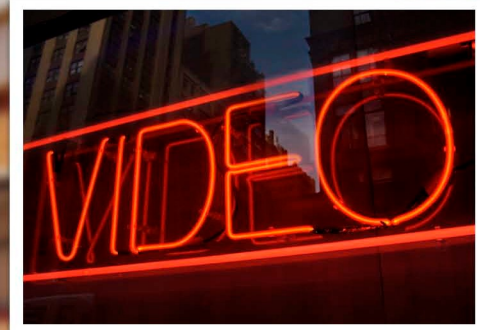# A Guide for
Evaluation and Selection of
Learning Resources

School District of Holmen

A Guide for
Evaluation
& Selection
of
Learning Resources

Selection of Learning Resource

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to expand upon the general criteria for selection of learning resources as stated in the *Guidelines for the Evaluation and Selection of Learning Resources* document, as well as to expound upon specific selection criteria in the areas of content, instructional design, technical design, and social consciousness.
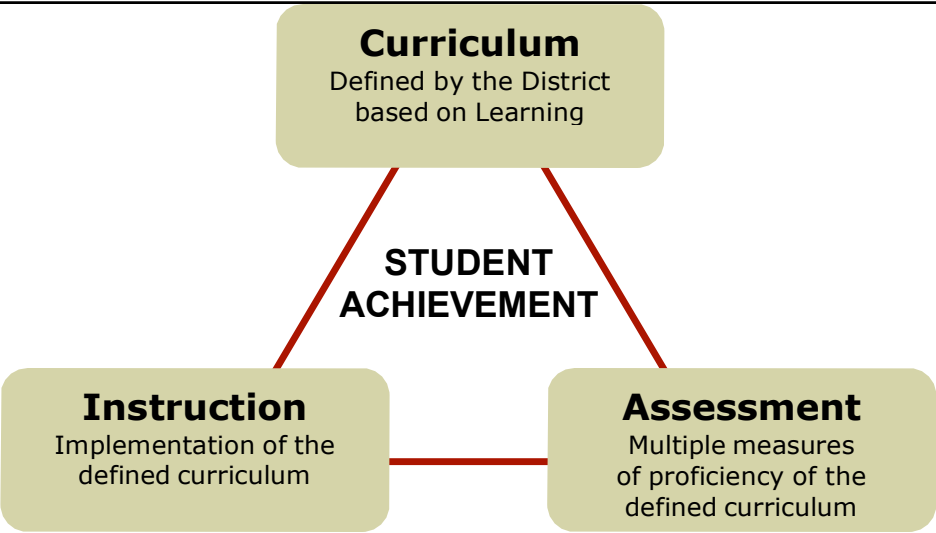
The overall goal must be to support the learning outcomes of the curriculum. The consideration of curriculum fit must be applied rigorously to all mediums of presentation.

These are guidelines that may be useful to district personnel, administrators, teacher-librarians, teachers, students, and members of the community. The forms that appear in the appendices are to help in the selection/evaluation process.

It is our belief that school programs will be enhanced through a clear and consistent approach around the selection of learning resources and the procedures for dealing with challenged materials.

Objectives of Selection	The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for the evaluation and selection of learning resources for the School District of Holmen.
Statement of Principle	**A.** For the purposes of this document, we use the following terms: (1) "*Learning Resources*" will refer to any person(s) or any material (whether acquired or locally produced) with instructional content or function that is used for formal or informal teaching/learning purposes. Learning resources may include, but are not limited to, print and non-print materials; audio, visual, electronic, and digital hardware/software resources; and human resources. (2) "*Resource-Based Learning*" will refer to the approach to core curricula that actively involves students, teachers, and teacher- librarians in the effective use of a wide range of print, non-print and human resources. This approach fosters the development of individual students by accommodating their varied interests, experiences, learning styles, needs, and ability levels. (3) "*Selection Tools/Aids*" will refer to bibliographies that include an evaluative or critical annotation for each item, providing recommendations; bibliographic information for each item; purchasing information; access to entries by author, title, subject, format, and audience to aid in locating recommended materials; and analytical indices, appendices, or other special features useful in helping students and teachers locate portions of works that may be in the school's collection. Selection tools/aids exist in a variety of print and digital formats, e.g., books, reviewing periodicals, and bibliographic essays. **B.** The resource-based learning approach supports, enriches, and helps to implement the educational program of the school through the interaction of professional personnel, students, and parents/guardians in the school community. It is the duty of professional staff to provide students with a wide range of materials at varying levels of difficulty, with a diversity of appeal, and representative of different points of view. **C.** It is the responsibility of all professional staff in the School District of Holmen (1) to select resources that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the diversity of interests and perspectives, and the variety of abilities, learning styles and maturity levels of the learners served; (2) to select resources that will stimulate growth in knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and knowledge of societal standards; (3) to select resources that positively and accurately reflect diverse perspectives on controversial issues, ensuring that learners have an opportunity to develop, under guidance, the practice of critical analysis and the ability to make informed judgments in their daily lives;

	(4) to select resources representative of gender, appearance, sexual orientation, ability/disability, belief system, family structure, race and ethnicity, and socio-economic status; (5) to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate to the school community by considering the appropriateness of placing principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of specific resources. **D.** While recommendations for selection of learning resources involves many partners, such as district personnel, administrators, teacher-librarians, teachers, students, and members of the community, the responsibility for coordinating the selection and acquisition of school learning resources rests with Director of Instructional Services, the Curriculum Chair, teachers of the content area, and principals. It is understood that teachers will be selecting and acquiring learning resources for classrooms. Teachers should consider the criteria outlined in this document when making their selections. If clarification is required regarding the appropriateness of a resource, teachers should consult with the Director of Instructional Services.

Guiding Principles:	Central to the work in School District of Holmen has been the work surrounding the Common Characteristics of High Performing Schools. This large body of research cites nine characteristics that make a successful school. They are as follows:
	
	    A. Clear and Shared Purpose
	    B. High Standards of Expectations
	    C. Effective School Leadership
	    D. High Level of Collaboration and Communication
	    E. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards
	    F. Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning
	    G. Focused Professional Development
	    H. Supportive Learning Environment
	    I. High Levels of Community and Parent Involvement
	
	As the context of the nine characteristics is examined, others such as Robert Marzano"s work on What Works in Schools (Marzano, 2003) makes clear that providing students with a "guaranteed and viable curriculum…" that is well-aligned to academic standards is a critical piece of achieving high student achievement. However, this research also points out that high standards for every student cannot be achieved by curriculum alone. While educators continually strive to identify highly effective instructional programs, often searching for the "silver bullet" solution, the selection and implementation of quality instructional materials must include also include a strong emphasis on quality instruction and ongoing professional development as critical components of any effective program implementation.

	Curriculum Defined by the District based on Learning STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT **Instruction** Implementation of the defined curriculum **Assessment** Multiple measures of proficiency of the defined curriculum
District-wide Adoption for Coherence	The selection and purchase of instructional materials are high cost activities that play a primary role in shaping the future success of their students. To increase coherence of learning opportunities for students, as well as maximize investment costs of materials and training, the practice of a single district-wide adoption is increasingly important. With such a practice, the district selection committee will be charged with recommending a consistent adopted instructional materials program for all schools within the district, rather than presenting a number of acceptable programs among which schools or grade levels can choose. We must ensure: • That there is vertical and horizontal alignment of standards to instructional materials; • Teacher collaboration on student performance within and across buildings and grade levels ; • Increased efficiency in detecting and correcting gaps or omissions of content and skills; • Increased capacity within a district to improve instruction in targeted areas • Consistency in instructional programs for highly mobile students as they move from school to school within a district; • Efficiency in maintenance, monitoring and adjustment of materials to meet standards • Efficiency and effectiveness of student assessment and program evaluation Increased consistency in professional development, including training of new staff each year; and • Effective identification, development, and training of interventions and enrichment activities for all students.
Consensus	This guide suggests the use of a consensus process when reviewing/developing curriculum and in the selection of instructional materials. Since the district standards/curriculum are a reflection of the total community, it is appropriate that a consensus model be used. To ensure that end, the adoption committees must strive to collect objective data for use in

	making the ultimate decision.
	"Consensus is a mindset as well as a process. Authentic consensus requires that team members are more concerned about community and less concerned about power. Authentic consensus requires that team members are more focused on successful team productivity and less focused on individual credit. Consensus demands mature behavior on the part of all team members. The leader must give sponsorship to the consensus process by holding self and others accountable for open, honest participation." Hoffman and Ness, Vista Associates, 1998
	There are a variety of consensus models available for use. Knowing the characteristics of the committee, the facilitator can choose a consensus model that is effective with such a committee. Using a consensus model usually defuses tension and frustration that sometimes occurs in such committees. It allows the committee to make the best decision for its district, school and each student. It reminds the committee that their first priority is the selection of instructional materials that will ensure student success.
	A decision-making or consensus model based on objective criteria and procedures should be developed as one of the first duties of the committee so that all members understand how the final decision is to be made. Some suggestions are: • Use objective criteria for evaluation and for determining the final decision. • Consider using a formal ranking tool to sort and prioritize information. • Follow the original process, and trust the process to bring consensus.
Working w/ Publisher Representatives	In most cases, the publisher representative who calls on the district will become a very helpful person in the adoption process; treat them as respected colleagues and as partners in the process. Some guidelines that will help the process to be more efficient: • Ask publisher representative to work with the Director of Instructional Services only and to have no contact with individual committee members or schools. • Samples from publisher go only to the Director of Instructional Services. • Expect to see all components of a program (sample sets often are incomplete). • Keep publisher representative apprised of timeline and expectations throughout the process and decisions. • Do not accept free "gifts"; remain objective and ethical. • Request immediate phone access to consultant on days of screening and evaluation of programs.
Tips for	A well-run meeting will help the committee to accomplish its goals timely,

Conducting a Meeting	efficiently and effectively. Some meeting tips are:
	    • Be well-planned and have a printed agenda.
	    • Begin and end on time.
	    • Restate overall purpose to focus meeting.
	    • Use strategies to get all members to participate. Evaluate the meeting.
	    • Create sub-committees when needed.
	    • Write minutes of meeting before members depart.

Communication Tips	The success of an adoption often hinges upon the communication between the committee and the teachers and administrators who are serving in the schools.
	Those people are entitled to know how the process is moving ahead as the decisions will impact both their students and themselves. Some tips to build effective communications are:
	  A. Meeting Minutes:
	    (1) Ask a member to keep notes throughout the meeting
	    (2) Complete "draft" of meeting minutes before departure from meeting
	    (3) Chair and committee members discuss minutes with their direct principal and grade level of content area team.
	    (4) Meeting minutes are sent to the Director of Instructional Services.
	    (5) Distribute minutes to all faculty
	  B. Allow time for staff feedback at the beginning of each meeting

Keep Others Informed	The responsibilities of other people in the district who are not administrators or teachers are impacted by the actions of the adoption committee in various ways.
	Show them their time and involvement is valuable by keeping them informed. They are:
	  A. Human resources (substitutes)
	  B. Clerical support team (meeting announcements, book orders)
	  C. Business office (processing purchase orders)
	  D. Custodial/Maintenance staff (notifying of shipment, moving books, storing supplies, relocating books/materials in schools)

Professional Development	Professional development will be necessary in a variety of ways before and following the adoption process. Prior to the adoption, the district might want to invite a content area specialist to meet with the committee to update the members as to the latest research and instructional strategies in that discipline. This can bring the committee to a base line of common understanding that will serve to enhance their effectiveness during the committee work.

Responsibility for Selection of Learning Resources	**A.** In selecting learning resources, professional personnel should evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and consult reputable, professionally prepared selection tools/aids and other appropriate sources. The actual resource should be examined whenever possible.
	B. Recommendations for acquisition must involve the Director of Instructional Services, Curriculum Chair, Teachers that will be using the resource(s) to implement the curriculum and the community, as appropriate.
	C. Selection criteria should be utilized to evaluate learning resources chosen for classroom use.

General Learning Resources: Considerations

The district personnel and teachers who are selecting learning resources must consider content, format, methodology, evaluation, assessment, and treatment of social issues. Equally important considerations are the wide range of audiences, (e.g., age, first language, special needs), as well as the purpose, characteristics, and use of the various media selections. Every effort should be made to ensure that resources are selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses.

Content/Format/Design

Learning Resources should
- support and be consistent with curriculum outcomes
- be developed by competent authors and producers and meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation
- 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
- have aesthetic, literary, and/or social value
- have a physical format and appearance suitable for their intended use
- be one of a variety of media presentation modes

Biased or slanted learning resources may be provided to meet specific instructional outcomes (for example, to recognize propaganda and its purpose in a given context, to extend critical-thinking skills, and/or to balance an argument).

Learning resources on controversial issues should be selected with a focus on maintaining a balanced collection representing various views. Such resources might be chosen, for example, to show the relationship between contemporary issues and past issues, with an emphasis placed on recognizing and understanding social and economic challenges.

Methodology

Learning resources should
- be activity-based rather than lecture-based
- draw students into group and co-operative learning, as well as provide for individual growth
- promote hands-on activities and an applied approach to learning
- encourage students to question, think, react, reflect, and decide in ways that develop critical-thinking and decision-making skills
- offer choice and flexibility, as appropriate, to meet needs related to individual aptitudes, abilities, learning styles, multiple intelligences, and interests.

Assessment/ Evaluation	Learning resources should • be supportive of continuous learning by the individual • provide for both formative and summative assessment/evaluation as appropriate • be relevant to the needs of the student.
Social Considerations	Learning resources should • reflect sensitivity to gender, and cultural and ethnic heritage • promote equality by enhancing students' understanding of a multicultural and diverse society • be chosen to help students understand the many important contributions made to our civilization by minority groups and people/groups with a variety of ethnic backgrounds • be designed to motivate students and staff to examine their attitudes and behaviors, and to comprehend their duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges as participating citizens in our society • support/promote students' self-esteem and respect for the self-esteem of others • recognize the integration of students with special needs (as part of the class) • reflect good safety practices in texts and visuals (e.g., use of helmets, seatbelts) • portray positive role models • use language appropriate to the intended audience, and exclude slang, vernaculars, or expletives that detract from meaning.

1. Gender Equity

- Education that is accessible and appropriate is sensitive to how gender shapes and is shaped by experience and learning.
- Female and male students may have different methods of learning and different educational needs. In a gender-equitable education system, all methods of learning are respected equally, and students with gender-specific needs or characteristics are supported and provided with resources appropriately and equally.
- Language influences the way in which people understand and interpret the world around them; therefore, the language of recommended learning resources should be inclusive, but not necessarily neutral, and should promote equality for males and females.
- Students are influenced by attitudes and values around them. It is important that recommended learning resources reflect balanced images and information about males and females and support broad choices and many roles for both sexes.
- Some materials contain an inherent gender bias because of historical or cultural context. When such resources are used, students should be made aware of the context.

2. Multiculturalism

- Students should experience a sense of belonging coupled with pride in their heritage. Learning materials should raise levels of awareness about ethnocentrism, bias, stereotypes, discrimination, and racism, and teach or provide examples of inclusive, pro-social behaviors.
- Students from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds need to see themselves reflected in educational materials. The sharing of cultural heritages, languages, traditions, values, and lifestyles enriches the education of all students.
- To these ends, resource collections should include materials that
  - increase awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity
  - create sensitivity to and respect for differences and similarities within and among groups
  - affirm and enhance self-esteem through pride in heritage
  - promote cross-cultural understanding, citizenship, and racial harmony
  - reflect and validate students' cultural experiences.

Audience Considerations

The range of audiences to consider when evaluating resources includes students whose first language is not English; and students with special needs, (e.g., physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, hearing impairments, visual impairments, and special gifts and talents).

1. English Language Learners

The following elements help to clarify meaning for English for English Language Learners (ELL).

Text Organization

Reading comprehension is aided by
- tables of contents
- indexes
- glossaries
- chapter titles that match main idea
- identification of subtopics
- overviews or advance organizers
- summaries.

Language

Resources should use language that features
- controlled vocabulary
- clear sentence structure
- logical and clear development of main ideas supported by relevant details
- paragraph development
- use of signal words (ordinals) for sequence, emphasis, and comparison
- contextual clues.

Visuals

Comprehension is aided by
- useful graphics (not just pictures)
- graphics that support, enhance, and re-explain main ideas
- graphics located near relevant text
- use of a variety of graphics and illustrations to support concepts and thought processes.

2. Students with Special Needs

The following considerations will aid students with special needs, whether in inclusive classrooms or specialized settings.

Language and Text Organization
- Avoid complex sentences.
- Use simplified vocabulary, avoiding excessive dialect or idioms.
- Express concepts at a literal level.
- Ensure that each sentence contains only one main concept.
- Provide clear, simple instructions that can be broken down into component steps.

- Highlight important information for easy recognition.
- Provide organizers, in advance, as well as definitions of key vocabulary, with illustrations.
- Provide clear structure and appearance, focussing student attention to key ideas.

Visuals
- Include illustrative material (pictures, graphs, etc.) that supports text.
- Use real life pictures where possible.

General
- Provide multi-sensory instruction.
- Avoid unnecessary complexity in activities.
- Provide opportunities for approaching concepts at various levels of complexity.
- Illustrate concepts by real-life examples connected to students' experiences.
- Include explicit aids for memorization and review, and "how-to" instructions.
- Offer group work and paired peer activities.
- Provide summaries of important information.
- Ensure age appropriateness, even if adapted in language, conceptual complexity, and structure to meet intellectual ability.
- Be conscious of spacing of print (lots of white back ground, large margins) and font size.

B. Students with Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities have normal cognitive potential with disorders in their learning: significant difficulties in perception and the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, and mathematical abilities. These difficulties often impact memory, problem-solving abilities, and attention span. Students with learning disabilities may have trouble processing, generalizing, or expressing their ideas in writing, even when they understand the content.

Language and Text Organization
- Avoid excessive dialect or idioms.
- Define and bold new vocabulary in text.
- Highlight key information.
- Vary font styles for concept purposes, not just for variety.
- Provide clear structure and appearance, focussing student attention to key ideas.
- Provide simple, clear instructions that are broken down into component steps.
- Note use of subtitles in nonfiction materials.

Visuals
- Use clear, uncluttered illustrative material (pictures, graphs, etc.).
- Illustrate main idea with action that is central and attention grabbing.
- Show single actions that focus attention.
- Illustrate important concepts both visually, and through sound.

General
- Provide means other than print to access information (e.g., support materials on tape or video).
- Express concepts, and provide opportunities for approaching them at various levels of complexity.
- Provide explicit aids for memorization and review, and "how-to" instructions.
- Provide multi-sensory instruction.
- Provide organizers that structure the learning task for the student.
- Provide opportunities for group work and paired peer activities.
- Allow for processing time, and time to use compensatory strategies.
- Suggest various means students may use to demonstrate understanding of concepts (e.g., oral or written material, including work done with a word processor; tapes, and video, demonstrations or performances, portfolios).
- Provide, in advance, organizers to support information on video.
- Review and summarize key concepts using tools such as graphic organizers.
- Illustrate concepts by real-life examples connected to students' experiences.

C. Students with Visual Impairments

Students may have a range of difficulties with vision, including being blind, being partially sighted, or having low vision. These students have visual acuity problems that interfere with optimal learning such that they need learning materials that are very clear and often adapted in size, complexity, or format.

Language and Text Organization
- Use clear pronoun referents that do not require visual supports for clarity.
- Use large type.
- Use well-spaced text.
- Avoid hyphenated text.
- Have wide margins.
- Use simple fonts with no overlap or running together of letters.
- Avoid random shifting of print sizes.
- Avoid columnar presentation.
- Separate print from visuals.
- Provide strong contrast between print and background, use white or pastel backgrounds.

- Provide predictable, consistent placement of print on the page or screen.
- Consider clarity of print quality, as many materials will require enlargement by a factor of up to six.
- Provide either tactual (braille, tactual drawings) or auditory (books on tape, e-text, sighted) materials for students who are totally blind

Visuals

- Use clearly shaped illustrations, avoid shadows.
- Use photographs that show single-focus events.
- Do not rely on color between letters, numbers, or objects to aid comprehension (color differences may not be perceivable).
- Use less, rather than more, image detail.
- Avoid clutter and glare on the page (glossy/laminated paper and charts).
- Use illustrations that are directly relevant to text rather than peripheral.
- Portray action center/front with characters in foreground.

General

- Use distinctly different and contrasting voices to allow distinction of characters.
- Avoid background sound that competes with significant aspects.
- Avoid distortion of sound, especially speech.

D. Students with Language Difficulties

Students may have a range of difficulties in language development, both receptive and expressive.

Language and Text Organization

- Use clear pronoun referents or antecedents.
- Avoid too many synonyms for the same word.
- Connect thoughts using simple coordinating conjunctions (and, so, but) rather than less common connectors (nevertheless, as a consequence, etc.).
- Avoid, or use minimally, passive voice verbs, expressions of negation, multiple modifying phrases in one sentence, colloquial or idiomatic expressions.
- Make careful, limited use of conditional expressions (such as, assuming that, etc.).
- Ensure that questions avoid long, involved grammatical structures.
- Use cause, and, effect expressions in simple form.
- Use footnotes or explanatory notations for difficult words or complex concepts.

Visuals
- Place illustrations as close as possible to relevant text.

General
- Ensure that context increases rather than decreases clarity.
- Caption all dialogue.

E.   Students with Hearing Impairments

Students may have a range of difficulties with hearing, from being deaf to being hard of hearing. Language proficiency for hearing impaired students will increase with exposure to materials that make required links to the curriculum and discussions at or slightly above the appropriate age/grade level. Comprehension is essential, and can be facilitated by using strategies appropriate for the individual's assessed needs and scaffolding vocabulary/language proficiency.

Language and Text Organization
- Use tables of contents, indices, glossaries, summaries.
- Provide chapter titles that match main idea.
- Use identification of subtopics.
- Use overviews or advance organizers.
- Use clear pronoun referents or antecedents.
- Avoid, or use minimally, passive voice verbs, expressions of negation, multiple modifying phrases in one sentence, colloquial or idiomatic expressions.
- Use controlled vocabulary.
- Provide clear sentence structure.
- Use logical and clear development of main ideas supported by relevant details.
- Provide paragraph development.
- Use of signal words (ordinals) for sequence, emphasis, and comparison.
- Provide contextual clues.

Visuals
- Provide clarity of video images such that room lighting will allow for sign language interpretation of dialogue.
- Provide useful graphics (not just pictures).
- Use graphics that support, enhance, and re-explain main ideas.
- Use graphics located near relevant text.
- Provide various graphics and illustrations to support concepts and thought processes.

General
- Use captioned dialogue.
- Provide context that increases rather than decreases clarity.

F.   Students with Special Gifts and Talents

Students are considered gifted when they possess demonstrated or potential high capability with respect to intellect, or creativity, or have skills associated with specific disciplines (e.g., music). They may need instruction with approaches that allow for faster pace, greater scope and complexity, more variety, or opportunities for more independent learning. They can engage in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation at a greater depth than age peers.

When choosing resources for these students, consider the following approaches:
- Include jumping off points for independent study.
- Provide opportunities for open-ended and divergent thinking.
- Use a discovery learning approach.
- Encourage flexibility and creative problem solving.
- Provide options for increased pace.
- Encourage higher-level thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation).
- Refer to other sources of information for extended learning.
- Provide options for choice and decision making.

Media Considerations

The following information regarding learning resources has relevance ELL students and students with special needs.

1.   Print

There are numerous matters for consideration that are unique to print resources, most of which relate to readability.

Vocabulary
- Consider the amount of technical vocabulary used, and the devices used to interpret, explain, and define technical terms.
- Consider the general level of difficulty of non-technical words used (in terms of familiarity and abstractness).
- Realize that excessive use of idioms and dialect increase reading difficulty.

Sentence Structure
- Consider the complexity of sentence patterns typically used (simple, compound, complex), but be alert to attempts to simplify by omitting needed connections between ideas.
- Note that unusual or unpredictable sentence patterns and use of long, involved sentences will increase the reading difficulty; signal words associated with contrast, negation, and time (e.g., but, although, since, except, nevertheless) are not well understood by many students in special audiences.
- Consider frequency of pronoun use, especially where referents are ambiguous.

Paragraph Structure

- Note effective use and placement of topic sentences in paragraphs (usually easier if at beginning or end).
- Note whether paragraphs are cohesive and have a main point (some writers tend to write less cohesively than others).
- Look for logical development or expansion of the idea(s) presented, being aware of the need for connections that link paragraphs together in a logical sequence.

Overall Structure

- Look for devices such as chapter and unit overviews; advance organizers and summaries; and "how to use," "how to read," and "how to approach/study" information. These are even more effective if supported graphically by diagrams and charts.
- Note that features such as a table of contents, index, glossary, and chapter and topic titles that reflect content are all important reading aids for students.
- Check that the hierarchy of information and the relationship among ideas are clearly communicated through effective and efficient use of contrasting print size and style (look for a clean, clear structure without distraction provided by too frequent shifting of type size, style, and color).
- Check that questions provide for understanding prior to interpretation. It is helpful if categories of questions and activities indicate when the student should find the answer in the text and when other resources are needed to answer or perform expected tasks and activities.

Graphics/Illustrations

- Look for clarity in visuals. Visuals should not be dark, cluttered, or have too many competing elements.
- Look for effective placement to support textual content.
- Check that visuals assist with comprehension; visuals should be relevant and useful.
- Check to see if visuals will be clear if enlarged for student use, or verify that the current size is appropriate.
- Check that key content is not covered in small print captions (questions that are asked in captions should be answerable by students)
- Check that there are a variety of visuals (some visually impaired and learning disabled students are more successful with colour and line, while others are more successful with black and white and shapes).

2. DVD/Video

When a DVD/video is evaluated, the visual component becomes even more important. Narration, sound effects, and music are all factors to be considered. This medium is meant to engage its audience and keep interest piqued throughout its presentation. Today's students are sophisticated and demanding visual consumers. Educational video must strike a balance between education and entertainment; it must simultaneously engage and inform.

Considerations that educators should be aware of when evaluating DVDs/videos include variation in and length of presentation, age-appropriate narration, the provision of meaningful characters and situations, and opportunities for reflection. Varying the presentation style also helps with viewer attention. Humor can be an engaging communication tactic as long as it is appropriate to the audience level and to the message of the video. Vocabulary, sentence structure, and syntax can contribute to the educational value of any video. Suitability, as it relates to educational value and the audience's age and level of knowledge, should be assessed after viewing has taken place.

Another consideration in the evaluation of DVD/video programs is whether they are accompanied by a teacher's guide. A guide should contain the following:
- program log highlighting key points in the DVD/video with accompanying times
- synopsis
- background information
- student activities and questions
- glossary of terms
- suggestions for extension

3. Digital Resources

Choosing digital learning resources (e.g., computer software, interactive media, on-line resources) that use technology effectively can present a different set of challenges for educators. The main advantage of digital resources is their ability to customize experiences for students through interactivity, feedback, and constructive engagement. Presentations can be varied to meet the needs of the learner through different sequencing, alternative material choices, and varied prompting. Digital resources can also merge a variety of media into one experience through the combination of text, video, sound, and graphics. Where a digital resource provides a mix of media, the evaluation criteria for the specific media should be considered. Digital resources must meet the tests of usability and functionality. Further consideration is the practicality of the resource (e.g., content, context, and larger learning environment). The following questions should be considered during the evaluation process:

Does this resource have significant added value or capability over a non-digital resource? Does it include:

- interactive features
- possibilities for feedback for the student and for the teacher
- constructive engagement (e.g., will it engage students in a meaningful way over an extended period of time)
- possibilities for customizing content, environment, and pathways according to user needs?

Would this resource be usable for the majority of the target audience given considerations of support, training, and facilities available?

Is there some assurance of ongoing availability?

Is the resource designed for educational use, or is it more appropriate for home use?

The last consideration is intended to point out that there are numerous digital educational resources that may link to curriculum but lack the characteristics of a learning resource. A digital learning resource should take into account good instructional design, assessment strategies, and instructional support materials (e.g., teacher guides).

4. Web Resources

The Internet is just another medium to be understood. It does, however, require sharper critical thinking skills than other media, for the following reasons:

- The Internet is interactive, absorbing users in two-way communication.
- It is full of commercial environments that blend entertainment and advertising in subtle ways.
- Because it often lacks traditional editors or gatekeepers, all viewpoints appear to have equal weight.

Since the explosion of the World Wide Web, (with easy-to-use HTML editors, access to "free" home page space for anyone who has an Internet account, and the influx of commercial sites and advertisements) evaluation of Web sites has become much more difficult. With the huge amount of information available, it is imperative that students and teachers learn how to critically evaluate a site.

Three basic aspects of a web site should be considered during any evaluation. These are navigation and usability, authorship, and validity of content.

A. Navigation and Usability

In order to use a site effectively, and in order to get to the important information, a student must find a site navigable and easy to use. A site should provide for all types of learners. This can be done by offering hypertext links, so users can jump around, and a site map for the left-brained or concrete-sequential user.

B. Authorship

Sites should enable users to easily find out about the authors (where they work, what credentials make it appropriate for them to write about the topic, and how to get in touch with them for further questions). Web page authors have to expect that they will get e-mail from interested students asking for further explanation of a topic covered.

C. Validity of Content

The most important factor to consider when evaluating a Web site is the content. Students need to be able to recognize when a Web page is a thinly disguised commercial or opinion page, or when it is strictly a source of information. More importantly, the student needs to realize when each type of page is appropriate for his/her purpose or task. If possible, all information should be verified in a traditional edited print/electronic resource.

Specific Evaluation Criteria

The following specific criteria to evaluate learning resources have been grouped under four main headings: Content, Instructional Design, Technical Design, and Social Considerations. The criteria are intended to encourage evaluators to think critically about the resource and evaluate some of its more detailed aspects. Evaluators will rate these specific criteria using the sample evaluation forms included in the appendix at the end of this document.

The criteria do not all prompt the same considerations, and are not listed in order of importance, which will vary according to the resource and its intended use. In addition, while all media share a large number of common criteria, video, digital and Web resources have additional media-specific criteria. The evaluation forms will reflect these needs. By examining the content of the resource, evaluators can determine how closely it matches and supports the prescribed learning outcomes of the curriculum.

Refer to Appendix A - D for evaluation forms specific to each of the mediums presented.

Content

1. **Content is current.**
   The resource is not dated in its content, language, or visuals in a way that reduces its educational value. Consider the following:
   - hairstyles, pop idols, evident family lifestyles, fads, etc.
   - information and models (e.g., extinction of the dinosaur theory should include comet collision)

2. **Content is accurate.**
   Possible problems in content accuracy include the following:
   - outdated information
   - factual errors
   - improper use of statistics
   - inaccurate graphs or displays
   - invalid or oversimplified models, examples, or simulations
   - errors in spelling or grammar

3. **Content supports the standard based curriculum.**
   The content will assist the student in achieving the prescribed learning outcomes of each of the units of study (UbDs) developed during the curriculum writing process.

4. **Scope (range) and depth of topics are appropriate to student needs.**
   Treatment of topics satisfies learning outcomes, and is at an appropriate level of detail. Keep in mind that overview materials often sacrifice depth and may require augmentation with additional materials.

5. **The level of difficulty is appropriate for the intended audience.**
   Concepts, visuals, vocabulary, and internal structure are developmentally appropriate and are meaningful to a broad range of abilities and achievement levels.
   - Readability of student and support materials is consistent with the expected ability level of the audience (e.g., vocabulary, phrasing, and sentence length).
   - The number of steps is logical and well-suited to the intended ability levels.
   - There are multiple levels of instruction to provide for individual differences in students.
   - Graphic illustrations, such as photographs and realistic drawings, are suitable for the maturity, age, and/or developmental level of student (they should be used to support the introduction and development of concept learning).
   - In digital resources that require student response, the method of response is appropriate (e.g., multiple choice, single keystroke, manipulation of graphics).
   - Concepts are presented one at a time, at a concrete level, for some audiences.

6. **Content integrates "real-world" experiences.**
   Content that supports the integration of personal, familiar, and cultural contexts of society is meaningful for many students. Links with real-world activities are incorporated, and provision is made for hands-on experiences. The experience of the individual student should form the context for learning.

Instructional Design

Evaluation of the instructional design of the resource involves an examination of its goals, objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment provisions. Evaluators should begin with the instructional objectives and work through the methodology. The following items should be judged on their contribution to the overall objectives of the resource.

1. **Instructional goals and learner objectives are clearly stated.**
   Is the overall purpose of the resource concisely stated, if appropriate, with specific objectives stated for specific components? Based on their experience, evaluators must judge whether the resource would fulfil its intended purpose and meet the learning objectives. The statements are explicit rather than inferred, succinct, free of jargon, and unambiguous. The information is accessible—usually in the support materials the clear identification of objectives is critical to the transferability and implementation of a package.

2. **The resource is suitable for a wide range of learning/teaching styles.**
   The resource uses a variety of approaches and is flexible in its application (e.g., encourages teacher intervention, student contributions, co-operative learning, discovery learning, and collaborative teaching). Materials and suggested activities encourage the use of a variety of learning styles and strategies (e.g., concrete, abstract, oral, written, multi-sensory, opportunities for extension, inclusion of explicit aids for retention).

3. **The resource promotes student engagement.**
   Focusing techniques and cueing devices, such as variations in typeface, boxes, underlining, and spacing are included. The resource incorporates aids to accessibility (advance organizers, summaries). Questions should encourage reflection. Questions and activities within the resource should attract attention and increase understanding.

4. **The methodology promotes active learning.**
   The methodology promotes critical thinking, research skills, problem solving, group decision making, etc. Students assume increased responsibility for learning. For the decision-making actions, the number of decision options should vary according to student needs (narrow to open-ended and negotiable).

5. **The methodology promotes development of communication skills.**
   The methodology includes activities that encourage student self-expression and interaction (e.g., debate, static display, construction, pamphlet writing, small group discussion). Materials should develop/promote visual, auditory, and writing skills. They should allow for consensus-building and build skills in listening for understanding.

6. **The resource encourages group interaction.**
   The resource uses group-based learning methods such as cross-ability groups and co-operative learning.

7. **The resource encourages student creativity.**
   Use of the resource encourages students to develop unique interpretations or solutions.

8. **The resource allows/encourages student to work independently.**
   The student has some measure of control over the rate and difficulty of presentation and review. For example, the student can
   - vary the amount of material
   - vary the time allowed for solving problems and/or processing information
   - explore rather than be locked into a linear instructional sequence
   - begin, continue, and end at an appropriate level
   - check for level of understanding at appropriate points.

9. **The resource is suitable for its intended purpose.**
   The resource offers a means to the end (specified by the instructional objectives).

10. **Materials are well organized and structured.**
    The order in which the information is presented is logical and suited to the subject and objectives. In both the teacher and student materials, the tasks are clearly defined and the information is accessible to a diverse range of abilities and achievement levels. Note that digital resources and Internet resources are not necessarily organized in a traditional, linear manner. They may be designed to encourage exploration and discovery.
    - Tables of contents should indicate consistency in approach to topics, units, etc. Balance among topics should be considered.
    - Co-ordination among components, including overview charts, graphics, and other visual organizers, is helpful in large series or programs.
    - Cross-references to supporting or supplementary aspects of a resource that show how they fit within the organizational framework will facilitate ease of use of the resource.
    - Content should be reflected in features such as a table of contents, index, glossary, and chapter and topic titles.

11. **Materials have unity/congruency.**
    The resource holds together as a self-contained unit. Content, methodology, and means of evaluation correspond to the overall purpose.

12. **Concepts are clearly introduced.**
    The progression of the presentation is smooth and logical, with new concepts identified in a clear and consistent manner.

13. **Concepts are clearly developed.**
    Definitions, explanations, illustrations, and examples are available where necessary and are relevant to the point under discussion.
    - Material includes links to and/or develops from previously acquired knowledge.
    - Examples, as well as non-examples or counterexamples are provided (e.g., a bear, not a bear).
    - Examples can be broken down into small sequential components.

14. **Concepts are clearly summarized.**
    A summary may come in many forms (e.g., an end of chapter list, synthesis activities, a post-lesson quiz, a handout, focused questions).

15. **Integration across curriculum subjects is supported.**
    Materials should be flexible in both content and presentation to apply to a variety of subjects.

16. Non-technical vocabulary is appropriate.
Consider
- the overall vocabulary load
- the purpose for reading, listening, or viewing
- the sophistication of the ideas presented
- the context (sentence complexity)
- the level of concreteness/abstraction
- the use of idiom and dialect (can increase comprehension difficulty and/or enrich meaning)
- user support (e.g., examples, illustrations, glossaries).

17. Technical terms are consistently explained/introduced.
Consider
- consistent presentation (e.g., in boldface; pause for explanation, accompanied by illustrative examples)
- student support (e.g., glossaries, an index, advance organizers, post-lesson summary).

18. Pedagogy is innovative.
The resource demonstrates a fresh approach. Imagery, layout, presentation, pace, topics, suggested activities, and instructional design all serve to promote student interest in the content:
- contains some emotional appeal
- leaves students with a positive attitude toward the material and, in the case of interactive learning tools such as digital resources, a desire to use the resource again
- motivates students to learn.

19. Adequate/appropriate pre-teaching and follow-up activities are provided.
The material provides activities outside the main body of the lesson(s) that serve to reiterate and extend the stated learning objectives and reinforce key aspects. The resource links students' prior knowledge to the stated learning outcomes and allows them to construct meaning. Links with real-world activities are incorporated.

20. Adequate/appropriate assessment/evaluation tools are provided.
The resource contains tools to assess ongoing achievement relative to the program's objectives (ie., rubrics, checklists, interviews,). Consider whether there are provisions for remediation of identified areas of weakness. A good learning resource is a collection of information organized and presented in a way that facilitates learning. The instructional design of a package will determine the conceptual organization, but it is the technical design that brings that structure into reality. Good technical design enhances student access and understanding. Poor technical quality creates barriers to learning (for example, dark or out-of-focus photographs

in a text, an inaudible soundtrack in a video, or a non-intuitive user-interface in a digital resource). Even if the content and methodology are excellent, learning resources with technical flaws should be avoided.

21. Text relates to visuals.

What is said or written should clearly correspond to what is shown. Captions should be clear and relevant. Visuals should be placed to effectively support textual content and not interfere with reading or viewing.

Technical Design

1. Appropriate support materials are provided.

Assess whether support materials contribute to the achievement of the resource's objectives. The use of all components should be clearly identified. Good support materials include

- for students, - sufficient material for a variety of activities including pre-instruction and follow-up,
- for teachers, - a description of the instructional activities, an overview of how these relate to each other and to the curriculum/resource goals, and identification of prerequisite skills;
- resource information, including a bibliography of resources and references related to the topic, and possibilities for package modification;
- technical documentation (mandatory for digital resources) — clear, easy-to understand instructions for use, including information about system requirements, where appropriate.

2. Visual design is interesting/effective.

Regardless of the content and medium, the actual presentation of the information will appeal to and enhance effective use for both students and teachers.

- Graphics, color, and sound enhance the learning process, drawing the student's attention to important points.
- Materials are visually clear, with good visual contrast.
- In multi-level or multi-component packages, co-ordination of components is facilitated by color-coding and number-sequencing of individual items.
- The user interface uses interesting and topic-appropriate metaphors for the learning activity.

3. **Illustrations/visuals are effective/appropriate.**
   The illustrations focus attention on the important content areas and are appropriate to the student's maturity level.
   - Animations and graphics are of a high quality, add to the instructional design, and are used appropriately to enhance the message.
   - Visuals are light, uncluttered, and have competing elements.
   - A variety of different types of visuals are used to support and represent concepts (flow charts, webs, diagrams, tables).

4. **Character size/typeface is appropriate.**
   - The material uses effective typographic design in the main body of text, captions, indices, diagrams, etc.
   - Cueing devices are used to attract attention to specific points (variations in typeface, boxes, underlining, spacing).
   - A hierarchy of information, and the relationship among ideas, is clearly communicated through effective and efficient use of contrasting print size and style (font variation should only be used as a cueing device, not just to be artistic).

5. **Layout is logical and consistent.**
   The material is presented in a well-organized, consistent, and predictable fashion. The structure is apparent to the user in the table of contents. Individual pages or screens are laid out in logical, uncluttered fashion. The number of "buttons" and the information blocks are not too complex. Layout should feature appropriate use of text, visuals, and backgrounds. The structure should not be distracting.

6. **Users can easily employ the resource.**
   The resource should be easily used and understood by both the teacher and student. Envision an instructional situation in which the resource could be suitable and easy to facilitate.
   - Teachers can control pace and difficulty levels, if desired.
   - Prerequisites are identified.
   - Equipment set-up is adequately explained or demonstrated.
   - Materials are easily used in the space typically available.
   - Materials, activities, lessons, etc. are easily adaptable to a variety of classroom environments.
   - Directions are accompanied by useful examples and "how to use," "how to read," and "how to approach/study information" aids, as appropriate.
   - Thorough and easy-to-use manuals are provided.
   - The resource can't be easily misused.
   - The resource contains no hazardous materials.

7. Packaging/design is suitable for the classroom.

- The quality of the paper, packaging, or binding is appropriate to its intended use and expected life.
- The text, captions, labels, pictures, and diagrams are attractive, clear, and free of errors.
- Components are packaged for easy access (e.g., teacher materials can be separated from student materials).
- Containers for organizing and storing all components, if needed, are provided.

8. The resource makes effective use of various mediums.

Each component (e.g., video, digital resources, print) used in the resource should take full advantage of the unique aspects of the particular medium. Consider whether the subject matter could be better handled by another medium and whether the instructional objective is best served by the medium chosen. This consideration is critical in the case of video and digital resources. In videos maximum use should be made of visuals and sound. In digital resources, maximum use of interactivity, adaptability of content, and interface are critical. Also, with respect to digital resources, the topic or the teaching/learning approach should take advantage of the computer's capabilities to present information and provide appropriate rapid feedback.

Some media choices are inappropriate:
- an overhead transparency of a large body of small print text

Some media choices are appropriate:
- video combining contemporary or historical footage with live drama
- digital resources that simulate activities too expensive or dangerous for the classroom

Digital resources should also consider the following questions:
- whether it can store responses, and students' marks, create reports, provide analysis, etc.
- whether it can be customized by the student and/or teacher to better meet a student's needs
- whether it can identify student weaknesses and strengths to assist teacher in assessment and planning for future work, etc.

Social Considerations

Examining a resource to see how it handles social issues helps to identify potentially controversial or offensive elements that may exist in the content or presentation, and highlights where resources might support pro-social attitudes and promote diversity and human rights. The intent of the screening process is not to remove controversy, but rather to ensure that controversial views and opinions are presented within the following framework:

- Alternative points of view are presented, as appropriate.
- The purpose in presenting alternative points of view is clear.
- Content is suitable for the maturity level of the intended audience.
- Opinions reflects a range of community standards.
- Expressed views promote opportunities for critical thinking.

Overall, materials should emphasize positive traits and role models. Consider the following points:

- The suitability of material may depend upon the intended audience (including maturity), subject area, and teaching/learning context (e.g., whether a video on reproduction is designed for teacher-directed use or self-directed student use). If students are exposed to controversial points of view, these views should be considered in the context of the total resource.
- Geographic location/physical setting, time period, and political and social context all help to determine whether something should be of concern or not. (For example, it would not be valid to impose modern values on a work by Moliere; rather, the work should be discussed in context as a "period piece," and differences between values of the time and today's values should be clearly understood.)
- The author's tone toward the subject matter and audience tend to influence all aspects of the resource.
- What might otherwise be perceived as an error by omission might in fact be a deliberate omission, and as such might be identified and justified by the author.
- If a controversial issue is referenced, how the reference is made, and how often, might be factors in determining the appropriateness of the resource. The evaluation form (Appendix A) could be used to indicate how much attention the controversial issue should get.

Specifically, the way in which the resource treats/handles a number of social issues should be examined.

1. **Gender/Sexual roles**
   Any portrayal of gender issues in approved resources should be relevant to the curriculum for which the resource is being considered, and appropriate for the age level of the intended audience.
   Consider
   - whether portrayal of the sexes is balanced
   - whether diverse roles and relationships are portrayed

- whether contributions, experiences, and perspectives of various individuals and groups are acknowledged
- whether tone and language are appropriate (and sexist, abusive, and/or derogatory reference to gender are avoided)
- whether gender stereotypes are avoided.

2. Age

Resources should portray different age groups, and reflect society's treatment of them.

Consider

- whether different age groups are represented
- whether descriptive language avoids stereotypes
- whether views of and about older people are included
- whether relationships between different age groups (e.g., parent/child) are depicted, and age-integrated activities included
- whether the aged are positively portrayed (e.g., as valuable contributors to society).

3. Socio-economic status

Resources should address socio-economic issues, including biases, values, and perspectives related to income.

Consider

- whether stereotypes are perpetuated, or inappropriate assumptions are made (e.g., that all teens have plenty of money and easy access to cars).

4. Political bias

Resources should avoid political bias (e.g., no one political point of view should be advocated over any other). Some topics may be particularly sensitive (e.g., land use, elections, environment, and agricultural practices).

5. Multiculturalism (and anti-racism)

The perspective from which information is presented in resources is important. It is not sufficient to merely include in texts or videos pictures of multicultural people. They must have valid roles and be seen to be participating in ways that recognize their value and meaning.

Consider

- that culture is about the way we live our lives (all ways, not just the exotic)
- whether the culture is examined from within, rather than from the point of view of an observer
- whether visuals present a variety of cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and visible minorities

- whether stereotyping (e.g., socio-economic, personal, linguistic) is avoided, both negative and positive (e.g., suggesting that Asian students are good at math)
- whether the level of respect shown for the language and culture of all people is appropriate (e.g., dialects, dress, diets are seen as positive reflections of a diverse, pluralistic society—not as deficits to overcome)
- whether the customs, lifestyles, and traditions of all races, religions, and cultures are presented in a manner that articulates their role, value, and meaning
- whether people of all races, religions, and cultures are shown as capable of understanding and making decisions about their own development and the important issues that affect their lives.
- whether members of minority groups are portrayed as positive role models (e.g., holding a variety of positions at every level of society)
- whether similarities among cultures and differences within ethno-specific group are acknowledged.

6. Language

The use of specialized language should be suited to the context, maturity, and intellectual level of the audience.

Consider

- trendy language that may date quickly
- profanity
- racist, sexist, homophobic, and other pejorative terms
- slang, jargon, or dialect
- incorrect grammar
- gender-biased language (e.g., chairman, constant "male first" order—he/she, boys and girls, men and women)

The frequency of use of some language (e.g., frequent, occasional, seldom) is a factor in judging its suitability, but even one occurrence may preclude use of the resource, depending on the nature of the language.

7. Violence

Incidences of violence, where present, should be suited to both the context and the maturity level of the audience.

Consider

- a continuum of violence and bullying — from putdowns, pushes, exclusion, and ridicule, to harassment, intimidation, physical threats, and assault
- type of violence (e.g., physical/emotional, shock or horror, verbal abuse, violence against animals)
- presentation (e.g., discrete, sensationalistic), and function of violence
- explicitness of violence (e.g., inferred, graphic)

- variety of participants
- stereotyping of participants.

8. **Safety standards compliance**
    Activities portrayed should comply with legal and community standards of safe practice and common sense.
    Consider
    - equipment use (e.g., in physical education class)
    - materials handling (e.g., chemicals, pottery, electronics)
    - lab procedures
    - adequacy of directions/instructions for safe use of materials
    - modelling of safe practices (e.g., wearing helmets, seatbelts)
    - ergonomics for computer use.

DVD/Video Specific Criteria

Instructional Design

DVD-1 The DVD/video extends or builds upon students' knowledge.
DVD/video productions should be targeted at appropriate levels for the audience. The back ground required to understand a video should be common knowledge or previously learned knowledge.

DVD-2 Sequencing (chunking) allows for appropriate contextual pauses in viewing.
DVD/videos covering a number of concepts require a level of organization that is logical to the student. Information presented in logical chunks helps the viewer to mentally organize the topic.

DVD-3 Adequate/appropriate pre- and post-viewing activities are suggested in the support materials.
Support materials are effective when they provide pre-viewing activities that connect to students' knowledge and help them to comprehend the concepts that are highlighted. Post-viewing activities should extend and consolidate the learning.

Technical Design

DVD-4 Volume and quality of sound are appropriate.
Narration messages should be audible over background sound.

DVD-5 Narration is effective and appropriate to instructional purposes (pacing, clarity, gender).
The narration should carry an appropriate tone and clarity. The voice should carry an authoritative tone without being patronizing. Narration should clearly correspond with the visuals.

DVD-6 Music and sound effects are appropriate and effective for instructional purposes.
Sound tracks should avoid distractions, and sound should enhance affective goals and effectiveness of the message.

DVD-7 Visual effects/transitions are used appropriately to highlight story and topic.
The use of special effects and complex transitions adds to the educational effectiveness. Otherwise, flashy visual effects should be used sparingly.

DVD-8 Titles/captions are appropriate/clear.
Titles present information about the production without disrupting the flow of the presentation. Captions are clearly readable and shown on the screen for a sufficient length of time.

DVD-9 Presentation is logical and varied.

The mix of pacing, presentation styles, and communication approaches used is consistent with the message.

DVD-10 Pacing is appropriate.

Pacing should be neither too slow nor too fast to hold the audience's attention and stimulate interest in the subject.

Digital Resources — Specific Criteria

Instructional Design

DIG-1 Instructional prerequisites are stated or easily inferred.

The background required to use the resource should come from common knowledge or previous instruction. The teacher or user guide should indicate the nature of this required background.

DIG-2 Opportunities are provided for different levels of instruction.

The material can be modified within this range to meet instructional requirements. This would include items such as variable entry/exit points, level of difficulty settings, and variable prompting.

DIG-3 Opportunities are provided for different levels of interactivity.

Students should be able to progress through the material at rates suitable to their abilities and styles.

DIG-4 Interaction promotes meaningful learning.

Interaction promotes learning goals suitable to the topic. The resource brings some added value that is not present in other formats.

DIG-5 Content chunking and sequencing are appropriate.

Students are not overwhelmed by the program, nor are they bored by its simplistic approach. The content and concepts of the program are organized as "segments" appropriate to students' abilities.

DIG-6 User navigation through program is appropriate.

Access to different information/concept chunks is either logical and intuitive or random with clear indications of the relationship of the chunks and the various paths available for exploring them. Any time spent learning the interface is small compared to the time-on-task learning.

DIG-7 Content depth is appropriate to target audience(s).

The overall content is appropriate. The time spent working with this content is appropriate for the results gained.

DIG-8 The program can be integrated with other activities in the same subject.

The program will support a continuity of learning in the subject matter when used in conjunction with other course learning outcomes and materials. Teachers can readily determine the content and intended learning outcomes without having to progress through the entire program.

DIG-9 User inputs are appropriately monitored, and responses are provided.

The program distinguishes between wrong answers and wrong format, spelling, or usage. The program gives feedback in instances where it will promote learning.

DIG-10 Feedback is non-threatening, immediate, positive, motivational, and user-sensitive.

Feedback is not used to reward wrong answers. The feedback builds confidence and understanding of the concepts, while motivating the student to continue working on the goals of the learning activity.

DIG-11 Feedback is appropriate to user's previous responses.

Where appropriate, the program tracks the student, providing prompts or feedback that take into account previous accomplishments or difficulties to correct problems appropriately.

DIG-12 Quantitative feedback is used where appropriate.

Quantitative feedback or assessment is used where students need to evaluate their level of understanding in a subject area, or to promote motivation.

Technical Design

DIG-13 The resource makes balanced use of graphics, animation, and video.

The material mixes various visual presentations with the textual content. The use is balanced and enhances learning without overwhelming the presentation.

DIG-14 Input and output are used effectively.

Use of audio input and output, manipulatives, and externally controlled devices is appropriate. They can be employed easily without excessive set-up or take-down.

DIG-15 A help function is provided and appropriate.

Help functions are available at all appropriate times. They are easy to use and allow quick response to problems.

DIG-16 Where appropriate, material can be networked or shared across platforms, or retrieved using standard Internet tools.
For programs that generate data for subsequent manipulation, the formats generated can be used by suitable applications or computer formats. Where collaboration is used, the sharing of content is possible using standard tools such as an Internet browser.

DIG-17 Teacher control of feedback and progress is provided and appropriate.
Where appropriate, the resource provides teachers with opportunities to monitor student performance or change the type and frequency of feedback students receive.

Instructional Design

Web Resources — Specific Criteria

WEB-1 Reliability/Validity of the site is clearly stated.
The site should clearly indicate who is responsible for the contents of the page, author qualifications, contact information, latest revisions/updates, and copyright information.

WEB-2 Sources of information are clearly listed.
Sources of factual information should be clearly listed for verification purposes. Clear distinctions should be made between internal links to other parts of the resource and external links that access other resources.

WEB-3 Instructional prerequisites are clearly stated, or easily inferred.
The background required to use the site should come from common knowledge or previous instruction. The information should be consistent with what is already known or found in other sources. The title page should be indicative of the content, and the purpose of the page should be indicated on the home page.

WEB-4 Opportunities are provided for different levels of instruction and/or interactivity.
Students should be able to progress through the material at rates suitable to their physical and intellectual maturity, abilities, and styles. Links should be provided to other sites to support or enhance the information presented.

WEB-5 Interaction promotes meaningful learning.
The site should provide information that is useful to the student's specific purpose and/or bring some added value to learning that is not present in other formats. The site should offer more than one point of view and/or include links to other or alternative viewpoints.

WEB-6 Content chunking and sequencing are appropriate.
The content and concepts of the site should be organized logically into segments appropriate to the student's abilities.

WEB-7 The site promotes active learning and student engagement.
The site should incorporate a variety of focusing techniques and cueing devices, as well as accessibility to advanced organizers and/or summaries. Information should be presented in such a way that it stimulates imagination and curiosity as well as encouraging self-expression and group interaction.

WEB-8 Non-technical vocabulary is appropriate.
The site should model correct use of grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, and the sophistication of the ideas presented should be appropriate for the intended audience.

Technical Design

WEB-9 Accessibility is timely.
The site/page should take a reasonable amount of time to load/download. Links should be readily accessible.

WEB-10 Navigation aids are in place.
Internal and external links should be clearly visible and annotated or explanatory. On supporting pages there should be a link back to the home page.

WEB-11 The site makes a balanced use of text, graphics, and images.
The site should incorporate a mixture of various visual presentations to supplement/enhance the content/information. The use should be balanced to enhance learning rather than overwhelm the presentation.

Glossaries

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adoption

An adoption is the selection and approval of specific instructional materials (textbook, computer program, science kit, etc.) for a content area or other specific purpose. In the broader sense, an adoption could be an individual item chosen for a specific instructional use, i.e., Gone with the Wind, a novel for use in a high school American Literature class, or Algebra I adopted for use as the 9th grade Algebra textbook.

Anti-Racism

At its simplest and least ideological form, opposition to racism based on a sense that all races are basically the same, and that we should all accept each other's differences. In more developed and ideological forms it tends to involve the belief that racism is both pernicious and socially pervasive, so that strong measures are called for to control and even eradicate it.

Bias

Inclination or prejudice in favor of a particular person, thing, or viewpoint that interferes with fair judgment.

Consensus Process

An objective, structured model clearly built to assist a group into making a decision based upon the evidence collected.

Curriculum

In our standards based education system, this refers to the written documents that define what students are expected to know and be able to do (including district written documents based on state and/or district adopted standards.

Curriculum Committee

The district committee given the responsibility for writing and revising curriculum based on standards and for the guidance/leadership of all content area teachers in selection and implementation of new instructional materials to support the curriculum for a school or district.

Discrimination

Anything that has the effect, intentional or not, of limiting the opportunities of certain individuals or groups because of personal characteristics such as race or color. Unlike prejudice, discrimination is an effect or result, not an attitude. Discrimination sometimes results from prejudice or stereotypes. However, it also comes from the failure, intentional or not, to avoid practices that disadvantage certain groups more than others, when the disadvantage could be eliminated without causing undue hardship.

Diversity

Variety of ethnicity, genders, abilities (mental and physical), ages, colors, religions, values, cultures and lifestyles that can be found within a given society.

Ethnocentrism

The tendency to judge all other groups by the norms and standards of one's own perspective.

Inclusion

Equitable participation opportunity in public or community institutions for all members of a society, as clients, stakeholders, or employees (as appropriate).

Instructional Materials

The instructional tools used to support the defined, written curriculum.

Prejudice

A body of unfounded opinions or attitudes relating to an individual or group that represents them in an unfavorable light.

Racism

An act of discrimination based on an ideology of racial superiority. This is a phenomenon in which people mistreat, discriminate against, dislike, or even hate, have disdain for, or regard as inferior, other people based on what is regarded to be their race. Individual racism takes the form of individual attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors. Institutional or systemic racism takes the form of the practices, customs, rules, and standards of organizations, including governments, that unnecessarily disadvantage people because of their race, color or ethnicity. Cultural racism involves the cultural values and standards that disadvantage people because of their race, color or ethnicity.

Stereotype

When applied to people, an instant or fixed picture of a group of people, usually based on false or incomplete information, designed to impart the "essence" of that group, which homogenizes the group, effacing individuality and difference.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

EVALUATION FORMS

For elaboration and clarification refer to Specific Evaluation Criteria.

Title of Resource:

For each of the following statements, check the box which best reflects your judgment of the resource.
- SA - Strongly Agree
- A - Agree
- D - Disagree
- NA - Not Applicable

SA	A	DA	NA	Content
				Content is current.
				Content is accurate.
				Content supports the written curriculum (Complete curriculum and resource alignment on units within the curriculum – include page numbers & other information from resource being reviewed to be turned in with this document and resource request).
				Scope (range) and depth of topics are appropriate to student needs.
				Level of difficulty is appropriate for intended audience.
				Content integrates "real-world" experiences.
				Instructional Design (provide examples)
				Instructional goals and learner objectives are clearly stated.
				Resource is suitable for a wide range of learning/teaching styles.
				Resource promotes student engagement.
				Methodology promotes active learning.
				Methodology promotes the development of communication skills.
				Resource encourages group interaction.
				Resource encourages student creativity.
				Resource allows/encourages students to work independently.
				Resource is suitable for intended purpose.
				Materials are well organized and structured.
				Materials have unity/congruency.
				Concepts are clearly introduced.
				Concepts are clearly developed.
				Concepts are clearly summarized.
				Integration across curriculum subjects is supported.
				Non-technical vocabulary is appropriate.
				Technical terms are consistently explained/introduced.
				Pedagogy is innovative.
				Adequate/appropriate pre-teaching and follow-up activities are provided.
				Adequate/appropriate assessment/evaluation tools are provided.
				Technical Design (provide examples)
				Appropriate support materials are provided.
				Visual design is interesting/effective.
				Illustrations/visuals are effective/appropriate.

				Layout is logical and consistent.
				Users can easily employ the resource.
				Packaging/design is suitable for the classroom/library.
				Resource makes effective use of various mediums.
				Consider whether the resource addresses the following issues appropriately.
				Social Considerations (provide examples)
				Gender/sexual roles
				Age
				Socio-economic status
				Political bias
				Multiculturalism/anti-racism
				Language
				Violence
				Safety standards compliance

State the major reason(s) for the recommendation/non-recommendation of this resource:

COMMENTS:

Evaluator: Date:

Software Quality Assessment Checklist

Evaluator's Name: _____ Date: _____

Software Package: _____

Quality Assessment - Phase 1

Please rate the software according to the assessment checklist provided.

Strongly Disagree - SD
Disagree - D
Neutral - N
Agree - A
Strongly Agree - SA
Not Applicable - NA

Section A — Educational

	SD	D	N	A	SA	NA
The content of the software is related to PEI curriculum.						
The software is appropriate for the intended age level.						
The software encourages critical-thinking skills.						
The software helps to develop problem-solving skills.						
The software challenges and stimulates creativity.						
The software encourages communication skills.						
The software allows students to recall/apply learned information.						
The software supports different learning styles.						
The software covers a wide range of skill levels.						
The software encourages independent learning.						
The software addresses a large number of intelligences.						

Section B – Content

	S D	D	N	A	S A	N A
The examples provided with the software are relevant to the course objective.						
The information included with the software is current.						
The information included with the software is accurate.						
The information provided is free of stereotypes.						
The software reflects gender equity.						
The content is not discriminatory.						
The software uses appropriate language and terminology.						
The software supports different learning styles.						
The software uses correct grammar and spelling.						
A wide variety of activities is included with the software.						

Section C—Documentation and Support Materials

	S D	D	N	A	S A	N A
If provided, the manual is clear and easy to follow.						
If provided, the Help menu is easy to follow.						
If provided, the on-line support is clear and useful.						
If provided, the tutorial is clear and useful.						
If provided, the learning activities enhance the curriculum.						

Based on your results/observations from Phase 1, do you wish to continue with the software evaluation process?   _____**Yes** _____**No**

Quality Assessment — Phase 2

In the Comments section, please provide additional information that you feel is relevant to the evaluation process.

Section D —Educational

	S D	D	N A	A	S A	N A

The design is user-friendly.
The text is clear and easy to read.
The software is logically organized.
Navigation is clear and consistent.
Navigation is user-controlled.
Both mouse and keyboard are used for navigation.
The screen is uncluttered.
The on-screen directions are easy to follow.
Little help is required to work independently.
The pace and speed are user-controlled.

Section E —Multimedia

	S D	D	N A	A	S A	N A

The graphics and sound are well used.
The graphics are not outdated.
The graphics are not distracting.
The audio is not distracting.

Section F —Management

	S D	D	N A	A	S A	N A

The sound can be turned on/off.
The user level can be set individually (e.g., beginner, advanced).
The user may exit from any screen.
The user has the ability to save.
The user may continue from previous session.
The user has the ability to print.
The software provides feedback to the user.

<u>Comments</u>

Section A: Educational Value

_____

_____

_____

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Section B: Content

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Section C: Documentation and Support Material

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Section D: User Interface

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Section E: Multimedia

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_____

_____

Section F: Management

_____

_____

_____

_____

Summary

Is this program suitable for the School District of Holmen?

_____ **YES** _____ **NO**

If YES, please summarize the strengths of this program and briefly explain how it can be integrated into the PEI Education System.

_____

_____

_____

_____

If NO, please summarize why this decision has been made.

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

WEB SITE EVALUATION FORMS

URL: _____

Name of Site: _____

Page of Article: _____ Title: _____

Evaluator's Name: _____

Date: _____

WEB SITE RESOURCE EVALUATION SHEET

Before beginning this evaluation ask yourself these questions:

- Is the Internet the right place to begin my research?
- Could I find the information I need in other places? Where?
- Can I get the information faster off-line?
- Have I checked the library resources available?

If you are convinced the Internet is where you should be, please take time to complete this evaluation for each site you visit and use as an information source.

Remember, anyone can publish anything on the Web. Unlike traditional print sources, Web resources rarely have editors or fact-checkers. Currently, no Web standards exist to ensure accuracy.

COMMENTS

_____
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_____

Name: _____   Date:_____

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF A WEB SITE
FOR USE BY EDUCATORS
©1996 — 2006. Kathleen Schrock (kathy@kathyschrock.net)
Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators
http://discoveryschool.com/schrockguide/

Before beginning this evaluation ask yourself these questions:
- •   Is the Internet the right place to begin my research?
- •   Could I find the information I need in other places? Where?
- •   Can I get the information faster off-line?
- •   Have I checked the library resources available?

If you are convinced the Internet is where you should be, please take time to complete this evaluation for each site you visit and use as an information source.

Remember, anyone can publish anything on the Web. Unlike traditional print sources, Web resources rarely have editors or fact-checkers. Currently, no Web standards exist to ensure accuracy.

1. What is the URL of the Web page you are evaluating?
    http://_____

2. What is the name of the site? _____

Part 1: What do you see?
As you look at the questions below, put an ✓ in the *yes* or *no* column for each.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Does the page take a long time to load?		
Are the pictures on the page helpful?		
Are there headings and subheadings on the page?		
Did the author sign his/her real name?		
Did the author give you his/her e-mail address?		
Is there a date on the page that tells you when it was last updated?		
Is there an image map (big picture with links) on the page?		
If you go to another page on the site, can you get back to the main page?		
Are the links clearly visible?		

Part 2: What's on the page, and who put it there?
As you look at the questions below, put an ✓ in the *yes* or *no* column for each.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Does the title of the page tell you what it is about?		
Is there a paragraph on the page explaining what it is about?		
Is the information on the page useful for your project?		
Would you have gotten more information from an encyclopedia?		
Can you tell if the information on the page is current?		
Is the material well organized?		
Does the page lead you to some other good information (links)?		
Does the author of the page present some information you disagree with?		
Does the author of the page present some information that you think is wrong?		
Does some information contradict information you found elsewhere?		
Does the author use some absolute words (like "always" or "never")?		
Does the author use superlative words (like the "best" or "worst")?		
Does the author tell you about him/herself?		
Do you feel that the author is knowledgeable about the topic?		
Does the information lead you to other sources, both print and Web, that are useful?		
Is a bibliography of print resources included?		
Does the information appear to be biased?		
Are the spelling and grammar correct on the page?		

COMMENTS:

Name: _____   Date: _____

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF A WEB SITE
SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL
©1996 − 2006. Kathleen Schrock (kathy@kathyschrock.net)
Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators
http://discoveryschool.com/schrockguide/

Before beginning this evaluation ask yourself these questions:
- •   Is the Internet the right place to begin my research?
- •   Could I find the information I need in other places? Where?
- •   Can I get the information faster off-line?
- •   Have I checked the library resources available?

If you are convinced the Internet is where you should be, please take time to complete this evaluation for each site you visit and use as an information source.

Remember, anyone can publish anything on the Web. Unlike traditional print sources, Web resources rarely have editors or fact-checkers. Currently, no Web standards exist to ensure accuracy.

1. What is the URL of the Web page you are evaluating?
     http://_____

2. What is the name of the site? _____

Part 1: What do you see?
As you look at the questions below, put an ✓ in the *yes* or *no* column for each.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Does the page take a long time to load?		
Are the pictures on the page helpful?		
Are there headings and subheadings on the page?		
Did the author sign his/her real name?		
Did the author give you his/her e-mail address?		
Is there a date on the page that tells you when it was last updated?		
Is there an image map (big picture with links) on the page?		
If you go to another page on the site, can you get back to the main page?		
Are the links clearly visible and annotated or explained?		

Part 2: What's on the page and who put it there?
As you look at the questions below, put an ✓ in the *yes* or *no* column for each.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Does the title of the page tell you what it is about?		
Is there a paragraph on the page explaining what it is about?		
Is the information on the page useful for your project?		
Would you have gotten more information from an encyclopedia?		
Can you tell if the information on the page is current?		
Is the material well organized?		
Does the page lead you to some other good information (links)?		
Does the author of the page present some information you disagree with?		
Does the author of the page present some information that you think is wrong?		
Does some information contradict information you found elsewhere?		
Does the author use some absolute words (like "always" or "never")?		
Does the author use superlative words (like the "best" or "worst")?		
Does the author tell you about him/herself?		
Do you feel that the author is knowledgeable about the topic?		
Does the information lead you to other sources, both print and Web, that are useful?		
Is a bibliography of print resources included?		
Does the information appear to be biased?		
Are the spelling and grammar correct on the page?		

COMMENTS:

Name: _____   Date:_____

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF A WEB SITE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL
©1996 ─ 2006. Kathleen Schrock (kathy@kathyschrock.net)
Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators
http://discoveryschool.com/schrockguide/

Before beginning this evaluation ask yourself these questions:
- •   Is the Internet the right place to begin my research?
- •   Could I find the information I need in other places? Where?
- •   Can I get the information faster off-line?
- •   Have I checked the library resources available?

If you are convinced the Internet is where you should be, please take time to complete this evaluation for each site you visit and use as an information source.

Remember, anyone can publish anything on the Web. Unlike traditional print sources, Web resources rarely have editors or fact-checkers. Currently, no Web standards exist to ensure accuracy.

1. What is the URL of the Web page you are evaluating?
       http://_____

2. What is the name of the site?   _____

Part 1: What do you see?
As you look at the questions below, put an ✓ in the *yes* or *no* column for each.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Does the page take a long time to load?		
Are there pictures on the page?		
Are the author's name and e-mail address on the page?		
Is there a date that tells you when the page was made?		
Is there a picture (image map) on the page that you can use to choose links?		
If you go to another page, is there a way to get back to the first page?		
If there are photographs, do they look real?		
If there are sounds, do they sound real?		
Is the information on the page easy to follow (well organized)?		

Part 2: What did you learn?

As you look at the questions below, put an ✓ in the *yes* or *no* column for each.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Does the title of the page tell you what it is about?		
Is there an introduction on the page telling you what is included?		
Are the facts on the page what you were looking for?		
Would you have gotten more information from an encyclopedia?		
Does the page lead you to some other good information (links)?		
Does the author of the page say some things you disagree with?		
Does the author tell you about him/herself?		
Does the page include information you know is wrong?		
Is the spelling correct on the page?		
Do the pictures and photographs on the page help you learn?		

COMMENTS: