. Classroom Tasks and Instruction** | 1. **Materials provide for structured discussions that address grade-level speaking and listening standards.**
 | * The *Classroom Tasks and Instruction* criterion includes both what students are asked to do and how teachers facilitate their success.
* Consider both speaking and listening clusters: *comprehension and collaboration* and *presentation of knowledge and ideas,* as well as [English language development levels](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf)*.*
* Do materials provide students with tools for speaking and listening development during academic discussions (e.g., speaking prompts, listening/note taking tools)?
 | * [Standards Navigator](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/search/default.aspx): standards, related resources, and maps of connections between standards
* [Aligning Curriculum to Massachusetts Standards](http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/qrg-aligning-curriculum.pdf) and [Highlights of the 2017 Revisions to the ELA/Literacy Framework](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06RevisionHighlights.docx): differences between Massachusetts and Common Core State Standards
* [Vertical progressions](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/standards/) of standards in each strand PK–12
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| 1. **Most questions, tasks, and assignments are text-based, work to support knowledge building of a topic or theme and require literary or other textual analysis.**
 | * Students should engage directly with texts, not just practice isolated skills (e.g., with worksheets). Occasional discussions and writing may not center on existing texts, but the reading standards are intertwined with the other strands, and most tasks and instruction should involve text.
* Though instruction and tasks should center on reading, comprehending, interpreting, and analyzing the written word, other types of texts also support access, engagement, and both close and comparative analysis. The curriculum framework defines text as “a composition or work of art: for example, a film, speech, photograph, drawing, or written work” (p. 184).
 | * Quick reference guides:
	+ [Anchor standards for reading](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06QRG-AnchorStandards.pdf)
	+ [Reading closely to analyze complex texts: secondary grades](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06QRG-Secondary.pdf)
* Curriculum framework: guidance on critical approaches to analysis (p. [12](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=15))
 |
| 1. **Materials address grade-level language standards (conventions of standard English, knowledge of language, vocabulary acquisition and use) through both explicit instruction and authentic application.**
 | * Consider all language clusters: *conventions of standard English*, *knowledge of language*, and *vocabulary acquisition and use*.
* *Authentic* here means *in context* or *for purposes beyond development of the target skill*. For language standards, *authentic application* might involve analyzing a speaker’s word choice or editing an essay.
 | * Curriculum framework: guidance on language standards (p. [14](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=17))
* Curriculum framework: key cumulative language standards, grades 3–12 (p. [84](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=87))
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| 1. **Materials include a wide range of authentic writing and explicit instruction in writing skills and strategies.**
 | * Consider all writing clusters: *text types and purposes*, *production and distribution of writing*, *research to build and present knowledge*,and *range of writing*.
* *Authentic writing* produces texts similar to those found outside of classrooms (e.g., brochures, editorials); accomplishes more than the demonstration of writing skills (e.g., communicates original thinking to a specific audience); and reaches audiences outside classrooms (e.g., family members, public officials).
 | * (WestEd)[Writing Standards in Action](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/wsa/): sample student work meeting or exceeding grade-level writing standards
* Curriculum framework: guidance on writing (p. [13](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=16))
* [Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc_secondary_writing_110116.pdf) (Institute for Education Sciences, 2016)
 |
| 1. **Materials have students engage in a range and volume of in-class and independent reading.**
 | * Every student should be reading *in class* every day. Worksheets and activities that relate to texts do not take the place of reading.
* Leveled texts may be provided but should not be the only type of text students read.
* Core materials should provide protocols or instructional routines to support students’ *independent* reading (e.g., resources to support independent book choices, book talk resources).
 | * Curriculum framework: guidance on balancing extended and shorter texts (p. [12](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=15))
* Curriculum framework guidance on independent reading ([Guiding Principle 3](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/2017-06.pdf#page=19))
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| **Domain: Classroom Application** |
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| **Criterion** | **Indicator** | **Notes and Tips** | **Further Reading** |
| **3. Accessibility for Students***Note:* While no one set of materials can serve all students’ needs, they should strongly support teachers tasked with doing so. Standard II of the [MA model teacher evaluation rubric](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/model/PartIII_AppxC.pdf) sets expectations for teaching all students. | 1. **Materials provide for varied means of accessing content, helping teachers meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities and those working above or below grade level.**
 | * Consider whether materials provide differentiated strategies and/or activities to meet the diverse needs of students working below proficiency, English Learners (ELs), and those of advanced learners.
* Focus here on access to grade-level content, not intervention or remediation.
* Consider whether materials provide [multiple means of representation](http://udlguidelines.cast.org/representation) and opportunities for collaborative learning (e.g., partner work).
* Consider intentional and varied points of access as an important strategy for ELs.
* Materials should include multiple entry points for learning and leverage the strengths of all learners, including English learners.
 | * Guidebook for Inclusive Practice, [Example Artifact List](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/5b-exartifacts.pdf): illustrates ways in which instructional materials can support *inclusive practice*, which encompasses Universal Design for Learning (the focus of these two indicators), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning
* [Universal Design for Learning Guidelines](http://udlguidelines.cast.org/?utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=none&utm_source=cast-about-udl) (CAST, 2018)
* [ELA Guidelines: Area of Focus IV, Leveraging Students’ Assets](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5e73a4231ef80672d63be713_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (The English Learner Success Forum, ELSF p. 14)
 |
| 1. **Materials provide for varied means of demonstrating learning, helping teachers meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities and those working above or below grade level.**
 | * Consider whether materials provide students the support needed to succeed on tasks and activities, helping meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities, English Learners, and those below and above grade level.
* Focus here on demonstration of grade level learning, not intervention or remediation.
* Consider whether materials provide [multiple means of action and expression](http://udlguidelines.cast.org/action-expression) and opportunities for students to make choices.
* Materials should **include multiple modes of assessment to demonstrate learning.**
* Consider intentional means of demonstrating learning as an important strategy for ELs.
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| 1. **Materials help teachers ensure that students at various levels of English proficiency have access to grade-level content, cognitively demanding tasks, and opportunities to develop academic language in English.**
 | * Materials should offer supports specific to ELs (e.g., references to cognates as-needed scaffolding, and entry points to amplify—rather than simplify—complex language) as well as supports that benefit ELs among other learners (e.g., repeated exposure to academic vocabulary and opportunities to develop academic language in English).
* Materials should support teachers to [develop ELs’ content knowledge and English proficiency simultaneously](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/guidance/sei/sei.docx) by using the WIDA standards framework to identify the language expectations, forms, and features students need to communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the literacy content [ELD-LA for Language Arts].
* Materials should support teachers to [differentiate language demands for ELs while maintaining cognitive demand](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf).
* Supports could be language specific, language family generalized, and/or inclusive of home languages.
 | * DESE’s [EL Blueprint for Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/dashboard.html)
* [Guidelines for Improving ELA Materials for ELs](https://assets.website-files.com/5b245df5d227e581c41b7c4b/5d0bee0995ca9218f246a98a_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (English Learner Success Forum)
* [The 2020 Edition](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld/2020) (WIDA Consortium)
* [The 2020 Edition](https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld/2020) (WIDA Consortium)
* [Examples of relevant resources](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Implementation-Guide-WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework.pdf) (WIDA Consortium, p. 8-16):
	+ Sensory supports (e.g., real-life objects, manipulatives, videos)
	+ Graphic supports (e.g., charts, tables, graphs, timelines)
	+ Interactive supports (e.g., pair and group work, software)
 |
| 1. **Materials include questions and tasks that affirm and value diverse identities, backgrounds, and perspectives.**
 | Questions to consider:* Do the materials elevate diverse backgrounds, perspectives, languages, and identities to deepen learning?
* Do the materials challenge existing narratives about historically marginalized and historically centered or normed cultures including challenges rooted in systemic oppression?
* Do the materials promote recognition of the validity and worth of all cultures and languages?
* Consider whether the questions and tasks support students to:
	+ Actively draw upon students’ diverse backgrounds
	+ Make real-life connections
	+ Examine their own and others’ perspectives
	+ Help advance student thinking and actions about identity, equity, power, and oppression
 | * [Equity Resources Roundup](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Resource%20Roundup.pdf) (Achieve the Core)
* [Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials](https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/assessing-bias-standards-and-curricular-materials) (p. 6-8) (Coomer, Skelton, Kyser, Thorius, & Warren, 2017)
* [Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/atn293/ejroc/CRE-Rubric-2018-190211.pdf) (New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, NYU, 2019)
* [Culturally Responsive Curriculum (Hanover Research, 2020)](https://www.wasa-oly.org//WASA/images/WASA/6.0%20Resources/Equity/DISCUSSION%20GUIDE---CULTURALLY%20RESPONSIVE%20CURRICULUM.pdf)
* [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html): MA DESE definition of culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, and tools for professional development
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| **4. Usability for Teachers***Note:* Materials should strongly support teachers in their everyday work. Standard I of the [MA model teacher evaluation rubric](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/model/PartIII_AppxC.pdf) defines expectations for teachers related to curriculum, planning, and assessment. | 1. **Lessons and tasks advance student learning with clear purpose.**
 | Consider whether:* The intended purpose of each lesson and task is clear, and content and language learning are interdependent.
* Lessons and tasks serve their intended purposes effectively.
 | [DESE is collecting samples of openly available curricular materials that exemplify various aspects of usability. To nominate a resource to be featured here, contact .]* [ELA Guidelines: Area of Focus I, Interdependence of Oral Language, Disciplinary Writing, and Text Engagement](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5e73a4231ef80672d63be713_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (The English Learner Success Forum, ELSF p. 10)
* [ELA Guidelines: Area of Focus I, Interdependence of Oral Language, Disciplinary Writing, and Text Engagement](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5e73a4231ef80672d63be713_ELSF%20ELA%20Guidelines.pdf) (The English Learner Success Forum, ELSF p. 10)
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| 1. **Materials support teachers with suggested classroom routines and structures (e.g., grouping strategies).**
 | * *Routines* might involve annotating a text, responding to peer feedback, or revising and editing writing.
	+ *Routines* should encourage equitable and inclusive student participation that support the simultaneous development of language and content learning.
* *Structures* (e.g., pair work, reading stations, speaking and listening) might be designed to broaden participation and cultivate collaboration among students, including English learners.
* Materials provide resources to support productive student discourse.
* Materials provide resources to actively avoid potential bias in grouping strategies.
 |
| 1. **Pacing is reasonable and flexible; the curriculum can be implemented effectively within a typical school year.**
 | Consider whether:* Time estimates for lessons and units are accurate.
* Required number of minutes per day and days per year are feasible.
* Flexible options exist for a variety of school schedules and unforeseen circumstances.
* Guidance is provided to make educated decisions for what resources and aspects of the lesson to be prioritized on a daily basis.
 |
| 1. **Materials include informal and formal assessments that help teachers measure learning and adjust instruction.**
 | Consider whether:* Assessments help identify students’ misconceptions about taught skills, topics, or themes within and across units, and surface gaps in skills and content knowledge, including language learning.
	+ Knowledge encompasses both literary content (e.g., theme, character, setting), as well as topical content (the topic or theme explored throughout a unit)
* Materials guide teachers toward next steps based on assessment data (e.g., reteaching, reassessing, continued practice).
 |
| 1. **Materials include rubrics, exemplars, or other resources to help teachers set clear and high expectations for students.**
 | In addition to rubrics and exemplars, relevant resources might include: * Checklists for students to use in peer or self-assessments.
* Annotated student work at various levels of achievement, including non-exemplars, or student work at different levels of English development.
* Guidance for the teacher to avoid bias in setting expectations for students
 |
| 1. **Materials include guidance and resources designed specifically to build teachers’ knowledge.**
 | Relevant supports might bolster aspects of *content knowledge* (e.g., grammar, literary theory*), pedagogical content knowledge* (e.g., development of phonemic awareness, effective strategies for writing instruction), and *inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining practice*.* Do the materials provide a range of supports for teachers that include both topic understanding and specific lesson/standards guidance?
	+ Formats might vary: consider callout boxes and annotations in lessons, videos of classroom instruction, implementation guides, and more.
* Do the materials support teachers to recognize their own pedagogical biases?
* Do the materials provide context for teachers to develop their sociocultural consciousness by contextualizing historical frames and providing various cultural developments for similar concepts?

 * Do the materials provide teachers with guidance on how to approach, enhance, and customize lessons to be inclusive and responsive to the diverse identities of students, inclusive of linguistic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity??
 | * [Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/instruction/smk-guidelines.docx) set expectations for Massachusetts educators’ content knowledge. Information about SMKs is available on DESE’s [educator preparation page](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/).
* [Designing Educative Curriculum Materials to Promote Teacher Learning](http://www.project2061.org/research/ccms/site.archive/documents/Promote_Teacher_Learning.pdf) (Davis & Krajcik, 2005)
* [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html): MA DESE definition of cultural responsiveness and tools for professional development
* [Culturally Responsive Curriculum (Hanover Research, 2020)](https://www.wasa-oly.org//WASA/images/WASA/6.0%20Resources/Equity/DISCUSSION%20GUIDE---CULTURALLY%20RESPONSIVE%20CURRICULUM.pdf)
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| **5. Impact on Learning***Note:* For CURATE reviews, DESE’s research office determines ratings for this indicator and criterion. | 1. **Research demonstrates that the materials have a positive impact on student learning.**
 | * Research that meets expectations:
	+ Falls into evidence tiers 1, 2, or 3 as [defined by ESSA](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceuseseinvestment.pdf)
	+ Concerns the specific product under review, not just pedagogical strategies the product incorporates
	+ Is conducted by an independent, disinterested party
 | * DESE’s [“How Do We Know?” Initiative](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/howdoweknow/) helps educators gather, assess, and use evidence to make informed decisions about programs and practices.
 |