When is a Resource a Good Resource?

Introduction

Selecting resources is an important step in preparation for a lesson or a unit.

All teachers wish they had a magical resource that does everything all the time. But few meet the requirements. This document is meant to help you critically select resources.

Why selecting a resource can be challenging:
- There is a plethora of resources available that come in a variety of formats.
- No single resource can be relied upon to support all choices and decisions that teachers make while planning for good instruction.
- All resources need to be scrutinized and no resource should be completely trusted to "deliver the curriculum".
- No resource is meant to be used from the first page to the last page in a linear fashion.

It is important to remember that teaching should not be dictated by a resource. The resource must support the instructional strategies chosen by the teacher. For this reason, teachers may need to use many resources in order to meet the outcome(s).

Purpose of this document: provide guidelines for the evaluation and selection of learning resources

Definition of Resource

Instructional resources can be defined as anything which is read, listened to, manipulated, observed or experienced by students as part of an instructional strategy. Resources may be consumable or non-consumable.

How to use this document: This document presents a list of criteria that can be used to select a resource when planning a lesson or unit. These criteria are in no particular order. A resource does not have to encompass all of these criteria. They are meant to be a reflection piece when selecting resources.

For more information:

Alberta: Guide to Education (p.123)

PEI Guide: Evaluation and Selection of Learning Resources: A guide

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What the resource should do for me, as a teacher:

Does this resource…
support the learning outcome(s) I want to focus on[1]?
deliberately and meaningfully incorporate at least one mathematical process?
help provide insight into the student's level of understanding?

What the resource could be for me, as a teacher:

Is this resource…
easily adaptable for differentiation purposes?
easily modifiable?
reusable/reproducible?
reasonably priced?

What the resource could be, for the students:

Is this resource…
at an appropriate reading level?
self-explanatory and/or user-friendly with some instruction?
supportive of the different learning styles?
available in electronic and/or online version?
respectful of all (culture, FNMI, etc.) ?
visually aesthetic and appealing?

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[1] "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." (Evaluation and Selection of Learning Resources: A guide, 2008)