

OER Benefits & Adoption Tips

Benefits of OER



OER provides the flexibility to customize through the 5Rs. “The ability to reformat was very helpful,” says Dennis Regus, Curriculum Coordinator for Menifee Union School District. “Our district mantra is that no curriculum, no matter how good, is ever going to meet the needs of all students so it’s expected teachers will alter it—make additions, subtractions, changes—to meet the needs of the students.”

Currently, many OER content providers do not customize instructional materials to fit local needs. Districts that are adopting OER will likely have to change or modify content themselves rather than rely on content creators.

With OER, **no contract means not getting locked in**. For example, Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District now has the flexibility to request additional consumables, teachers’ additions, or printed materials only when, and if, they need them.

“If our teachers still like it [the OER materials] after five years, we can just keep going. We don’t need to re-up with the publisher,” says Jennifer Roush, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Fairfield Unified School District.

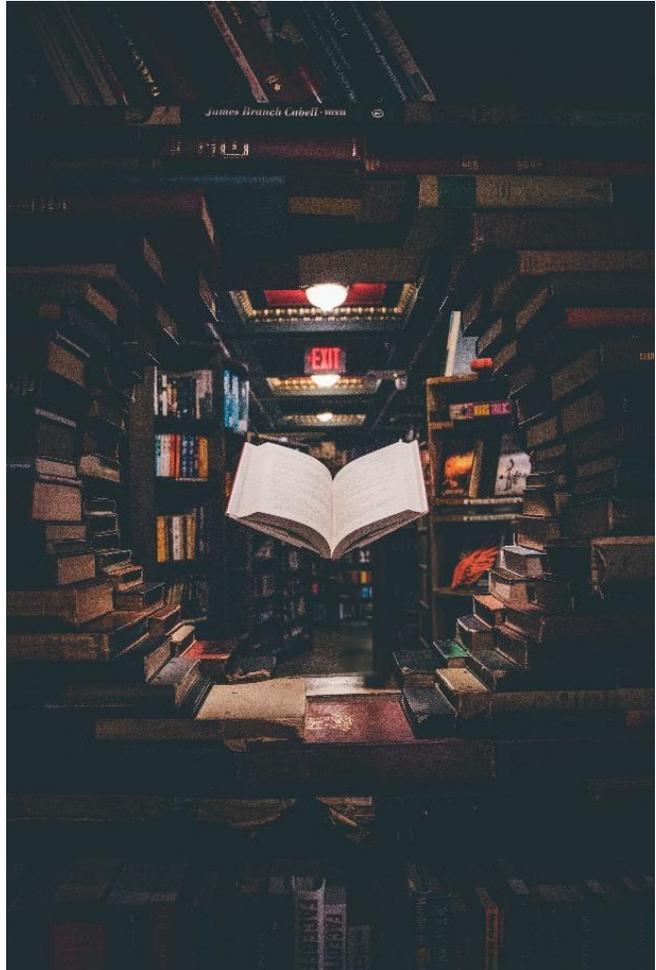
“The fact that we can now evaluate our curriculum needs each year is a significant benefit to the district,” stated Mr. Regus of Menifee Union. “Workbooks are our biggest cost, and because we have one-to-one Chromebooks, some of our teachers opt to access the OER online.”

Tips for Adopting OER

Tip #1: Ensure you have **strong district leadership** in support of considering OER materials. The OER materials market has grown and many OER materials in the market now are high-quality. It’s important to the success of your adoption that your leadership knows the potential benefits of OER and the importance of considering it alongside traditional materials in an adoption process.

Tip #2: Just like a traditional materials adoption, be sure to involve your **teachers to lead** the adoption process of new OER materials. “Teachers need to really believe in what’s being adopted,” says Jenn Roush, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction, “and they need to find value in it. We can’t forget that they’re our content experts.”

Tip #3: Put **quality before cost savings**. It’s important to note that while the majority of programs provide free instructional materials, there is often a need to purchase additional content or print materials. For instance, in English Language Arts, some literature texts under traditional “all rights reserved” copyright must be purchased to implement the lesson components provided by OER instructional materials. In addition, some OER materials lack pre-tailored professional learning components. Districts may need to purchase additional guidance, tools, or programs to support teachers with implementation.



Tip #4: OER does not need to be on the state adoption list in order to adopt. As the California Department of Education states, “a school district may utilize instructional materials not adopted by the SBE, so long as the materials are aligned to state standards and a majority of the participants of any review process conducted by the district are classroom teachers who are assigned to the subject area or grade level of the materials being reviewed.” To adopt OER in California, there is a mandatory process that you should follow. Click [here](#) to learn more.