

*Providing guidance for leaders dedicated to children's literacy development, birth to age 9*

# SELECTING A COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY CURRICULUM

**The Issue:** A comprehensive curriculum is needed to provide young children with literacy learning environments that meet high standards (Memo 14). Many educators need guidance, however, when trying to select or assemble a curriculum that advances teaching and learning.

## What Are Some Common Pitfalls That Impede Impact?

Common Pitfalls	What We're Learning
1. Selecting a curriculum that targets the various components of literacy (e.g., phonics, vocabulary), but only in isolation.	1. Preparing children for academic success means embedding literacy instruction within a rigorous content-based framework for knowledge-building (Memo 4).
2. Having multiple literacy curricula and programs in use within and across classrooms.	2. If teachers are expected to assemble a curriculum by pulling from a number of sources, they need an overarching framework to assemble these into a cohesive approach.
3. Selecting a curriculum based on sales and marketing, including free sample materials, and making a decision within too tight a timeframe.	3. Selecting a curriculum requires a team-based process that is informed by unbiased guidance, the needs of the setting's children and adults, and a pilot phase that enables thorough review.

### For More on This...

The Oregon Reading First Center provides a [Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program](#)

The [Best Evidence Encyclopedia](#) and the [What Works Clearinghouse](#) provides information about research-based reading curricula

## Self-Study for Impact: Lead the Conversation!

Use this checklist to guide the selection of comprehensive curricular resources. A comprehensive curriculum has the following:

### Think *Rigorous!*

- Content-based units of study. Units should combine:
  - purposeful, explicit opportunities for developing knowledge-based competencies
  - systematic and explicit instruction that targets skills-based competencies (Memo 4)

*Why these features?* A curriculum that promotes comprehensive literacy development embeds skills-based competency instruction in language-rich and content-rich units of study.

### Think *Cohesive!*

- A long-term plan for teaching and learning that includes structured, daily lesson models
- Consistent unit features to facilitate teaching and learning
- Supporting materials that provide additional review and practice of the content taught in class

*Why these features?* A curriculum with these features will support instructional coherence and consistency within and across classrooms and grade levels.

### Think *Engaging!*

- A classroom arrangement with literacy-enriched learning centers featuring a wide variety of books and visuals
- Structured learning tasks and routines that promote interactive play and inquiry

*Why these features?* Educators need clear steps and quality materials to create a literacy-enriched learning environment that is structured, interactive, and engaging.

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