

LEARNING COMMONS MANUAL

ACQUISITIONS

For Literary Works – A List of Questions to Consider When Purchasing

(Adapted from “Selection of English Literature Books”)

1. Does the work promote the student's enjoyment of literature?
  - (a) Is it topical to the issues of the day?
  - (b) Is it relevant to their experience?
2. Is the work appropriate to the student's age and reading level in vocabulary, sentence structure, and form?
3. Does the work make the students aware of traditional and changing social values?
4. Does the work have literary merit?
  - (a) Has it stood the test of time?
  - (b) Is it widely acclaimed by appropriate authority?
5. Is the language usage appropriate to the context of the work?
6. Does the work avoid exploitation of the reader by unwarranted emphasis on:
  - (a) violence? (d) racism?
  - (b) sex? (e) religion?
  - (c) sexism? (f) politics?
7. Does the work move towards achieving a balance between pessimism and optimism?
8. Does the work help the students to discriminate between well written and poorly written literature?
9. Where Canadian content is concerned, does the work foster the students' awareness of a Canadian multi-cultural identity?

Criteria for Identifying Bias

The following criteria for identifying bias are adapted from *The Shocking Truth about Indians in Textbooks* (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Indian Cultural Education Centre, 1977). (Toronto District School Board: Aboriginal Voices in the Curriculum: A Guide to Teaching Aboriginal Studies in K-8 Classrooms)

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When analyzing the content of instructional material on Indigenous cultures, histories, and contemporary issues, the following criteria may be employed to identify forms of bias.

- Bias by omission: selecting information that reflects credit on only one group, frequently the writer's group.
- Bias by defamation: calling attention to the faults and ignoring the virtues of an individual or group.
- Bias by disparagement: denying or belittling the contributions of an identifiable group of people in Canadian culture.
- Bias by cumulative implication: constantly creating the impression that only one group is responsible for positive development.
- Bias by lack of validity: failing to ensure that information about issues is always accurate and unambiguous.
- Bias by inertia: perpetuation of myths and half-truths by failure to keep abreast of historical scholarship.
- Bias by obliteration: ignoring significant aspects of the history of a cultural or minority group in Canada.
- Bias by disembodiment: referring in a casual and depersonalized way to the historical role of identifiable cultural and minority groups.
- Bias by lack of concreteness: dealing with a cultural group in platitudes and generalizations (applying the shortcomings of one individual to the whole group). To be concrete, the material must be factual, objective, and realistic.
- Bias by lack of comprehensiveness: failing to mention all relevant facts that may help the student form an opinion.

### Suggestions for Dealing with Bias in Learning Resources

- Know your materials - examine for implicit and explicit bias.
- Question your own assumptions and consider the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of students (such as ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, family structure, and abilities/disabilities).
- Clarify your goals and objectives with your students.
- Provide positive presentations that complement and supplement the material, for example, resource persons, field trips, role models.
- Be aware of student attitudes and comfort levels.
- Anticipate and provide opportunities for recognition of potential student responses to the materials you are using.
- Ensure that materials are at appropriate age and maturity levels.
- Encourage open discussion of bias, prejudice, and stereotypes, and of the ways they are manifested and combated in school life community life.
- Place texts in broader historical/social context.
- Seek a balance of materials by provide several selections.
- Teach strategies to develop effective readers so that students can make inferences that make will be appropriate.
- Use the inquiry method to encourage students to question.

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- Be prepared for hostile reactions and anticipate constructive ways of defusing them.
- Introduce various points of view on the same issue from different sources and different genres.
- Consider writers' biases by study of their language and background or experience.
- Encourage opinions and responses as issues arise through discussions and journals.
- Use selected parts of the material to illustrate relevant points and issues.
- Discuss the similarities and differences between the situations and characters in the literature and life situations and people.
- Develop issues in small groups with the teacher as arbitrator.
- Expect students to keep a reading log and monitor their choices.
- Conduct reading conferences with students.
- Research gaps in the material and conduct research on issues raised.
- Have students construct alter Indigenous situations and endings.
- Change the situation to another ethnic group, culture, gender, or socioeconomic status, and have students discuss or write about the implications.
- Have students write letters to characters, authors/publishers, etc.
- Ask students to construct a student manifesto of rights and responsibilities.
- Have students insert "bookmarks" or sticky notes to alert other readers to bias.

### Guidelines for Selecting Children's Literature that Deals with Indigenous Peoples

(Taken from the Turtle Island Curriculum Resources)

- Scrutinize the author's biographical information. Many Indigenous authors will list their tribal affiliation. Other authors may describe authentic experiences with particular cultures, such as being a teacher for many years in an Indigenous school.
- Look carefully for any stereotypes in the text and illustrations. Mono-dimensional images, such as warrior, princess, stoic, environmentalist, and primitive, should naturally be avoided.
- Avoid books that lump all Indigenous cultures together into generic images. These are not authentic representations.
- Examine the characters. Are they real, with in-depth personalities? Books should not glamorize any group of people.

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- Think about how the book relates to your overall curriculum. Does it fit into a more global topic, such as families, so that children can see similarities as well as differences among cultures?
- Resist highlighting Indigenous American cultures as topics for study. Integrate Indigenous books and materials all year, just as you would with other groups.
- Do not include books that show children playing as Indigenous people or depicting animals dressed in traditional Indigenous clothing or ceremonial items. This degrades and objectifies Indigenous peoples and cultures.
- Look for books that portray Indigenous peoples today. Otherwise, non-Indigenous children will continue to regard Indigenous peoples as living only in the past, or as living today exactly as they did a hundred years ago.
- Seek out books that represent present-day Indigenous peoples for preschoolers. Children of this age do not understand historical references.
- Seek out books that are historically accurate and include an Indigenous perspective on historical events or periods for primary-age children. Children of this age can distinguish between the present and history.

## CATALOGUING

The Central Cataloguer, IMC, is responsible for cataloging all print and non-print material.

Information service technicians (elementary school) and library technicians (secondary school) are responsible for:

- first checking the automated library system to see if the item is already catalogued;
- if not found, prepare the item for cataloguing by stamping with school stamp and packing in IMC provided book bins for shipping;
- if item is not found, but immediate circulation is necessary, follow specific procedures for “Quick Cataloguing” provided by Central Cataloguer;
- if item is found, add holdings to the database and designate location for each item; and
- once holdings are added, spine and barcode labels are printed and affixed to book. Control number and call number is recorded on item (title page of book or where room permits on item). Reinforce or package item before circulation.

Library staff are responsible for asset management of school equipment (LCD projectors, cameras, printers, scanners, portable audio players, iPads, playbooks, etc.). This involves entering equipment information such as make, model, serial, etc. into the automated library system and then printing and affixing barcodes to the item.

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### CIRCULATION

Library staff is responsible for all aspects of circulation. These responsibilities include:

- circulation (check in /check out / renewal) of all catalogued book and non-book items;
- circulation of all catalogued textbooks;
- re-shelving all material to their specific location (library, resource room, professional collection, classroom, etc.);
- inspection of material for wear and damage. Repair when able;
- usage of all letters/forms/reports, etc., generated in the automated library system;
- billing for lost/damaged items when necessary;
- generating of overdue reports, no less than monthly for all patrons;
- fulfillment of inter-library loan requests from other schools. Requests from students or for resource room materials are filled at the discretion of the lending library; and
- orientating staff and students to the organization and use of the library.

### COLLECTION

Library staff is responsible for the development and maintenance of the collection. Their responsibilities include:

- inventorying of all catalogued books and non-book items with the recommendation of a three year rotation. Suggest inventorying one section per year;
- knowledgeable of curriculum;
- keeping current with reading interests and trends; and
- promotion of reading for students by:
  - a) ensuring collection meets student needs;
  - b) themed and seasonal book displays;
  - c) recreational reading programs such as “Forest of Reading”;
  - d) book fairs;
  - e) read-alouds;
  - f) book reserves; and
  - g) school newsletter submissions.

### Deselection/Weeding

Deselection should reflect the goals and objectives of LDSB. Criteria for deselection should be similar to those used for selection and core collection development on the understanding that selection and withdrawal are different facets of the same continuous process.

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The library maintains a practice of on-going weeding based upon following criteria:

- outdated materials;
- materials no longer of interest;
- unused for three or more years to be determined by circulation statistics;
- inappropriate for curriculum;
- inaccurate information;
- duplicates; and
- worn or mutilated copies.

Exceptions:

- works by local authors;
- works related to local history; and
- works of famous authors including the “classics”.

Weeded material is disposed of according to the following procedure:

- offered free to students and staff;
- offered free to outside charitable agencies; and
- recycled.

## TECHNOLOGY

Information service technicians (ISTs) are the frontline contact for all technology queries:

- collect and store all Technology Use forms and PED forms;
- promote and assist with online databases and Ontario Software Acquisition Program Advisory Committee (OSAPAC) software;
- create and edit user accounts;
- setup all school's Special Education Amount (SEA) equipment;
- update school webpages;
- install software and drivers;
- maintain peripherals i.e., change printer cartridges;
- troubleshoot computers, peripherals, audio visual (AV) equipment, digital devices and software programs;
- inventory tablets, laptops and notebooks;
- assist staff and students with research, online programs, databases and communication programs;
- perform file management (pictures, backup);
- assist staff and students with file management and retrieval; and
- enter hardware/network request in the work order system.