

Guidelines for Selecting Classroom Resources

Learning resources purchased through the 40% credit allocation must be consistent with the principles of learning which provide the foundation for public school programs in Nova Scotia and must be evaluated for bias, using the *Bias Evaluation Instrument* provided by the Department.

The Principles of Learning

- Students construct knowledge and make it meaningful in terms of their prior knowledge and experiences.
- Learning is a process of actively constructing knowledge.
- Learning is enhanced when it takes place in a social and collaborative environment.
- Students need to continue to view learning as an integrated whole.
- Learners must see themselves as capable and successful.
- Learners have different ways of knowing and representing knowledge.
- Reflection is an integral part of learning.

Therefore, resources that are consistent with these principles should

- ensure that students' diverse prior experiences are recognized, valued, and activated as the beginning of new learning experiences
- begin a new learning experience by providing students with opportunities to identify what they already know and can do relevant to the topic, concept, or skill to be addressed and prompt them to communicate this prior knowledge and ability in a variety of ways
- challenge students to use their prior knowledge to make a prediction or conjecture and act upon it, thereby allowing them to examine the validity and usefulness of their current understandings
- ensure that students are invited or challenged to engage actively in the construction of meaningful understanding through inquiring, predicting, exploring, collecting, drawing, or by engaging in educational play, writing, and/or talk
- ensure that learners have opportunities to engage in experiences where collaboration and discourse are key features of the learning environment
- help students to make connections within subject areas, across subject areas, and with the world beyond the school and to engage in activities that require reflection on those connections
- situate students' learning in real-life contexts which are personally meaningful and socially relevant
- ensure that learners see themselves reflected in the learning materials used in the school and provide learning opportunities that respect and support students' racial, cultural, and social identity
- be developmentally appropriate and provide opportunities for a broad range of learners to experience genuine learning success
- communicate clear expectations for all students and offer students multiple ways of demonstrating what they know, are able to do, and value

- recognize, acknowledge, and build on students' diverse ways of knowing and representing their knowledge
- encourage students and teachers to see themselves as learners and prompt them to reflect on and communicate what they have learned and how they have learned it

Criteria for Selection

The following criteria will be used as they apply:

- learning resources shall meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation;
- learning resources shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected;
- learning resources shall have aesthetic, literary, and/or social values;
- physical format and appearance of learning resources shall be suitable for the intended use;
- learning resources chosen shall be developed by competent authors and producers;
- learning resources shall be designed to help students gain an awareness of our pluralistic society, as well as an understanding of the many important contributions made to our civilization by women and minority and ethnic groups;
- learning resources shall be designed to motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behaviour and to comprehend their own duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges as participating citizens in our society;
- learning resources shall be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses;
- biased or slanted learning resources may be provided to meet specific curriculum objectives; for example, to recognize propaganda and its purpose in a given context or to balance an argument.(See Bias Evaluation Instrument)

- The selection of learning resources on controversial issues will be directed towards maintaining a balanced collection representing various views. Learning resources shall clarify historical and contemporary forces by presenting and analysing intergroup tension and conflict objectively, placing emphasis on recognizing and understanding social and economic problems.
- Emphasis will be placed on the selection of Canadian learning resources where appropriate. These resources include book and non-book learning materials by or about a Canadian person, about a region or event, and/or published or produced in Canada.

Bias Evaluation

Every resource acquired under the 40% allocation requires the completion of a bias evaluation. The *Bias Evaluation Instrument* has been designed to facilitate the process. This tool provides information on the policies and criteria governing bias evaluation. Definitions and examples have been provided for recognition of bias issues. The section on Assessment Criteria provides a series of analytical questions regarding each type of bias issue so that evaluators may identify the various aspects of bias present in the resource and provide for ways in which teachers and students might address these issues within the classroom.