

Checklist for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Cultural Appropriateness

A. Relevancy:

1. Does the book (poster, movie, slide, etc.) actually reflect the language and the experience of the minority student? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Does it depict people of the child's minority group as worthwhile individuals? _____ Yes _____ No

B. Authenticity:

1. Is the book (poster, movie, slide, etc.) authentic from the perspective of the minority student? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Is the book written by a member of the minority group being portrayed? _____ Yes _____ No
3. Does the book deal with or compare minority cultures within and outside the United States? _____ Yes _____ No
4. Does it identify with the majority's culture values and standards? If so, are the majority's culture values considered the only acceptable norm? _____ Yes _____ No
5. Does comparison of cultures in any way imply the superiority of one culture to another? _____ Yes _____ No

C. Racist Stereotypes:

1. Are illustrations of faces, figures, and settings stereotypical? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Do the clothes, appearance, manners of speech, and behavior described in the text and illustrations tend to reinforce derogatory stereotypes of the child's minority group? _____ Yes _____ No
3. Who in the stories are the leaders? Who are the followers? Who are characters with ideas and initiative?
4. Is the impression given that the welfare of one group (or individual) depends on the generosity or goodwill of another group (or individual)? _____ Yes _____ No

D. Sexist Stereotypes:

1. Are the females in the book just part of the background and do they play minor roles in a male-centered story? _____ Yes _____ No
2. If females are central figures, are they cast in roles other than the usual stereotypes of teacher, mother, and nurse? _____ Yes _____ No
3. Are the actions of women less sophisticated, less interesting, or less challenging than those of men? Do they show initiative and imagination or are they docile and passive and need help in order to resolve the problems posed? Is the solution to problems based on a sixth sense or “women’s intuition?” _____ Yes _____ No
4. Are the values of beauty, sweetness, domesticity, motherhood, and marriage the predominant virtues depicted for females in the stories? _____ Yes _____ No

E. Language:

1. Is the language used familiar to the student? If not, is there a glossary?
_____ Yes _____ No
2. Can the language of the text be used as a cross-cultural experience to facilitate communication and cooperation between groups in the United States?
_____ Yes _____ No
3. Does the book depict dialects and cultures of different groups inaccurately? Are these confused with one another? _____ Yes _____ No
4. Is minority group language or dialect used in a derogatory or demeaning way?
_____ Yes _____ No

Is it used in a comparative or illustrative way to show diversity of dialects and cultural variations? _____ Yes _____ No

F. History:

1. Does the teacher or evaluator feel he or she has sufficient knowledge of the history of the group involved to make an accurate judgment as to the validity of the historical content? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Are the settings, actions, places, dates, etc. accurate? _____ Yes _____ No