



## **School Libraries in Action**

### **Selection Policy**

This document is part of IASL *School Libraries in Action* series.

You may use any part of it and adapt it for your school.

Please observe the original copyright in the footer (if stated).

If you adapt it for your own use, you should add *adapted by [your name]* in the footer information and include some identifying information or library graphic at the top of the page. This tells anyone who uses the document where it has come from in the school (the library) and who is responsible for its creation (you).

**This document was created by B. Combes, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia**

<Insert your Library/School logo here>

## **Selection Criteria**

The selection of quality educational resources that support, extend and enrich the education of students, while providing good value for money, is the fundamental criteria for the selection of resources at the Library and Information Centre. Resources range from traditional fiction and nonfiction print to videocassettes, audiocassettes, CD-ROM, computer software, Internet sites and online curriculum resources.

## **Overarching Outcomes**

The Library and Information Centre aims to select resources that will:

- Foster growth in factual knowledge, literary, aesthetic and cultural appreciation; moral and ethical values and will aid in daily and future decision-making.
- Ensure there are adequate resources at appropriate levels for resource-based and student-centred learning and to meet personal and recreational needs
- Include new curriculum and interest areas.
- Ensure that resources provide optimum value in terms of curriculum relevance, accuracy, authority, reliability and accessibility.
- Reflect the principles of intellectual freedom and provide students with access to information that represents diverse points of view.
- Encompass a variety of media and information formats to suit varied learning purposes and styles, including:
  - print resources eg. books (reference, fiction, non-fiction), periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, ephemera.
  - graphic resources eg. charts, posters, pictures, maps, models, realia, kits.
  - audiovisual resources eg. videocassettes, audiocassettes, slides, film.
  - electronic resources eg. computer software, multimedia, CD-ROM, videodiscs.
  - online resources eg. Internet sites, databases, indexes.
- Consider students with particular needs, taking into account race, ethnic group, culture, gender, socioeconomic group, physical and intellectual capacity.
- Assist staff in their teaching roles by providing resources and materials for professional development. For example resources which:
  - model best practice.
  - provide a variety of teaching strategies and teaching aids.
  - reflect current trends in curriculum development and assist in further professional development.

## **General Selection Criteria**

For all resources regardless of content or form.

## **Authority**

- Qualified and/or experienced author.
- Reputable sources of information.
- Recognised publisher/producer.



**Physical Format & Technical Quality**

- Quality materials.
- Sturdy construction.
- Attractive presentation & clear reproduction.

**Arrangement of Material**

- Content is easily accessible.
- Instructions and support materials are adequate, clear, comprehensive and effective.

**Appropriateness**

- Content, language, symbols and concepts are at a suitable level for the intended user.

**Cost**

- Value for money.
- May be used across a number of curriculum areas and levels.

**Availability**

- Currently available to schools.
- Readily available to schools.

**Format**

- The most suitable medium to present the subject matter.
- Includes paperback, hardback, big book, audiocassette, videocassette, kits, realia, games, charts, posters, slides, film, computer software, CD-ROM and online resources.

**Controversial Material**

- Consider any controversial content and/or issues.

## **Specific Selection Criteria for Non-Fiction Books**

Non-Fiction books include encyclopedias, year books, almanacs, dictionaries, thesauruses, anthologies, atlases, handbooks, pamphlets, periodicals, journals and information books.

### **Purpose**

- fulfil the purpose of the item (quick reference, browsing or extensive research).
- support and enrich the curriculum.

### **Readability**

- text and print size appropriate to the intended reader.
- style of writing appropriate to the purpose or intention of the author.
- text is smooth to read, clear and concise, interesting and non-repetitive.
- language used reflects the intended use of the item.
- reading level of the item matches the user's experience and capability.

### **Interest Level**

- matches the readability of the text and the interest levels of students.

### **Accuracy**

- information is accurate and up-to-date.
- vital facts are not omitted or over-simplified.

### **Scope**

- topic covered adequately : in-depth, detailed account or a general overview, as appropriate.
- approach/development of concepts suited to intended users.

### **Curriculum Relevance**

- supports the West Australian/Australian curriculum.

### **Organisation of Information**

- clear and functional.
- contains index, table of contents, glossary, bibliography, as appropriate.
- clearly defined chapters/sections.

### **Page Layout**

- headings/sub-headings clearly defined.
- text well spaced and organised into paragraphs.
- background colour/borders/illustrations do not interfere with the readability of the text.
- adequate use of white space.

### **Bias**

- avoid stereotypes in text or illustrations.
- avoid biased opinions/value judgements.
- reflect gender equity principles of social justice (includes race, sex, physical and intellectual disability, cultural grouping).

- relevant to Australian conditions, as appropriate.

### **Illustrations**

- support or extend the information base of the text.
- may include diagrams, maps, graphs, photographs, drawings, paintings, tables.
- positioned relevant to the text.
- clear, attractive and/or interesting.
- labelled/captioned effectively/accurately.

### **Specific Selection Criteria for Fiction Books**

Fiction includes picture books, beginning readers, early chapter books, graphic novels and novels.

### **Purpose**

- provide enjoyment and entertainment.
- stimulate the imagination.
- develop language.
- extend the student's experience vicariously.
- develop discriminatory and independent readers.
- support the curriculum.
- develop life-long readers.

### **Readability**

- reading level of the item matches the user's experience and capability.

### **Language**

- appropriate to the plot, theme and characters.
- imaginative and interesting with natural dialogue and vivid descriptions.
- concepts developed by the language are appropriate for the age/maturity of the intended reader.
- style of writing is appropriate to the genre.
- provides the opportunity for students to practise/develop/extend literacy skills.

### **Content**

#### **Plot:**

- stimulates the reader's imagination.
- encourages awareness of issues.
- story is interesting and entertaining.
- sequence of events is logical and (within the genre) believable.
- factual elements are correct.

#### **Theme:**

- easily identified.
- resolution of conflict within acceptable moral codes and behavioural modes.
- avoids moralising and didacticism.

**Characterisation:**

- resolution of conflict within acceptable moral codes and behavioural modes.
- convincing and credible.
- uses natural and suitable dialogue.
- characters develop and grow.
- avoids stereotyping by gender, race, disability or culture.

**Other Considerations**

- comparative merit with other items by the same author, in the same genre or by other authors.

**Curriculum Relevance**

- may be used to support Non-Fiction curriculum Learning Areas. ie. links can be made across all Learning Areas.

**Page Layout**

- content well spaced and logically organised.
- background colour/borders/illustrations do not interfere with readability of the text.

**Illustrations:** include here cover, end papers, within text, textless.

**Purpose:**

- enhance/extend elements of the story.
- enhance readability of the text.
- appropriate to the reading/interest/maturity level of the reader.

**Bias**

- avoid stereotypes in text or illustrations.
- avoid biased opinions/value judgements.
- reflects gender equity principles of social justice (includes race, sex, physical and intellectual disability, cultural grouping).
- relevant to Australian conditions, as appropriate.

**Sensitive Issues**

- elements of language appropriate in the context of the plot and characterisation.
- treatment of issues eg. sex, violence, drugs, AIDS, death, religion, the supernatural appropriate for the to the intended reader.

**Specific Selection Criteria for Computer Software and CD-ROMs**

**Purpose**

- using the computer/CD-ROM format is the best/most appropriate way to access this information.
- this type of resource adds value to the overall resource collection and enhances the learning process.

- useful for more than one learning/topic area.

### **Authority**

- experience of intellectual content providers, qualifications and expertise (of design and content).
- other titles published.

### **Appropriateness**

- supports the content and enhances the understanding of the user.
- appropriate to the level of the intended user/s.
- long term value of information.
- encourages students to use more than once to gain new experiences.

### **Accuracy & Recency of Information**

- bibliographies of further reading included, plus affiliated titles and support services.
- accuracy of information especially Australian content.

### **Scope**

- depth of coverage (as appropriate).
- uses a variety of forms so students of different levels have access to appropriate information.
- offers students an overview plus a more detailed analysis of subject material.

### **Ease of Use**

- easy to load.
- variable search options eg. keyword, topic, picture, alphabetical listing, freetext search, multimedia items.

### **Navigation**

- offers flexibility of access to information.
- easy cross referencing with hotlinks to more specific information.
- menus clear, of a suitable number and easy to use.
- interpretation of icons appropriate to the intended users.

### **Presentation**

- level of interaction: multimedia includes text, graphics, animated graphics, sound, video clips, facility to enable student participation. ie. offers alternative media to those found in other resources.
- provides ancillary applications eg. records student participation, print facility, notes/word processing facility.
- high quality of production. Include here:
  - sound.
  - video and animation.
  - diagrams, illustrations, maps and legends.
  - colour quality.
  - clarity and size of illustrations/videos/animations.
  - depth of images.

- number of frames per second.
- depth/pace/clarity of sound recording.

### **Accompanying Material**

Printed instructions easy to interpret:

- contain enough detail to facilitate easy access to content.
- enable easy loading of software.

Printed course material/teacher's notes/synopsis:

- appropriate to intended users.
- clearly set out.
- relevant to the curriculum (not just busy work Blackline Masters).
- enhance the learning process.

### **Packaging**

- Durable and facilitates easy storage.

### **Cost**

- is not prohibitive.

### **Alternative formats**

Specific selection criteria for Non-Fiction and Fiction books also apply to each format.

### **Audiocassettes**

- sound clarity.
- clear pronunciation and enunciation.
- reading is well paced.
- background music/sound effects appropriate and don't interfere with main reading.
- abridged or full-text version as appropriate.
- story reading or dramatised version.
- length appropriate for intended user.
- accompanying teachers' notes - appropriate, useful and relevant.

### **Charts - includes maps, diagrams, pictures, posters, friezes, study prints**

- clear and logical layout.
- information and graphics uncluttered.
- overall size and print size appropriate for intended use.
- attractively presented to generate interest.
- simplify information and summarise key concepts.
- support a specific educational purpose.

### **Games**

- support an educational purpose.
- packaging/storage to facilitate long-term use.
- durability of game pieces.
- accompanying instructions clear and appropriate for the intended user.



**Realia/Models**

- support an educational purpose.
- durable construction.
- size/weight appropriate for intended use.
- attractive and interesting.
- easy to use.

**Videocassettes**

- clarity of sound and images.
- visually appealing.
- voice production clear and suited for intended purpose and user.
- accuracy and currency of visual information.
- content appropriate for intended user.
- variety in presentation.
- production well paced.
- length appropriate for the intended user.

**Slides**

- interesting and appropriate for intended purpose.
- clear graphics/images.
- accompanying notes clear, appropriate, useful and relevant.
- durable packaging/storage to facilitate long-term use.

### **Internet Sites**

Specific selection criteria for Non-Fiction and Fiction books also apply to each format. Include Internet sites, online indexes and online databases.

#### **Authority**

- consider qualifications, expertise and background experience of intellectual providers.
- authority information must be easy to locate and verify.

#### **Ease of Access**

- online site must be readily accessible to users at a variety of times.

#### **Accuracy & Recency of Information**

- site updated regularly.
- be aware of long/short term value of sites.

#### **Security**

- sites are free from viruses/worms/data corruption.
- secure from tampering/alteration by visitors.

#### **Scope**

- provides information not readily available through other media.

#### **Appropriateness**

- appropriate to level/maturity of users.
- consider here links to other sites, content, controversial material and subject matter.

#### **Presentation**

- text is clear and easy to read.
- graphics relevant, clear and attractive.
- background colour/design does not interfere with text.
- hotlinks easy to identify.

#### **Navigation**

- easy to use.
- enhances students' information retrieval and hands-on computer skills.
- allows user to keep track of movements.
- keeps time wasting to a minimum.

#### **Cost**

- is not prohibitive