

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

The purpose of these regulations is to provide consistent, systematic standards for evaluating instructional materials proposed for use in Connecticut's public elementary schools to ensure compliance with the Connecticut General Statutes and with the regulations of the State Board of Education.

Children pattern their interests, prejudices, and ideas after what they see and hear. Children dream of and aspire to those goals they are encouraged to attain. Their world can be expansive and filled with exciting and infinite possibilities, or frustrating in its limitations, depending on their exposure. Much of a child's early development takes place in school, and the potentially positive or negative effect of the school experience is well documented.

These guidelines are not intended to supplant the evaluator's judgment, because it would be impossible to do so. They do comprise the minimum standards for acceptability, and they provide criteria by which to judge quality of instructional materials. The guidelines should be used when evaluating both the student material and the teacher material. In no event should instructions in a teacher manual designed to overcome discriminatory pictures or text in a student edition be given any consideration in evaluation of the student edition.

To portray accurately the cultural and racial diversity and the male and female roles in our society, instructional materials must encourage students to understand not only the historical roles and contributions of women and minorities, but also the forces which shaped those roles and contributions, and how and why the contemporary roles and contributions of women and minorities are different.

Limitations

In certain limited situations it would be inappropriate to require that a pictorial or textual item conform exactly to these guidelines. Such an instance would arise, for example, in reprinting a story by a named author or painting by a named artist which is considered to make an important contribution to a given instructional material. In such a situation, however, discussion material should be included indicating that, for example, a particular attitude toward women or minority groups was prevalent during a certain period in history, and how and why that attitude has changed.

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Limitations (continued)

When examining instructional material for adverse reflection on race, creed, sex, etc., the evaluator should make a qualitative judgment with respect to stories or articles having an historical perspective. Any description, depiction, inference, label or retort found to be, by itself, an adverse reflection should not be judged out of context. Rather, the story or article should be examined for appropriate explanations, discussion or other devices included therein, or immediately attached thereto, which may overcome the impact of such offending words or pictures. The instructional material should be rejected only if, on a total basis, the story or article would, in the mind of an average student for whom the material is intended, reflect adversely upon a person because of his or her race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex or occupation.

Materials in a Series

When evaluating instructional materials which are designed to be used as a graded, non-graded or multi-graded series, each component thereof shall be judged individually for compliance and without regard to the content of any other component. However, a group or sequence of materials which is designed for use exclusively within a particular single grade shall be judged on a total basis for compliance concerning adverse reflections of one's race, creed, sex, etc. For example, if a package of three different books is designed to be used as fourth grade readers and a student is expected to complete all books in that school year, any portrayal deficiencies found in one book may be balanced against any exemplary portrayal in another book. However, each of the three books must be judged separately for compliance with the adverse reflection prohibitions.

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials

1. Male and Female Roles

To encourage the individual development and self-esteem of each child, regardless of gender, instructional materials, when they portray people (or animals having identifiable human attributes), shall portray women and men, girls and boys, in a wide variety of occupational, emotional, and behavioral situations, presenting both sexes in the full range of their human potential. The criteria are:

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials

1. Male and Female Roles (continued)

- A. Descriptions, depictions, inferences, labels or retorts which tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize females must not appear.
- B. Instructional materials that generally or incidentally reflect contemporary American society, regardless of the subject area, must contain references to, or illustrations of, males and females approximately evenly, except as limited by accuracy.
- C. Mentally and physically active, creative, problem-solving roles, and success and failure in those roles, should be divided approximately evenly between male and female characters.
- D. Emotions of fear, anger, aggression, excitement or tenderness should occur randomly among characters regardless of gender.
- E. Traditional activities engaged in by characters of one sex should be balanced by the presentation of nontraditional activities for characters of that sex.
- F. If professional or executive roles, or vocations, trades or other gainful occupations are portrayed, men and women should be represented approximately equally.
- G. Where life-style choices are discussed, boys and girls should be offered an equally wide range of such aspirations and choices.
- H. Whenever material presents developments in history or current events, or achievements in art, science, or any other field, the contributions of women should be included and discussed when historically accurate.
- I. Imbalance or inequality of any kind, when presented for historical accuracy, should, in the student edition of the instructional material, be interpreted in light of contemporary standards and circumstances.
- J. Sexually neutral language -- for example, "people," "persons," "men and women," "pioneers," "they," -- should generally be used.

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

2. Ethnic and Cultural Groups

To project the cultural diversity of our society, instill in each child a sense of pride in his or her heritage, eradicate the seeds of prejudice, and encourage the individual development of each child, instructional materials, when portraying people (or animals having identifiable human attributes), shall include a fair representation of majority and minority group characters portrayed in a wide variety of occupational and behavioral roles, and present the contributions of ethnic and cultural groups, thereby reinforcing the self-esteem and potential of all people and helping the members of minority groups to find their rightful place in our society. The criteria are:

- A. Descriptions, depictions, inferences or labels that do not patronize, stereotype, or demean any group.
- B. When diverse ethnic or cultural groups are portrayed, such portrayal should not depict differences in customs or life-style as undesirable and should not reflect an adverse value judgment of such differences.
- C. Instructional materials that generally or incidentally reflect contemporary American society, regardless of the subject area, must contain references to, or illustrations of, a fair proportion of diverse ethnic groups.
- D. Mentally active, creative, and problem-solving roles, and success and failure in those roles, should be divided in fair proportion between majority and minority group characters.
- E. The portrayal of minority characters in roles to which they have been traditionally restricted by society should be balanced by the presentation of nontraditional activities for characters of that race.
- F. Minority persons should be depicted in the same range of socioeconomic settings as persons of the majority group.
- G. Depiction of diverse ethnic and cultural groups should not be limited to the root culture, but rather expanded to include such groups within the mainstream of American life.

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials

2. Ethnic and Cultural Groups (continued)

- H. If professional or executive roles, or vocations, trades or other gainful occupations are portrayed, majority and minority groups should be presented therein in fair proportion.
- I. Whenever developments in history or current events, or achievements in art, science, or any other field are presented, the contributions of minority peoples, and particularly the identification of prominent minority persons should be included and discussed when historically accurate.
- J. Imbalance or inequality of any kind, when presented for historical accuracy, should, in the student edition of the instructional materials, be interpreted in light of contemporary standards and circumstances.

3. Entrepreneur and Labor

The criteria are:

- A. References or labels which tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize an occupation, vocation, or livelihood must not appear.
- B. Where appropriate, reference should be made to the role and contribution of the entrepreneur in the total development of Connecticut and the United States, and any such reference should be accurate.
- C. Where appropriate, reference should be made to the role and contribution of labor in the total development of Connecticut and the United States, and any such reference should be accurate.

4. Ecology and Environment

The criteria are:

- A. Responsibilities of human beings toward a healthy, sanitary environment are appropriately portrayed.
- B. Wise use of resources, both human and physical, is actively encouraged.

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

4. Ecology and Environment (continued)

- C. Interdependence of people and their environment is portrayed.
- D. The effects of solutions to environmental problems are identified.
- E. Appropriate means of protecting the environment are suggested.

5. Dangerous Substances

The criteria are:

- A. The hazards of the use of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, and restricted dangerous drugs are depicted in illustrations or discussions where references to these substances are included in instructional materials.
- B. The use of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, or restricted dangerous drugs is not glamorized or encouraged by illustrations or discussion references.

6. Religion

The criteria are:

- A. No religious belief or practice shall be held up to ridicule nor any religious group portrayed as inferior or superior.
- B. Portrayals of contemporary American society should, where religion is discussed or depicted, reflect its religious diversity. Except where material deals with a particular historical era, materials in art and music must, where religious aspects thereof are depicted, reflect the religious diversity of contemporary American society.
- C. Any explanation or description of a religious belief or practice shall be presented in a manner which neither encourages nor discourages belief in the matter, nor indoctrinates the student in any particular religious belief, nor otherwise instructs students in religious principles.

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

7. Brand Names

The criteria are:

Instructional materials shall not contain illustrations of any identifiable commercial brand names, representations or corporate logos unless such illustrations are necessary to the educational purpose of the instructional material, and that purpose cannot be achieved without using such illustrations, or unless such illustrations are incidental to a scene of a general nature. If, under these exceptions, a brand name, representation or corporate logo is illustrated, prominence shall not be given to any one brand or corporation unless, in turn, such illustration is necessary to the educational purpose of the instructional material and that purpose cannot be achieved without using such illustration.

8. Food

The criterion is:

When instructional materials contain illustrations of foods, there shall be an emphasis on foods of high nutritional value.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-18a Contents of textbooks and other general instructional materials.

Policy adopted: June 18, 2003

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL
Hartford, Connecticut

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948
Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980,
by the ALA Council