



USER GUIDE

Courseware Test Prep

PURPOSE:

As practitioners, we have all seen both admissions tests and testing requirements change in many ways over the years. Schools have gone test optional and back again¹, states have developed preferences for specific tests, created regional scholarship opportunities tied to test scores, or outright eliminated testing requirements at state IHEs. The guidance for students has shifted just as frequently, and the tests themselves have also changed. Despite the change over time and in different regions, the tests are still here and in different ways for each of our affiliates.

At our National Office we have also developed partnerships with different test prep organizations over the years, and provided internal curriculum related to these tests. Similarly, affiliates have implemented a variety of different test prep programs, and each site still approaches this work very differently. Given the wide range of ways in which we approach test prep across the Collaborative, a one-size fits all national solution may not be realistic. That said, we do have access to a strong test prep resource that all affiliates can access and use for free, Courseware via Edmentum.

We know that affiliates have varying degrees of staff capacity and may have different goals and needs related to each site's test prep work. The hope is that Courseware can be a tool in our toolbox that affiliates can implement with their students. Further, Courseware can serve as a resource for affiliates to support them in meeting our test prep [Collaborative Standard](#), "Affiliates will provide or connect all high school students with SAT and/or ACT prep."

EDMENTUM AND COURSEWARE OVERVIEW:

Edmentum Overview:

In 2021, the Breakthrough National office started a national partnership with [Edmentum](#) to provide affiliates access to online assessment and learning tools. This critical partnership provides the Collaborative free licenses for [Exact Path](#) (our preferred student assessment), as well as [Study Island](#) and [Courseware](#), and has an annual collective value of approximately \$2.4 million. The National Office currently supports the administration and training in Exact Path and Courseware, but affiliates are able to access all three programs at no cost. For this user guide, we are focusing on one of Edmentum's products in particular, Courseware. You can learn more about Edmentum and its use across the Collaborative via our [Research and Evaluation Toolkit Google Site](#).

Courseware Overview:

[Courseware](#) is an online learning platform that houses more than 500 digital curricula for grade 6 through adult learners. The platform helps students reach college, career, and military readiness through flexible, personalized first-time credit, credit recovery, and expanded course access. Courseware's platform supports:

- Equitable access to learning
- Rigorous and engaging courses
- Dynamic curricular design
- Scaffolded instruction

The [Courseware course catalog](#) includes semester long core subject courses, SAT/ACT prep, Advanced Placement courses, and electives. Affiliates can also customize or create their own course using Courseware's lesson bank.

The National Office recommends that Courseware be used as a potential tool to support individualized student learning during the school year. Some affiliates currently use Courseware as a tutoring resource, for SAT/ACT and AP test prep.

Courseware 101:

To get started using Courseware, affiliates can reference Breakthrough's [Courseware 101 Training recording](#) and contact [Jenny Song](#) to set up a Courseware account for

them. Once staff have a Courseware account, they can use the Courseware 101 Training and the resources within this User Guide to explore the platform and set up a course for their students. **You can use this list of steps as a guide to getting started with Courseware:**

1. Watch [Courseware 101 Training recording](#).
2. Contact [Jenny Song](#) to set up your Courseware instructor account. See the "Exact Path Login Information" section of the [Exact Path Administration Guide](#) for more information on how to access your account.
3. Login to Courseware and familiarize yourself with the platform. You can refer to the [Courseware Student Management](#) and [Courseware Manage Courses](#) as you explore the platform.
4. Review the [Courseware Planning Guide](#), and complete the guide based on your intended use of Courseware.
5. Create course sections in Courseware according to your intended use. Use the [Courseware Manage Courses](#) resource as a reference.
6. Check that your students already have Exact Path accounts. If they do, you do not need to create new accounts for them to use Courseware. Follow the instructions in the "Create/Update Student & Instructor Accounts" section of the [Exact Path Administration Guide](#) to check student account records, and to set up accounts for any students who do not yet have one. You can also use this guide to create additional instructor accounts for other folks who may be teaching your Courseware courses.
7. Add students to your course sections, using the [Courseware Student Management](#) document as a reference.
8. Continue to complete tasks outlined in your version of the [Courseware Planning Guide](#) as you prepare for, implement, and reflect on Courseware use in your programming.

As you use Edmentum and Courseware, **you can always contact Breakthrough National Office Colleagues or Edmentum directly for support.**

- **Edmentum Technical Support:** Mon-Fri, 7AM-6PM CST: 800-447-5286, support@edmentum.com, <https://www.edmentum.com/support>
- If you are having trouble over a weekend, please first go to the [Edmentum support website](#) and check the system status.

- **For support with Courseware login information** for instructors and students, you can contact [Jenny Song](#), Breakthrough's Senior Manager of Research and Evaluation, or join [weekly Research and Evaluation Office Hours](#).
- For support with **Courseware curriculum and instructional design questions**, you can connect with [Linda Francis](#), Breakthrough's Manager of Learning and Instruction. Linda also hosts [weekly curriculum coffee chats](#).
- For questions related to **integrating Courseware into your high school program and using it for test prep**, contact [Sam Geary](#), Breakthrough's College Access and Success Manager or [join weekly office hours](#).
- You can also reach out to the [College Bound Directors Listserv](#) or [Google Space](#) **to ask affiliate colleagues about test prep best practices and their experiences using Courseware with their students.**

SAT/ACT COURSEWARE COURSES:

[Courseware's Course Catalog](#) contains over 500 digital curricula, but its SAT and ACT resources comprise 7 different courses. This suite of courses includes 4 ACT courses, (one for english, math, reading and science) and 3 SAT courses (one for reading, math, and writing/language).

In this section, we provide key resources for each course (a course syllabus and any instructor resources), as well as responses to the summative reflection questions used in our Curriculum Evaluation Tool for each course evaluation.

Course Evaluation Process:

At Breakthrough, we have access to a useful tool that can be used to evaluate different curricula. [The Curriculum Evaluation Tool](#) was created in 2021 by a group of National Office and affiliate colleagues to bring common language and standards across a variety of curricula used throughout the Collaborative. The evaluation tool is a set of criteria that norms what must be true in instructional plans for it to be considered holistically effective and of service to students and teachers. The end goal of the evaluation tool is to provide clarity for stakeholders of what aspects of their curricula they can both stand on and build on--creating quantitative and anecdotal data to identify the strengths and growth areas of each analyzed unit.

For Courseware's SAT/ACT courses, Sam Geary used the Curriculum Evaluation tool when reviewing each course. The purpose of this evaluation was to review the courses for alignment with Breakthrough's curricular norms and expectations, and to highlight strengths, areas of growth, and recommendations for use for each course to support affiliates in implementation. The evaluation was not conducted to review these courses in comparison to other SAT/ACT test prep curricula, but this could be an opportunity for exploration in the future. You can access the full CET sheet for all SAT/ACT Courseware courses [here](#).

Courseware SAT/ACT Courses: Overall Evaluation

The Courseware SAT and ACT Courses are all structured in a similar way, and each come with similar supporting resources. We have evaluated each course individually, but much of the feedback is redundant because of the similarities between the courses and their structure. See below an overall evaluation of the SAT and ACT courses. After that, you can check out each course individually for more specific information.

Summative Reflection Questions	Response
What did you find to be the key strength(s) of the curriculum? Explain with specific evidence.	Each Courseware ACT course provides a thorough, already built course that can be administered in a variety of different ways and can be adapted and customized. This enables practitioners to know that they are providing students with a comprehensive test prep experience for each ACT subject while also being able to adapt it easily to meet their needs. For example, an affiliate with a small subset of students taking the ACT test could assign this course to students to take and use independently with little instructor oversight. Alternatively, an affiliate with a more intensive test prep program for their students could create a custom course that incorporates this curriculum and use it with a full group/more structured program.
What are the emerging assets of the curriculum? Explain with specific evidence.	While these courses provide multiple opportunities for students to practice writing and reflection, it could provide more specific guidance to practitioners re: grading and providing feedback to students. The "Introduction to Edmentum Courseware" resource includes an open-ended question rubric for instructors, but this is general to all courses, and may not be suitable for feedback needed specifically for the questions included in the different ACT courses.
What did you find to be the key growth area(s) of the curriculum? Explain with specific evidence.	Other than in units that have built-in SEL components, like the "Ecological Issues and Crises" unit in the ACT Science course, there is not much SEL information/alignment within these courses. Breakthrough staff could create a custom course incorporating this curriculum so they can also add their own activities that may be more SEL-oriented. In particular, there is no big-picture information about admissions

	testing or the ACT, including the history of testing and ways in which it impacts different student populations, and affiliates could fill this important gap with their own content.
Recommendation	These courses are great options for affiliates/students in need of ACT prep resources. That said, each course should be thoroughly reviewed prior to use, and instructors should consider creating custom courses that include the content from the original ACT courses so they can add their own activities/information, especially when it comes to SEL and big-picture information about admissions testing and the ACT. Additionally, these courses are most valuable when used digitally and in their entirety, as they would need significant adaptation to be appropriate for non-virtual instruction. If planning to use this curriculum in parts or as an in-person supplement to other curricula, consider picking activities and adapting them for in-person use (ex: using ACT Courseware activities as a "Do now" activity during HS Super Saturday sessions to expose students to ACT content).

ACT Courses	SAT Courses
<u>PLATO Course ACT English v2.0</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course Syllabus</u> • <u>Instructor Guide</u> 	<u>PLATO Course SAT Mathematics v2.0</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course Syllabus</u> • <u>Instructor Guide</u>
<u>PLATO Course ACT Mathematics v2.0</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course Syllabus</u> • <u>Instructor Guide</u> 	<u>SAT Reading v3.0</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course Syllabus</u> • <u>Instructor Guide</u>
<u>PLATO Course ACT Reading v2.0</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course Syllabus</u> • <u>Instructor Guide</u> 	<u>PLATO Course SAT Writing and Language v2.0</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course Syllabus</u> • <u>Instructor Guide</u> • <u>Interpretation of Graphs Worksheet</u> • <u>Interpretation of Graphs Worksheet (Key)</u>
<u>ACT Science Reasoning v2.0</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Course Syllabus</u> • <u>Course Map</u> • <u>Instructor Guide</u> 	

IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION:

Program Considerations:

Each Breakthrough site is unique, and each site addresses SAT/ACT test prep in different ways. Courseware can be adapted to meet the needs of your affiliate, and to fit within the framework of your existing programming. When considering Courseware as a tool, you can start by working through the [Courseware Planning Guide](#) to determine how to best use it at your site. From there, you can also reflect on the following considerations:

- Courseware's test prep courses focus primarily on the content of each SAT or ACT subject- they do not cover broader testing information. These courses should not be administered in the absence of admissions testing programming that covers the history of admissions tests, how they operate, how test prep works, IHE test policies, etc.
- Each site has a different staffing structure, and capacity of staff also varies. Administration of Courseware test prep courses can be done using a single instructor or multiple instructors, and the courses can be broken out into different sections that can be differentiated or led by different instructors. Consider your staff's capacity, familiarity with test prep content, understanding of the Courseware platform, and proximity to students and families when determining who will instruct, and how many instructors/course sections to have.
- Your staff capacity and the urgency of test prep for your students can also influence how you administer Courseware. You can assign students to the stock SAT/ACT courses with no closing date and allow them to work through the courses with little to no oversight, or you can create custom courses with additional activities, with a specific time frame to complete, and actively track and report on grades. Consider how critical Courseware is as a test prep avenue for students, your time and capacity, and student engagement trends when determining how you set up your course.
- Courseware is a virtual tool, and how you use it may be determined by your access and/or student access to devices. The planning guide includes different delivery options depending on technology access. You can also use some components of courseware live and low-tech, such as printing off activities and adapting them to use within a Super Saturday session. That said, Courseware does not lend itself to being easily adapted for live, in-person instruction without student access to individual devices.

Regional Considerations:

As you plan to implement this resource, you can consider your affiliate's regional context. Factors like race, language, location, college cost, admissions requirements etc. can influence how you might choose to use the tool.

For example, if you have a large population of students and families who speak languages other than English, you may need to independently explore the Courseware accessibility tools (like the translation function) to ensure that they are sufficient, especially if you will be inviting families to support their students with Courseware.

Depending on your regional context, you may choose to focus on either the ACT or SAT, or may omit one or more of the ACT or SAT-specific courses. If you live in a state where public IHEs are test-optional or test-blind, you may choose to use Courseware with a subset of students who intend on applying to schools requiring test scores, or where scores will be particularly beneficial. Further, student academic competitiveness or financial factors may influence how you determine which students participate in Courseware (ex: students who plan to attend a community college for GPA or financial reasons may opt out if they do not need test scores).

Your local context can also shape your test prep timeline. You may need to consider free, full school SAT or ACT test dates, regional college and financial aid/scholarship deadlines, etc. that may influence a student's testing timeline.

Finally, given the complicated history of admissions testing² and its disproportionate impact on different identity groups³, it is important to inform students about this broader context prior to starting test prep.

Delivery Options:

Depending on your site structure and program goals, you can implement Courseware in different ways.

- Courseware's SAT/ACT test prep courses can be used as the primary test prep program for an affiliate. If you plan to use Courseware in this way, consider adding additional content to the courses themselves or prior to administering the courses that covers admissions testing, its history, how it works, etc. You can

consult [Breakthrough's College Bound in a Box resources](#) for these supplemental test prep workshops and resources.

- Depending on your local context and student population, you can choose to administer all SAT and ACT Courseware courses to students, or can assign a subset of them. If Courseware will be the primary form of test prep that your students are using, you may choose to assign all courses to ensure that they have access to both ACT and SAT prep prior to testing. If your students have already taken pre-tests or had some exposure to test prep and have a specific test that they would like to focus on preparing for, you could assign them either the SAT or ACT courses. The courses can be further individualized by hiding or omitting certain activities or assignments to align their course with student areas of growth.
- Courseware can be used entirely virtually, with you assigning courses to students and then completing them independently or in a Breakthrough setting. For sites with regular in-person touchpoints with students (like weekly tutoring/office hours, Super Saturdays), an in-person administration may make sense, and can enable you to check in with students in person while they work on their courses.
- Courseware can be adapted for a hybrid of low-tech administration, but this requires more effort for the instructor. An example of this might be for an instructor to pull some of the activities from a course and adapt them for in-person instruction. It would be very difficult to adapt an entire course to be instructor-led in an in-person setting, so low-tech adaptations should be limited to specific activities or instruction of additional content to supplement the Courseware content.
- Timing of administration should align with your affiliate's local test prep timeline. Many affiliates conduct test prep with students during the second semester of 11th grade or the summer after 11th grade, but some opt to do test prep earlier. The timing will depend on the deadlines your students will have for admissions and financial aid, as well as on your program structure and capacity.
- You can choose to conduct test prep over a long period of time (ex: an entire semester), or in a shortened period of time (like an intensive 2-week summer program). Prep should be timed to lead up to a SAT/ACT date so students are able to use their knowledge while it is still fresh.

Parent/Guardian Involvement:

Parents/guardians should be involved at every juncture. We recommend that parents/guardians be informed prior to students taking courses on Courseware so that they are aware of the resource, what to expect, and how they can support their student. Courseware is a tool for test prep, but does not provide the important context around what admissions tests are, why and how we prepare for them, their history, etc. This content will need to be provided alongside Courseware information.

Because Courseware is a virtual platform, it is possible that your students may be completing coursework or accessing their courses at home. Parents/guardians can be a valuable partner in supporting students to complete their Courseware assignments. To prepare parents/guardians to be involved in their students' Courseware journey, consider holding a parent/guardian info session or orientation, sending messaging home to families about Courseware, and checking in with families along the way on their students' progress.

Some parents/guardians may want to be more hands-on with their student's Courseware courses. You can offer training to families to teach them how to access their student's Courseware accounts, and how to view their progress, etc. This will enable families to decide how involved they want to be in their student's test prep, and can ensure that they have access to updated information about their students progress. After multiple administrations of Courseware, you may find that some parents/guardians who have used Courseware with their students can also be helpful messengers and resources for information about the platform to families of younger Breakthrough students.

Courseware includes some accessibility tools, such as a translation feature for tutorials, and also has some parent/guardian resources available in other languages. That said, you may need to create in-house resources to accommodate families at your site who speak other languages or may need additional context to be able to best support their students. Because Courseware is a standard resource, this could be an opportunity for affiliates to collaborate with one another to share independently created Courseware resources, such as a parent information sheet that has been translated into multiple languages.

Courseware resources for families:

- [Getting Started with Courseware: Parent & Family Introduction Video](#)
- [Courses Guide for Students and Their Parents or Guardians](#)
- [A Parent Guide: Support Your Child During Virtual Learning](#)
- [Courseware Parent Letter \(English\)](#)
- [Courseware Parent Letter \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Edmentum Sensei for Courseware Families](#)

RESOURCES:

See below for links to associated resources.

Breakthrough Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courseware SAT/ACT Curriculum Evaluation Tool• College Access and Success Google Site• Breakthrough Curriculum Google Site<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Courseware Curriculum Resource Page• Breakthrough Research and Evaluation Toolkit Google Site<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Edmentum Overview◦ Edmentum Instructional Supports• Courseware 101 Training (October 2024)• Exact Path Administration Guide
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courseware Planning Guide • Courseware Student Management • Courseware Manage Courses • Grade-Specific User Guides/Curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 7th Grade Courseware User Guide and Curriculum ◦ 8th Grade Courseware User Guide and Curriculum ◦ 9th Grade Courseware User Guide and Curriculum
External Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courseware Login Page (Account is "brktcb") • Courseware Learn and Support Help Site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Instructor Resources for Higher Ed, College and Career Readiness Courses ◦ Instructor Resources for AP Courses ◦ Instructors: Getting Started in Courseware ◦ Create a Custom Course ◦ Resources for Parents and Guardians • Courseware SAT/ACT Course Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Introduction to Edmentum Courseware ◦ SAT Course Resources ◦ ACT Course Resources

FEEDBACK:

Breakthrough's College Bound in a Box resources are meant to be reflective of the great work that our affiliates are doing collectively, while also being adaptable based on feedback and new information. Should you have any feedback on this resource, feel free to complete [this College Bound in a Box feedback form](#) to let us know!

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3. Institutional Research and Academic Planning. *Relationship of the SAT/ACT to College Performance at the University of California*. University of California; January 2020. Accessed March 25, 2025.
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