NOVA SCOTIA

Bias Evaluation Instrument

The preamble to the Nova Scotia *Education Act* states that "… the education system should be committed to fair and equitable participation and benefit by all people in Nova Scotia." The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) interprets this to mean that everything we use in the classroom not only aligns with the curriculum and is age appropriate, but needs to reflect the fair and equitable society we are trying to achieve in Nova Scotia. The Bias Evaluation Instrument is one tool to help us reach this goal.

Learning resources include texts, videos, software and apps, audio or visual media, and other materials that educators use to address learning outcomes. When the resource is a collection, a sufficient sampling of the collection must be reviewed.

Evaluation Process

Before using a resource in the classroom, check to see if it is an **Authorized Learning Resource (ALR)**. If the resource is not included on the ALR, please complete the steps illustrated in the Bias Evaluation Process diagram on page 3.

Please use the Bias Evaluation Instrument Checklist on pages 4 to 6 to review potential bias in your resource. If you identify bias, you must confer with your principal (or designate) regarding whether the resource is appropriate for use in the classroom.

Whether or not the resource is recommended, the Bias Evaluation Record form must be completed and approved by the principal/designate, who will then submit the Record to your school board's Director of Programs and Student Services, or designate. The school board Director/designate will then send the Record to the EECD Media Library at lrt@ednet.ns.ca. Completed Bias Evaluation Records will be accessible on the EECD's EduPortal at https://edapps.ednet.ns.ca/eduportal.

Resources found on the ALR https://edapps.ednet.ns.ca/nssbb/search_alr.asp have been formally reviewed and approved for classroom use.
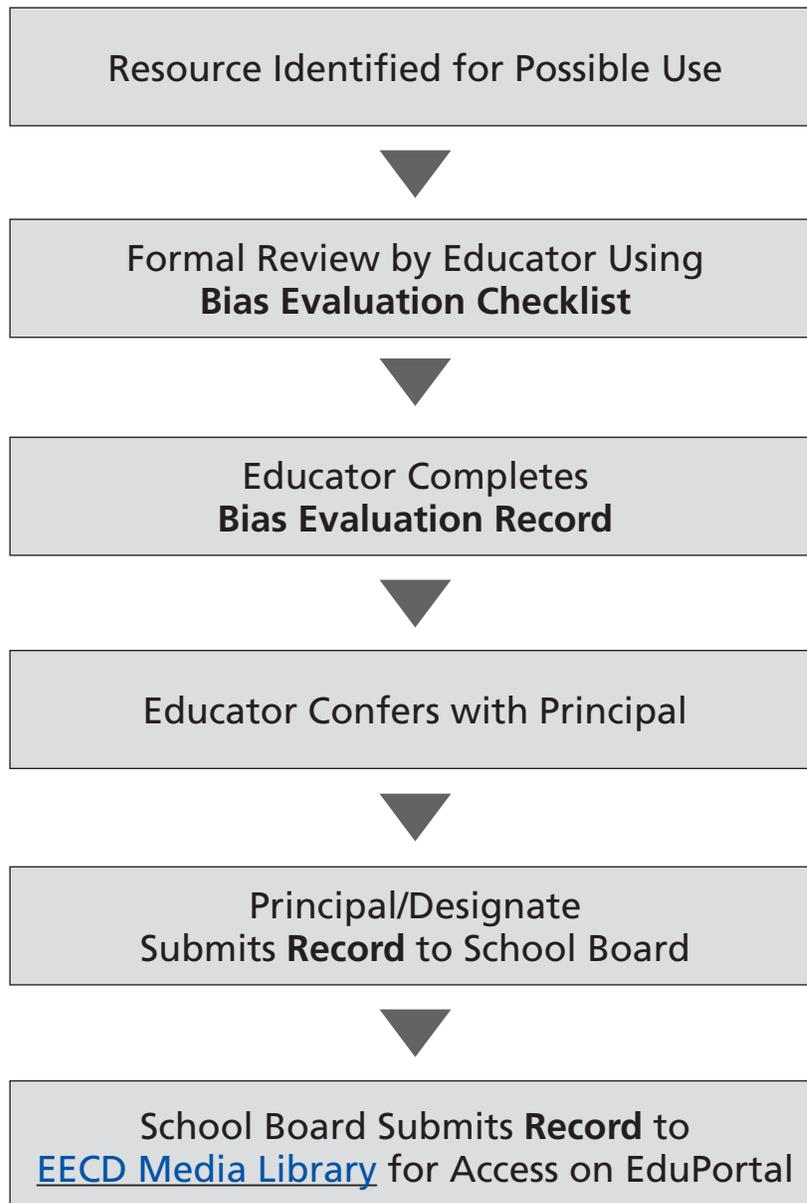
Context

Everyone is biased. An individual's views and interpretations of the world are inevitably influenced by personal and social identities, values, and experiences, which in turn influence how the individual assesses and uses resources. By acknowledging and understanding this, selected learning resources are more likely to contain fewer biases and to be more inclusive of the broad diversity in our society.

It is important to consider context when reviewing learning resources. A resource may be biased but still appropriate for use in certain contexts. For example,

- the resource provides information and opportunities to think critically about prejudice
- the resource is a critique of society
- the resource is an historical document or portrayal of historical events

When planning to use an identified resource, school board policies, such as Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding, and Human Rights policies must also be considered, as well as federal and provincial legislation, such as the *Copyright Act* (e.g., copying resources for classroom use) and the *Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act* (e.g., when accessing digital resources outside of Canada).

Bias Evaluation Process

Resource Identified for Possible Use

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Formal Review by Educator Using
Bias Evaluation Checklist

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Educator Completes
Bias Evaluation Record

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Educator Confers with Principal

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Principal/Designate
Submits **Record** to School Board

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School Board Submits **Record** to
EECD Media Library for Access on EduPortal

Bias Evaluation Checklist

Age	Yes	No	N/A
1. Individuals are inaccurately portrayed as less capable than others based on their age.			
2. Individuals are discriminated against based on their age or age group.			
Appearance			
1. People from specific races, ethnicities, age groups, or social classes are portrayed with stereotypical or negative physical attributes.			
2. People of certain shapes, sizes, heights, and appearances are negatively portrayed as having a limited range of abilities or as less accepted by individuals, groups, or societies.			
3. Certain mannerisms, gestures, or body language contribute to negative or stereotypical portrayals.			
Family Structure, Marital Status, and Relationships			
1. Certain family structures are portrayed negatively.			
2. The absence of any family structure is portrayed negatively.			
3. Negative judgments are made about individuals or groups based on their marital status.			
4. Negative judgments are made about individuals or groups based on a characteristic of those with whom they choose to have a relationship.			
Language			
1. Languages, dialects, or speech patterns that differ from what is considered "standard" language are portrayed as lesser forms of communication.			
2. Individuals and groups are portrayed as less intelligent or incapable if they use languages, dialects, or speech patterns that differ from what is considered "standard" language.			
3. The resource contains gratuitous use of profanities or derogatory terms.			
4. The resource contains gratuitous or derogatory use of sexist terms.			
5. The resource contains gratuitous or derogatory use of racist terms.			
6. The resource contains gratuitous or derogatory use of homophobic or transphobic terms.			

Physical Ability or Disability and Mental Ability, Disability, or Illness	Yes	No	N/A
1. People living with disabilities are portrayed mainly as being incapable, helpless, lacking intelligence, or lacking creativity.			
2. People living with disabilities are, appear, or seem to be included in the resource only as a form of token recognition.			
3. An individual's physical or mental ability or disability is referenced unnecessarily.			
4. Physical ability or disability or mental ability, disability, or illness is sensationalized or demonized.			
Race, Ethnicity, Nationality, and Aboriginal Ancestry			
1. Certain physical characteristics, such as skin tone, facial features, hair colour, texture, and style, are demeaned.			
2. Aboriginal peoples are portrayed in a superficial and uniform way.			
3. Racial, ethnic, or national groups are portrayed in homogenous and superficial ways.			
4. Material misrepresents (including by omission) racial, ethnic, national, or Aboriginal groups in society.			
5. Negative attitudes or behaviors are attributed to individuals or groups of a certain race, ethnicity, nationality, or Aboriginal ancestry.			
6. Individuals or groups of a particular race, ethnicity, nationality, or Aboriginal ancestry are portrayed as less capable or intelligent, or are treated in a paternalistic manner.			
7. Falsehoods, myths, or stereotypes about race, ethnicity, nationality, or Aboriginal ancestry are perpetuated or promoted.			
Sex, Sexual Orientation, and Gender (including gender identity and gender expression)			
1. Non-verbal interactions amongst sexes or people of varying sexual orientations or genders are demeaning.			
2. The language of the resource portrays genders in stereotypical ways.			
3. Depiction of certain individuals or groups is stereotypical or negative based on their sex, sexual orientation, or gender.			
4. Negative judgments are being made about individuals based on their sexual orientation or expression.			

Socio-economic Status	Yes	No	N/A
1. Housing, clothing styles, food, and leisure activities are used as indicators of negative attributes or qualities.			
2. An individual's or group's employment status is portrayed as less valuable.			
3. Certain occupations are portrayed as being of lesser value or as not contributing to society.			
4. Wealth or socio-economic status is associated with race or ethnicity in a pejorative way.			
5. Individuals, groups, or classes are portrayed negatively based on their income, money, wealth, or property.			
6. Individuals, groups, or classes are portrayed negatively solely based on where they live.			
Values (Belief System, Creed, Religion, and Political Affiliation)			
1. Certain values and practices are portrayed in discriminatory ways.			
2. An individual is presented as being representative of, or responsible for, an entire value system.			
3. The author's message or implied message creates a bias towards a specific value system.			
4. Specific values are the target of implied or overt messages of hate or intolerance.			
5. Individuals or groups are portrayed negatively based on their actions or values.			
6. Values of individuals or groups are depicted in a blasphemous or derogatory way.			