

Learning Resources in British Columbia Schools

What is a learning resource? Learning resources are generally understood to be texts, videos, software, and other materials that assist students to meet the expectations for learning defined by provincial or local curricula. Before a learning resource is used in a classroom, it must be evaluated to ensure that criteria such as those for curriculum match, social considerations, and age or developmental appropriateness are met. The evaluation criteria that provincially approved learning resources must meet are detailed in the provincial policy document *Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources* which has been distributed to all B.C. schools. Learning resources such as newspapers or periodicals that support current events or “the teachable moment” also need to be evaluated for suitability before use in a classroom. Usually, the evaluation of this type of resource relies on the professional expertise and judgement of the classroom teacher.

Who evaluates learning resources? The provincial learning resource evaluation process involves trained evaluators who use media specific evaluation instruments and processes. Evaluations are coordinated by Ministry staff from the Standards Department and are carried out by educators from across the province. The educators involved in the provincial process are primarily classroom teachers. School boards are required to have criteria and processes in place for the selection and evaluation of learning resources. Guidelines and suggestions for school district criteria and processes may also be found in [*Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources*](#)

Which learning resources may be used in a classroom? The learning resources that may be used in a classroom are legally identified in section 3 of the Educational Program Guide Order. An annotated copy of Section 3 has been provided here for your information. The annotations are in italics below and do not comprise part of the Minister’s Order.

Educational Program Guide Order (Section 3 only)

The Educational Program Guide Order is a Minister’s Order that sets out what curriculum guides (Educational Program Guides) and learning resources (Educational Resource materials) may or may not be used in BC schools.

Educational resource materials (*This is the legal name for learning resources in BC*)

3. (1) A board or francophone education authority may only use the following educational resource materials:

*Section 3 sets the limits as to what learning resources may be used in BC schools. It also names the “school board or francophone education authority” as the decision making body. The use of the phrase “**may only use...**” indicates that the board or francophone authority is not **required** to use any specific resource; they have both choice and decision-making authority.:*

(a) resource materials in an educational program guide specified in section 1 of this Order;

This specifies all the learning resources identified in Ministry developed curriculum guides, primarily those listed in Appendix B of each IRP;

**Educational Program Guide Order:
continued...
(Section 3 only)**

- (b) resource materials in a document referred to in column 1 of Table 1;**

This specifies all the learning resources identified in curriculum guides that are not ministry developed but have provincial approval and have been listed in the table;

- (c) the educational resource materials referred to as authorized or recommended in the most recent “Catalogue of Learning Resources”, published from time to time by the Ministry of Education;**

The Catalogue of Learning Resources is an annual compilation of all the resources listed in Appendix Bs of all IRPs or Grade Collection document and includes newly recommended resources each year.

- (d) other educational resource materials that, subsequent to the publication of the Catalogue referred to in paragraph (c), are designated by the minister as authorized or recommended; and**

This covers learning resources identified through the Continuous Submission process between annual publications of the Catalogue of Learning Resources or revisions of Grade Collections or IRPs.

- (e) educational resource materials that the board or francophone education authority considers are appropriate for individual students or groups of students.**

This authorizes boards or francophone educational authorities to approve learning resources that have not been approved through the provincial evaluation process (Continuous Submission Process)

- (2) Before a board or francophone education authority uses educational resource materials referred to in subsection (1) (e), the board or francophone education authority must approve those educational resource materials in accordance with evaluation and selection criteria and procedures established by the board or francophone education authority.**

This requires a board or francophone education authority to establish criteria and procedures for the evaluation and selection of materials that have not been approved through the provincial Continuous Submission process. The board or francophone authority is required to use these criteria and procedures.

In Summary:, Section 3 of the *Education Program Guide Order* gives boards and francophone authorities the authority to determine which educational resource materials will be used in the schools under their jurisdiction. The section also limits the choice of Educational Resource Materials to those that have been approved through a provincial process OR those that have been approved through a local process established by the board or authority.

It is accepted that teachers and other educators in the system are in the best educational position to use their professional judgement with regard to learning resources in classrooms. Teachers are careful to ensure that resources in their classrooms have merit and relevance. School boards, however, are ultimately responsible for the use of any particular learning resource in a classroom within their district.