Tips for Launching OER in Schools

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It has been almost three years since the launch of the United States Department of Education's #GoOpen movement - the commitment to expand and accelerate the use of openly-licensed educational resources in schools across the country.

The commitment is to replace at least one textbook with open educational resources (OER) within one year, share in a community of practice with other school districts, and share the resources created with a Creative Commons license.

In the words of Simon Sinek, if you "start with the why" when thinking about #GoOpen, the answer is easy: "To provide equitable access of educational materials that are modifiable and shareable no matter the zip code of each school."

The how and the what can be tricky when thinking about scaling OER in your school or district, however. Here are five recommended steps to getting started.

1. **Assemble your crew.**
   Scaling OER requires a dedicated team of educators, instructional leaders, librarians, and technology leaders. In addition to these members, seek feedback from all education community stakeholders.

2. **Find your why.**
   The nuance will vary for every school. No two schools are alike, and all schools will encounter different hurdles and roadblocks along the way. Start with a few attainable, measurable goals when setting out on this journey.

3. **Assess your assets.**
   Examine current instructional materials and ask why you are using those and what the cost is to the district. This is an opportunity to find the gaps in your instructional materials, to see where you can do better, and to use that information as an entry point for scaling OER.

4. **Set your GPS coordinates.**
   Once you have assembled your crew, found your why, and assessed your assets, you will want to work backwards from your goal and develop a roadmap of benchmarks and milestones.

5. **Select the right tools.**
   Regardless of the course you chart with OER, keep in mind that OER is about ensuring that all students have access to high-quality, relevant educational materials.

Source: eSchool News ↗