EVALUATING AND CHOOSING CURRICULUM RESOURCES pdf

1: HSLDA | Homeschooling Thru High School: Curriculum

This revised and updated version of the book, Evaluating, Selecting and Acquiring Learning Resources, originally published by the BC Ministry of Education in , (with a minor update in), was researched and produced by ERAC.

Consider how the table of contents aligns with your course syllabus and teaching philosophy: Is coverage of topics broad or specific? Are key principles stated precisely and clearly? Are the explanations and interpretations consistent with your teaching style? In addition to content, evaluate the text structure and layout as discussed in the previous section. Textbooks vary greatly in their level of difficulty with respect to readability, depth of theoretical treatment of information, and complexity of end-of-chapter problems. Colleagues who have adopted the book can provide insight about these issues. They are also helpful for determining whether a textbook contains errors, which have been shown to have a large, negative effect on student learning Iona, Considerations in Choosing a Textbook Look at it from the point of view of novice users. Is it organized in a useful way? Consider the information and the weight. A book which is more appropriate for the course may be available, often at substantially lower cost to the student. Choose a book that contains most of the information that is needed, and supplement it with additional readings. This alerts students to the existence of other resources. Match the text to the audience in terms of its preparation and prior knowledge. Check the book carefully for errors. The text itself is rarely the only resource available to the students and instructor. Many publishers have a separate study guide, often with chapter summaries and solutions to textbook problems. Upon adoption of a text, publishers often provide or offer for sale at a reduced price transparencies, slides, and computer test banks. Software to accompany textbooks is also becoming more popular. This software can vary considerably in quality and usefulness, so you may want to ask for a demonstration disk before purchasing it or requiring that students purchase it. Once you have chosen a textbook, help your students use it effectively. A number of suggestions are given in the sidebar. Allow time during the first week of class to introduce the text and outline your strategy for its use. Encourage your students to use the text by asking them questions that require higher-order critical thinking skills drawing on and extending its material, methods, or examples. Simple factual questions are of little value to long-term retention or true understanding. Higher-order questions require students to think about the readings, ask questions, integrate material, and develop answers in their own words. When appropriate, help students to understand that a text book is not always the final authority on a topic, particularly in fields where new information is discovered at a very fast rate. Students may learn that it is okay to question the text if the instructor also openly disagrees with some interpretations or approaches in the book. The instructor can use different interpretations as examples of unresolved problems and illustrate critical thinking by presenting reasons and evidence for differing opinions. After a thorough search, you may find that the book you want simply does not exist. Publishers have realized this and have taken steps to customize their products to meet faculty needs. It is possible to select certain chapters of a given book to be bound as a volume. Choosing and Using Instructional Resources. The National Academies Press. Be prepared for questions, references to those readings, and other activities building on that material. Take notes in outline form as you read the text, indicate key points with a highlighter, note connections between sections, make lists of questions that come to mind or uncertainties, and pause frequently to summarize the key points of each section or chapter. Compare your lists of questions and your lists of key points with those of others in the class. Bring questions to class or recitation sections and ask the instructor to answer them. Review the text after the class to gain additional perspective. Look in supplemental texts to see how other authors present similar topics, especially if the points seem vague or unclear in the primary text. Remember that often the presentation that introduces new information, concepts, and vocabulary will seem foreign. Another presentation with a slightly different twist may help you see something differently or may confirm that you have identified key points. Review the text before exams and quizzes or periodically throughout the term. Study and review worked examples before attacking the homework problems. Read over questions, exercises, and problems that are not assigned and think about how to answer them. Group questions or problems by the topics they address or the methods

required to solve them. Summarize by writing your own problems. Consult worked examples in other texts. This approach offers considerable flexibility, given that many smaller textbook publishers are now subsidiaries of larger corporations. Another option is to combine resources from several different publishers and to offer students a "coursepack" instead of a textbook. Many college bookstores and copy centers will work with faculty members to collect chapters, readings, and supplements. They obtain the required copyrights, and bind and sell custom-designed materials tailored for a particular course. For some, the value of the Internet is that it allows users at remote locations to sign-on to computers where they have accounts, often using connection software called telnet. For others, rapid electronic communication and document sharing replaces phone conversations and meetings and facilitates collaboration. Another major use of the Internet has been to provide free public access to documents in electronic form. Many individuals and organizations "post" documents on their own computers so that others can obtain electronic copies without need for special accounts and passwords. File transfers can be made by FTP file transfer protocol software, and for many who have posted documents to their Web pages see below , file transfers can be initiated by as little as the click of a button on the title of the document. Page 52 Share Cite Suggested Citation: To use the Web you need a computer with special software that is called a browser, such as Lynx, Mosaic, Cello, or Netscape, or equivalent services available through commercial Internet providers. Highly detailed text, graphics, and videos are available on a wide array of topics. The Internet and the ease of information viewing and retrieval that are possible through the Web mean that students are no longer limited to information provided by textbooks and printed materials in libraries. Students may "search" on the World Wide Web for preprints and reprints of articles, for discussion bulletin boards on specialized topics, for conference abstracts and proceedings, or for topical compilations of materials for research or teaching. Most Web navigational software systems include search engines that allow the user to locate information or sites by topic area. With more than a thousand new Web sites added every day, browsing for information on the Web needs to be done even more carefully than a literature search for library references. Bear in mind that while the Web holds enormous potential in providing access to information, much of the information available has not been reviewed for quality or reliability. Examples of Faculty and Student Use of Web Resources Course Web pages give students easy access to assigned readings and reference material. Student presentations to their class mates through creation of Web pages. Student access to resource information for papers or research projects. Access to discussion groups and the latest information on particular topics. A number of electronic resources are available to those seeking information about education. Many professional societies have created Web pages with information about their educational initiatives and with links to other resources. Also, consider looking at the information posted by those who fund educational initiatives, including the National Science Foundation, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and the Department of Education. Electronic Communication Electronic mail "e-mail" enables students and faculty to communicate with each other and with people all over the world. Many groups have adopted or created systems under which messages sent to a single address are delivered to mail accounts of all members of the group. This kind of electronic bulletin board is called a "listserv. Another form of group electronic communication is through a bulletin board on which messages are posted, called a newsgroup. Interested readers must sign on to a particular electronic address to find and read messages or posted documents. Bulletin boards of this type permit readers to leave their reactions to and comments on the postings of others. Many instructors use electronic communication to facilitate interactions among students, and between students and themselves. Sample uses of e-mail or Web pages for communication include: Students send questions electronically to the instructor, which gives them an opportunity to express a doubt or misconception that they might have been afraid to voice in class. The instructor can transmit the question and the answer simultaneously to all students, without identifying the individual who asked the question. Faculty members can monitor these exchanges to gauge student understanding and progress. Faculty hold "electronic office hours" in addition to traditional ones, so that students can ask a question and receive an answer almost immediately. Faculty require drafts of student papers to be submitted electronically; not only does this make it easier for some faculty to review the draft, it forces the student to become familiar with technology used in the workplace. Faculty members distribute or post homework assignments, homework solutions, exam solutions,

and other supplemental information electronically. Faculty create electronic "suggestion boxes" where students can post their comments about the course; consult the administrator of your campus e-mail system for ways to make the postings anonymous. Choosing and Using Electronic Technologies Before reviewing particular software, it is important to know which course goal it will help you to achieve. Lists such as those published by Boettcher and Kozma Advantages of Interactive Computer Software Increased motivation because software packages offer feedback and respond to the questions and uncertainties of the student. Increased enjoyment of learning because students shift from the passive role of receiving knowledge to the more active role of becoming seekers of knowledge. Reduced learning time due to personalized instruction which accommodates different learning styles. Self-paced instruction encourages the student to invest the time in weak areas rather than in areas they have already mastered. Increased retention from the enhanced engagement and participation of the learner. Mastery can be more nearly ensured because programs can be designed so that new material will not be covered until the current material is mastered by the student. Privacy because students interact on a one-on-one level and are free to ask questions without feeling intimidated or embarrassed. Opportunity to conduct simulated laboratory procedures and experiments which are too dangerous or expensive to be performed by students, or which require expensive laboratory equipment. Page 54 Share Cite Suggested Citation: In addition to working with the demonstration disks yourself, invite students to give you feedback on the product.

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2: Basic Guide to Program Evaluation (Including Many Additional Resources)

Selecting and evaluating resources An overview â€" with a new introduction and minor adaptations â€" of A Resource Guide. published by Curriculum.

Note that the concept of program evaluation can include a wide variety of methods to evaluate many aspects of programs in nonprofit or for-profit organizations. There are numerous books and other materials that provide in-depth analysis of evaluations, their designs, methods, combination of methods and techniques of analysis. However, personnel do not have to be experts in these topics to carry out a useful program evaluation. Besides, if you resort to bringing in an evaluation consultant, you should be a smart consumer. Far too many program evaluations generate information that is either impractical or irrelevant -- if the information is understood at all. This document orients personnel to the nature of program evaluation and how it can be carried out in a realistic and practical fashion. Note that much of the information in this section was gleaned from various works of Michael Quinn Patton. Many people believe evaluation is a useless activity that generates lots of boring data with useless conclusions. This was a problem with evaluations in the past when program evaluation methods were chosen largely on the basis of achieving complete scientific accuracy, reliability and validity. This approach often generated extensive data from which very carefully chosen conclusions were drawn. Generalizations and recommendations were avoided. As a result, evaluation reports tended to reiterate the obvious and left program administrators disappointed and skeptical about the value of evaluation in general. Many people believe that evaluation is about proving the success or failure of a program. This myth assumes that success is implementing the perfect program and never having to hear from employees, customers or clients again -- the program will now run itself perfectly. Success is remaining open to continuing feedback and adjusting the program accordingly. Evaluation gives you this continuing feedback. Many believe that evaluation is a highly unique and complex process that occurs at a certain time in a certain way, and almost always includes the use of outside experts. Many people believe they must completely understand terms such as validity and reliability. They do have to consider what information they need in order to make current decisions about program issues or needs. And they have to be willing to commit to understanding what is really going on. Consequently, they miss precious opportunities to make more of difference for their customer and clients, or to get a bigger bang for their buck. So What is Program Evaluation? In nonprofits, each of these goals often becomes a program. Nonprofit programs are organized methods to provide certain related services to constituents, e. Programs must be evaluated to decide if the programs are indeed useful to constituents. In a for-profit, a program is often a one-time effort to produce a new product or line of products. So, still, what is program evaluation? Program evaluation is carefully collecting information about a program or some aspect of a program in order to make necessary decisions about the program. The type of evaluation you undertake to improve your programs depends on what you want to learn about the program. Understand, verify or increase the impact of products or services on customers or clients - These "outcomes" evaluations are increasingly required by nonprofit funders as verification that the nonprofits are indeed helping their constituents. Too often, service providers for-profit or nonprofit rely on their own instincts and passions to conclude what their customers or clients really need and whether the products or services are providing what is needed. Over time, these organizations find themselves in a lot of guessing about what would be a good product or service, and trial and error about how new products or services could be delivered. Improve delivery mechanisms to be more efficient and less costly - Over time, product or service delivery ends up to be an inefficient collection of activities that are less efficient and more costly than need be. Evaluations can identify program strengths and weaknesses to improve the program. Evaluations can verify if the program is really running as originally planned. Produce data or verify results that can be used for public relations and promoting services in the community. Produce valid comparisons between programs to decide which should be retained, e. Fully examine and describe effective programs for duplication elsewhere. This may seem too obvious to discuss, but before an organization embarks on evaluating a program, it should have well established means to conduct itself as an organization, e. You Need

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Program s: To effectively conduct program evaluation, you should first have programs. That is, you need a strong impression of what your customers or clients actually need. You may have used a needs assessment to determine these needs -- itself a form of evaluation, but usually the first step in a good marketing plan. Next, you need some effective methods to meet each of those goals. These methods are usually in the form of programs. It often helps to think of your programs in terms of inputs, process, outputs and outcomes. Inputs are the various resources needed to run the program, e. The process is how the program is carried out, e. The outputs are the units of service, e. Outcomes are the impacts on the customers or on clients receiving services, e. Often, management wants to know everything about their products, services or programs. However, limited resources usually force managers to prioritize what they need to know to make current decisions. Your program evaluation plans depend on what information you need to collect in order to make major decisions. Usually, management is faced with having to make major decisions due to decreased funding, ongoing complaints, unmet needs among customers and clients, the need to polish service delivery, etc. For example, do you want to know more about what is actually going on in your programs, whether your programs are meeting their goals, the impact of your programs on customers, etc? You may want other information or a combination of these. There are trade offs, too, in the breadth and depth of information you get. The more breadth you want, usually the less depth you get unless you have a great deal of resources to carry out the evaluation. On the other hand, if you want to examine a certain aspect of a program in great detail, you will likely not get as much information about other aspects of the program. For those starting out in program evaluation or who have very limited resources, they can use various methods to get a good mix of breadth and depth of information. They can both understand more about certain areas of their programs and not go bankrupt doing so. Consider the following key questions when designing a program evaluation. For what purposes is the evaluation being done, i. Who are the audiences for the information from the evaluation, e. From what sources should the information be collected, e. How can that information be collected in a reasonable fashion, e. When is the information needed so, by when must it be collected? What resources are available to collect the information? Some Major Types of Program Evaluation When designing your evaluation approach, it may be helpful to review the following three types of evaluations, which are rather common in organizations. Note that you should not design your evaluation approach simply by choosing which of the following three types you will use -- you should design your evaluation approach by carefully addressing the above key considerations. Goals-Based Evaluation Often programs are established to meet one or more specific goals. These goals are often described in the original program plans. Goal-based evaluations are evaluating the extent to which programs are meeting predetermined goals or objectives. Questions to ask yourself when designing an evaluation to see if you reached your goals, are: How were the program goals and objectives, is applicable established? Was the process effective? Will the goals be achieved according to the timelines specified in the program implementation or operations plan? If not, then why? Do personnel have adequate resources money, equipment, facilities, training, etc. How should priorities be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals? Depending on the context, this question might be viewed as a program management decision, more than an evaluation question. How should timelines be changed be careful about making these changes - know why efforts are behind schedule before timelines are changed? How should goals be changed be careful about making these changes - know why efforts are not achieving the goals before changing the goals? Should any goals be added or removed? How should goals be established in the future? Process-Based Evaluations Process-based evaluations are geared to fully understanding how a program works -- how does it produce that results that it does. These evaluations are useful if programs are long-standing and have changed over the years, employees or customers report a large number of complaints about the program, there appear to be large inefficiencies in delivering program services and they are also useful for accurately portraying to outside parties how a program truly operates e. There are numerous questions that might be addressed in a process evaluation. These questions can be selected by carefully considering what is important to know about the program. What is required of employees in order to deliver the product or services? How are employees trained about how to deliver the product or services? How do customers or clients come into the program? What is required of customers or client? How do employees select which products or services

will be provided to the customer or client? What is the general process that customers or clients go through with the product or program? What do customers or clients consider to be strengths of the program? What do staff consider to be strengths of the product or program? Outcomes-Based Evaluation Program evaluation with an outcomes focus is increasingly important for nonprofits and asked for by funders. Outcomes are benefits to clients from participation in the program.

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3: Choosing resources | Curriculum

Criteria for choosing resources: curriculum materials In order to carry out an information task effectively, students need access to appropriate information sources. The following are some key points to consider when deciding which published materials to include in the curriculum.

To determine what the effects of the program are: Assess skills development by program participants Compare changes in behavior over time Decide where to allocate new resources Demonstrate that accountability requirements are fulfilled Use information from multiple evaluations to predict the likely effects of similar programs To affect participants: Reinforce messages of the program Stimulate dialogue and raise awareness about community issues Broaden consensus among partners about program goals Teach evaluation skills to staff and other stakeholders Gather success stories Support organizational change and improvement Questions The evaluation needs to answer specific questions. Drafting questions encourages stakeholders to reveal what they believe the evaluation should answer. That is, what questions are more important to stakeholders? The process of developing evaluation questions further refines the focus of the evaluation. Methods The methods available for an evaluation are drawn from behavioral science and social research and development. Three types of methods are commonly recognized. They are experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational or case study designs. Observational or case study methods use comparisons within a group to describe and explain what happens e. No design is necessarily better than another. The choice of methods has implications for what will count as evidence, how that evidence will be gathered, and what kind of claims can be made. Because each method option has its own biases and limitations, evaluations that mix methods are generally more robust. Over the course of an evaluation, methods may need to be revised or modified. Circumstances that make a particular approach useful can change. For example, the intended use of the evaluation could shift from discovering how to improve the program to helping decide about whether the program should continue or not. Thus, methods may need to be adapted or redesigned to keep the evaluation on track. An agreement describes how the evaluation activities will be implemented. Elements of an agreement include statements about the intended purpose, users, uses, and methods, as well as a summary of the deliverables, those responsible, a timeline, and budget. The formality of the agreement depends upon the relationships that exist between those involved. For example, it may take the form of a legal contract, a detailed protocol, or a simple memorandum of understanding. Regardless of its formality, creating an explicit agreement provides an opportunity to verify the mutual understanding needed for a successful evaluation. It also provides a basis for modifying procedures if that turns out to be necessary. As you can see, focusing the evaluation design may involve many activities. For instance, both supporters and skeptics of the program could be consulted to ensure that the proposed evaluation questions are politically viable. Interviews could be held with specific intended users to better understand their information needs and timeline for action. Resource requirements could be reduced when users are willing to employ more timely but less precise evaluation methods. Gather Credible Evidence Credible evidence is the raw material of a good evaluation. The information learned should be seen by stakeholders as believable, trustworthy, and relevant to answer their questions. This requires thinking broadly about what counts as "evidence. For another question, a set of well-done, systematic observations such as interactions between an outreach worker and community residents, will have high credibility. The difference depends on what kind of information the stakeholders want and the situation in which it is gathered. In some situations, it may be necessary to consult evaluation specialists. This may be especially true if concern for data quality is especially high. In other circumstances, local people may offer the deepest insights. Regardless of their expertise, however, those involved in an evaluation should strive to collect information that will convey a credible, well-rounded picture of the program and its efforts. Having credible evidence strengthens the evaluation results as well as the recommendations that follow from them. One way to do this is by using multiple procedures for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data. Encouraging participation by stakeholders can also enhance perceived credibility. The following features of evidence gathering typically affect how credible it is seen as being: Indicators Indicators translate general

concepts about the program and its expected effects into specific, measurable parts. Examples of indicators include: That is, they reflect the aspects of the program that are most meaningful to monitor. Several indicators are usually needed to track the implementation and effects of a complex program or intervention. One way to develop multiple indicators is to create a "balanced scorecard," which contains indicators that are carefully selected to complement one another. According to this strategy, program processes and effects are viewed from multiple perspectives using small groups of related indicators. For instance, a balanced scorecard for a single program might include indicators of how the program is being delivered; what participants think of the program; what effects are observed; what goals were attained; and what changes are occurring in the environment around the program. Another approach to using multiple indicators is based on a program logic model, such as we discussed earlier in the section. A logic model can be used as a template to define a full spectrum of indicators along the pathway that leads from program activities to expected effects. They can also address intermediary factors that influence program effectiveness, including such intangible factors as service quality, community capacity, or inter -organizational relations. Indicators for these and similar concepts can be created by systematically identifying and then tracking markers of what is said or done when the concept is expressed. In the course of an evaluation, indicators may need to be modified or new ones adopted. There are definite perils to using performance indicators as a substitute for completing the evaluation process and reaching fully justified conclusions. Sources Sources of evidence in an evaluation may be people, documents, or observations. More than one source may be used to gather evidence for each indicator. For instance, an inside perspective may be reflected by internal documents and comments from staff or program managers; whereas clients and those who do not support the program may provide different, but equally relevant perspectives. Mixing these and other perspectives provides a more comprehensive view of the program or intervention. The criteria used to select sources should be clearly stated so that users and other stakeholders can interpret the evidence accurately and assess if it may be biased. The integration of qualitative and quantitative information can yield evidence that is more complete and more useful, thus meeting the needs and expectations of a wider range of stakeholders. Quality Quality refers to the appropriateness and integrity of information gathered in an evaluation. High quality data are reliable and informative. It is easier to collect if the indicators have been well defined. Other factors that affect quality may include instrument design, data collection procedures, training of those involved in data collection, source selection, coding, data management, and routine error checking. Obtaining quality data will entail tradeoffs e. Quantity Quantity refers to the amount of evidence gathered in an evaluation. It is necessary to estimate in advance the amount of information that will be required and to establish criteria to decide when to stop collecting data - to know when enough is enough. It also partly determines whether the evaluation will be able to detect effects. All evidence collected should have a clear, anticipated use. Logistics By logistics, we mean the methods, timing, and physical infrastructure for gathering and handling evidence. People and organizations also have cultural preferences that dictate acceptable ways of asking questions and collecting information, including who would be perceived as an appropriate person to ask the questions. Therefore, the techniques for gathering evidence in an evaluation must be in keeping with the cultural norms of the community. Data collection procedures should also ensure that confidentiality is protected. Justify Conclusions The process of justifying conclusions recognizes that evidence in an evaluation does not necessarily speak for itself. Conclusions become justified when they are linked to the evidence gathered and judged against agreed-upon values set by the stakeholders. Stakeholders must agree that conclusions are justified in order to use the evaluation results with confidence. Standards Standards reflect the values held by stakeholders about the program. They provide the basis to make program judgments. The use of explicit standards for judgment is fundamental to sound evaluation. They are designed to detect patterns in evidence, either by isolating important findings analysis or by combining different sources of information to reach a larger understanding synthesis. Mixed method evaluations require the separate analysis of each evidence element, as well as a synthesis of all sources to examine patterns that emerge. Deciphering facts from a given body of evidence involves deciding how to organize, classify, compare, and display information. These decisions are guided by the questions being asked, the types of data available, and especially by input from stakeholders and primary intended users. Interpretation Interpretation

is the effort to figure out what the findings mean. The facts must be interpreted to understand their practical significance. In short, interpretations draw on information and perspectives that stakeholders bring to the evaluation. They can be strengthened through active participation or interaction with the data and preliminary explanations of what happened. Judgements Judgments are statements about the merit, worth, or significance of the program. They are formed by comparing the findings and their interpretations against one or more selected standards. Because multiple standards can be applied to a given program, stakeholders may reach different or even conflicting judgments. Community members, however, may feel that despite improvements, a minimum threshold of access to services has still not been reached. Their judgment, based on standards of social equity, would therefore be negative. This type of disagreement can be a catalyst to clarify values and to negotiate the appropriate basis or bases on which the program should be judged. Recommendations Recommendations are actions to consider as a result of the evaluation. Forming recommendations requires information beyond just what is necessary to form judgments. By contrast, an evaluation can be strengthened by recommendations that anticipate and react to what users will want to know. Three things might increase the chances that recommendations will be relevant and well-received: Sharing draft recommendations Soliciting reactions from multiple stakeholders Presenting options instead of directive advice Justifying conclusions in an evaluation is a process that involves different possible steps. For instance, conclusions could be strengthened by searching for alternative explanations from the ones you have chosen, and then showing why they are unsupported by the evidence. When there are different but equally well supported conclusions, each could be presented with a summary of their strengths and weaknesses.

and Selection of Learning Resources document, as well as to expound upon specific selection criteria in the areas of content, instructional design, technical design, and social consciousness.

It also shows the interaction and relationships of the four essential phases of the curriculum development process: It is important to acknowledge that things do not always work exactly as depicted in a model! Each phase has several steps or tasks to complete in logical sequence. These steps are not always separate and distinct, but may overlap and occur concurrently. For example, the curriculum development team is involved in all of the steps. Evaluations should occur in most of the steps to assess progress. Each step logically follows the previous. It would make no sense to design learning activities before learner outcomes and content are described and identified. Similarly, content cannot be determined before learner outcomes are described. In the experience of the author, and confirmed by other curriculum specialists, the following curriculum development steps are frequently omitted or slighted. These steps are essential to successful curriculum development and need to be emphasized. Recruiting and training volunteer facilitators: Evaluating and reporting on the impact of the curriculum: Two types of evaluation are included in the Phases and Steps illustration: Summative evaluation provides evidence for what works, what does not work, and what needs to be improved. In every step of the curriculum development process, the most important task is to keep the learner in this case, youth in mind and involve them in process. The results may prompt decision makers to allocate resources for a curriculum development team to prepare curriculum materials. A brief description of each of the curriculum development steps is described below. After reviewing these descriptions, you should have a very clear idea of how the steps occur in each of the phases and what each step includes. The steps in this phase include: This section explores some of the questions that need to be addressed to define the issue and to develop a statement that will guide the selection of the members of a curriculum development team. The issue statement also serves to broadly identify, the scope what will be included of the curriculum content. Topics covered in this section include: The goal is to obtain expertise for the areas included in the scope of the curriculum content among the team members and develop an effective team. The first is procedures for conducting a needs assessment. A number of techniques are aimed toward learning what is needed and by whom relative to the identified issue. Techniques covered in this section include: Analysis, the second part of this needs assessment step, describes techniques on how to use the data and the results of the information gathered.

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5: Early Childhood Assessment: Resources for Early Learning

Based on materials from Christian Educators' Guide to Evaluating and Developing Curriculum by Nancy Ferguson Curriculum Resources: Four Models Christian education curriculum materials are published in abundance, and the publishing companies are.

In Massachusetts, licensed early childhood programs are now required to include a child assessment component in their programs. Here we have included information and resources to inform educators on early childhood assessment programs. What is childhood assessment? Childhood assessment is a process of gathering information about a child, reviewing the information, and then using the information to plan educational activities that are at a level the child can understand and is able to learn from. Assessment is a critical part of a high-quality, early childhood program. When educators do an assessment, they observe a child to get information about what he knows and what he can do. With this information, educators can begin to plan appropriate curriculum and effective individualized instruction for each child. Why is assessment important? Provide a record of growth in all developmental areas: Identify children who may need additional support and determine if there is a need for intervention or support services. Help educators plan individualized instruction for a child or for a group of children that are at the same stage of development. Identify the strengths and weaknesses within a program and information on how well the program meets the goals and needs of the children. Provide a common ground between educators and parents or families to use in collaborating on a strategy to support their child. What are different child assessment methods? Educators can observe all facets of development, including intellectual, linguistic, social-emotional, and physical development, on a regular basis. Portfolios are a record of data that is collected through the work children have produced over a period of time. Portfolios can be an important tool in helping facilitate a partnership between teachers and parents. These ratings can be linked to other methods of assessment, such as standardized testing or other assessment tools. See the next question below. Parent Ratings integrate parents into the assessment process. Standardized Tests are tests created to fit a set of testing standards. These tests are administered and scored in a standard manner and are often used to assess the performance of children in a program. What are different types of child assessment systems? There are two different types of assessment systems. The following assessment systems, used by early education and care programs across the state, are recommended by and available through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care:

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6: Developing Curriculum Leadership and Design

1 SERVING THE NEEDS OF LEADERS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION CHOOSING CURRICULUM RESOURCES WHAT IS CURRICULUM? n its broadest sense, curriculum is the whole of the plan for education and forma-.

The following criteria -- Evaluating Instructional Materials and Programs in Science, Technology and Mathematics -- are recommended for use by Massachusetts educators. These criteria are designed to help districts, schools and teachers to first, reassess the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and materials they have in place, and second, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of new programs and materials being considered for implementation. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not choose to mandate specific programs, but rather to provide tools that will help professionals to select programs that best match the specific needs of their students. Who is it for? While the criteria are primarily for districts leaders, they also provide a useful guide for teachers as they reshape specific curriculum activities to align with the Curriculum Frameworks for Mathematics and for Science and Technology. These Frameworks, which are based upon the goals set forth in the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning, present a vision for the reform of Science, Technology and Mathematics in the Commonwealth schools. How are the criteria to be used? The Curriculum Frameworks in Mathematics and in Science and Technology should be used in conjunction with the criteria. It is unlikely that a program will satisfy all components of the criteria. Reviewing published programs critically and becoming familiar with their particular strengths and weaknesses will help teachers and districts to make informed decisions about program selection, program modification and the use of supplementary materials. These criteria are organized into six categories. These categories should be considered as overlapping rather than distinct. Is scientifically and mathematically correct and current. Provides opportunities to show how a scientist, mathematician or technologist thinks. Reflects the diversity of our society through activities, use of language, and illustrations. Organization and Structure Provides cohesive units, multi-day in length, that build conceptual understanding. Provides for in-depth, inquiry-based investigations of major scientific and mathematical concepts. Emphasizes connections among science domains technology and within mathematics. Incorporates materials that are appropriate and engaging for students of the community. Includes a master source of materials and resources. Includes safety precautions where needed, and clear instructions on using tools, equipment and materials. Student Experiences Emphasize students doing science technology or mathematics. Involve students in active, inquiry-based, open-ended learning, and problem solving. Involve use of manipulatives to explore, model and analyze. Involve use of instructional technology to visualize complex phenomena or concepts, acquire and analyze information, and communicate solutions. Provide multiple routes for students to explore concepts and communicate ideas and solutions. Are developmentally appropriate and provide for diverse cultural backgrounds, abilities and learning styles. Encourage collaboration and reflection. Use a variety of resources e. Teacher Support Materials Provide background about the content. Offer ideas for how parents and community could be involved and kept informed about the program. Give suggestions for creating a variety of learning environments, such as cooperative learning; independent research; grouping strategies; student as teacher, learning enters and field trips. Reference resource materials such as appropriate videos, file clips, reference books, software, video laser disk, long-distance learning, CD ROM, electronic bulletin boards. Suggest how to adapt materials for different developmental levels of students. Incorporate strategies for engaging all students such as open-ended questions to stimulate student thinking, journals, manipulatives, explorations, visual, auditory and kinesthetic approaches. Student Assessment Materials Are free of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, gender, and physical bias. Are oriented toward problem solving and real-world applications. Are embedded in the instructional program, occurring throughout the unit, not just at the end. Incorporate multiple forms of assessment such as: Focus on the process of learning such as: Program Development and Implementation Was designed using a research base. Has evidence of effectiveness, such as field test data regarding impact on student learning, behavior, and attitudes, including underrepresented student populations.

Offers training, sustained technical assistance, and long-term follow-up for teachers.

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