# Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum

# English Language Arts

FOUNDATION

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# Table of Contents

# *Vision*

The Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum
is shaped by a vision of enabling and encouraging students
to become reflective, articulate, literate individuals
who use language successfully for learning and communicating
in personal and public contexts.

# Introduction

## PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

*T*his document offers a vision of what the learning and teaching of English language arts can become when well supported by the education system and community and when strengthened by collaboration among students, teachers, administrators and community members.

It provides a framework on which educators and others in the learning community can base decisions concerning learning experiences, instructional techniques and assessment strategies, using curriculum outcomes as a reference point. This framework provides a coherent, integrated view of the learning and teaching of English language arts which reflects current research, theories and classroom practice.

The *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* will be followed by English language arts curriculum guides which elaborate on the curriculum at specific grade level groupings: entry-grade 3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, and grades 10-12.

*Curriculum guides for each of the four key stages—entry-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, and grades 10-12—elaborate on the curriculum at each grade level. These guides provide information on program design and components, the nature of learning, the range of learners that can be expected at each key stage, specific curriculum outcomes and learning experiences, instructional and assessment strategies, and resources. Curriculum guides are intended to assist teachers and administrators in presenting a balanced, integrated, effective English language arts program at each grade level.*

## CURRICULUM FOCUS: LITERACY

*T*his curriculum identifies the development of literacy as a priority. The curriculum anticipates that what it means to be literate will continue to change as visual and electronic media become more and more dominant as forms of expression and communication.

As recently as one hundred years ago, literacy meant the ability to recall and recite from familiar texts and to write signatures. Even twenty years ago, definitions of literacy were linked almost exclusively to print materials. The vast spread of technology and media has broadened our concept of literacy. To participate fully in today's society and function competently in the workplace, students need to read and use a range of texts.

In this document, the term text is used to describe any language event, whether oral, written, or visual. In this sense, a conversation, a poem, a novel, a poster, a music video, a television program, and a multimedia production, for example, are all texts. The term is an economical way of suggesting the similarity among many of the skills involved in "reading" a film, interpreting a speech, or responding to an advertisement or a piece of journalism. This expanded concept of text takes into account the diverse range of texts with which we interact and from which we construct meaning.

For these reasons, the curriculum at all levels extends beyond the traditional concept of literacy to encompass media and information literacies, offering students multiple pathways to learning through engagement with a wide range of verbal, visual, and technological media.

- **This curriculum is defined in terms of outcomes.**

  The identification of English language arts curriculum outcomes clarifies for students, teachers, parents and administrators specific expectations of what students in Atlantic Canada should know and be able to do at key stages in their curriculum.

- **This curriculum is designed to nurture the literacy development of all students.**

  This curriculum recognizes that students develop and learn at different rates and in different ways and that the time frame for literacy development will vary.

  In recognizing and valuing the diversity of students, the education system must allow for a range of learning styles, teaching styles, instructional strategies and resources. Learning contexts should be adapted to meet the needs of students with different backgrounds, interests and abilities and to provide ongoing opportunities for all students to engage in new learning, based on their previous successes.

- **This curriculum emphasizes the importance of students' active participation in all aspects of their learning.**

  Learning experiences and interactions should immerse students in real communication situations both within the classroom and in broader social contexts.

- **This curriculum emphasizes the personal, social and cultural contexts of language learning and the power that language has within those contexts.**

  Since language is the primary means by which people express their personal and cultural values, it is critical that educators and students be sensitive to personal and cultural differences, respecting, understanding and appreciating differences in aspects of communication.

  This curriculum encourages students to recognize the power of language to define and shape knowledge, self and relational positions in society. This curriculum encourages students to explore how forms of language construct and are constructed by particular social, historical, political and economic contexts. It encourages students to understand how their own and others' uses of language have social effects.

- **This curriculum provides a basis for assessing student achievement.**

  The outcomes framework provides reference points for teachers to inform their instructional practice as they monitor student progress and assess what students can and cannot do, what they know and what they need to know.

  Assessment involves more than a judgment made about performance after learning has taken place. As a continuous, co-operative, collaborative, comprehensive process, assessment can be a powerful tool to enhance students' learning when it is an integral part of their learning process.

  This curriculum requires the use of a broad range of formal and informal assessment strategies and practices to ensure that curriculum and assessment work together to support student learning.

*I*n 1993, work began on the development of common curricula in specific core programs. The Atlantic ministers' primary purposes for collaborating in curriculum development are to

- improve the quality of education for all students through shared expertise and resources

- ensure that the education students receive across the region is equitable

- meet the needs of both students and society

Under the auspices of the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, development of Atlantic common core curricula for mathematics, science, social studies and English language arts follows a consistent process. Each project requires consensus by a regional committee at designated decision points; all provinces have equal weight in decision making. Each province has established procedures and

mechanisms for communicating and consulting with education partners, and it is the responsibility of the provinces to ensure that stakeholders have input into regional curriculum development.

Each foundation document includes statements of essential graduation learnings, general curriculum outcomes for that core program, and key-stage curriculum outcomes (entry-grade 3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, grades 10-12). Essential graduation learnings and curriculum outcomes provide a consistent vision for the development of a rigorous and relevant core curriculum. In addition to this foundation document, teachers will receive curriculum guides for the grade levels they teach.

***General curriculum outcomes***
*are statements which identify what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of study in a curriculum area.*

***Key-stage curriculum outcomes***
*are statements which identify what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 as a result of their cumulative learning experiences in a curriculum area.*

# *Outcomes*

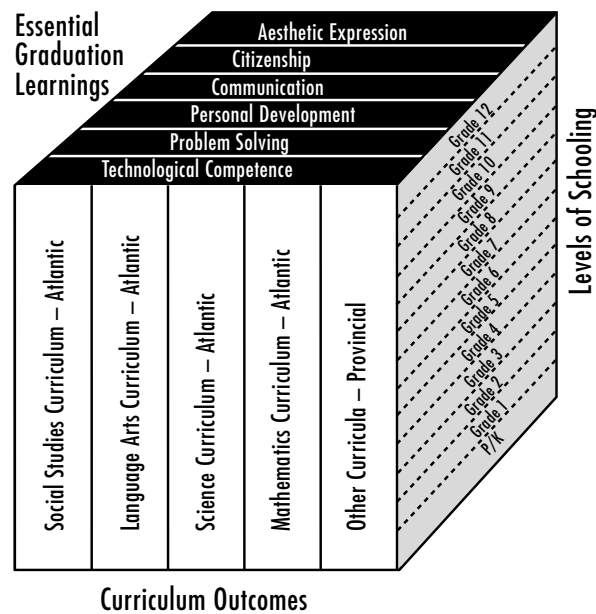***Essential graduation learnings***

*are statements describing the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected of all students who graduate from high school. Achievement of the essential graduation learnings will prepare students to continue to learn throughout their lives. These learnings describe expectations not in terms of individual school subjects but in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes developed throughout the curriculum. They confirm that students need to make connections and develop abilities across subject boundaries if they are to be ready to meet the shifting and ongoing demands of life, work and study today and in the future. Essential graduation learnings are cross-curricular, and curriculum in all subject areas is focussed to enable students to achieve these learnings. Essential graduation learnings serve as a framework for the curriculum development process.*

***Curriculum outcomes***

*are statements articulating what students are expected to know and be able to do in particular subject areas. These outcomes statements also describe what knowledge, skills and attitudes students are expected to demonstrate at the end of certain key stages in their education as a result of their cumulative learning experiences at each grade level in the entry-graduation continuum. Through the achievement of curriculum outcomes, students demonstrate the essential graduation learnings.*

Relationship among Essential Graduation Learnings, Curriculum Outcomes & Levels of Schooling

*G*raduates from the public schools of Atlantic Canada will be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following essential graduation learnings. Provinces may add additional essential graduation learnings as appropriate.
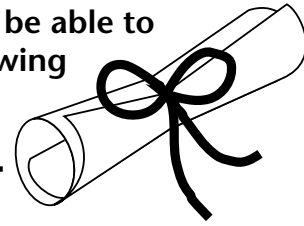
## Aesthetic Expression

*G*raduates will be able to respond with critical awareness to various forms of the arts and be able to express themselves through the arts.

Graduates will be able, for example, to

- use various art forms as a means of formulating and expressing ideas, perceptions and feelings

- demonstrate understanding of the contribution of the arts to daily life, cultural identity and diversity, and the economy

- demonstrate understanding of the ideas, perceptions and feelings of others as expressed in various art forms

- demonstrate understanding of the significance of cultural resources such as theatres, museums and galleries

The English language arts curriculum provides many experiences which involve students in using language for aesthetic expression. For example, the study and enjoyment of literature and other texts, including literary and artistic masterpieces, cultivate students' aesthetic awareness and appreciation and strengthen their critical thinking abilities. The curriculum offers students opportunities to use and respond to a range of aesthetic communication forms and to explore and describe their qualities and effects.

Key-stage curriculum outcomes which contribute to students' achievement of this essential graduation learning include the following. Students will be expected to

- read widely and experience a variety of children's literature (by the end of grade 3)

- explain why a particular text matters to them and demonstrate an increasing ability to make connections among texts (by the end of grade 6)

- demonstrate commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations (by the end of grade 9)

- evaluate the responses of others to their writing and media productions (by the end of grade 12)

## Citizenship

*G*raduates will be able to assess social, cultural, economic and environmental interdependence in a local and global context.

Graduates will be able, for example, to

- demonstrate understanding of sustainable development and its implications for the environment

- demonstrate understanding of Canada's political, social and economic systems in a global context

- explain the significance of the global economy on economic renewal and the development of society

- demonstrate understanding of the social, political and economic forces that have shaped the past and present, and apply those understandings in planning for the future

- examine human rights issues and recognize forms of discrimination

- determine the principles and actions of just, pluralistic and democratic societies

- demonstrate understanding of their own and others' cultural heritage, cultural identity and the contribution of multiculturalism to society

The wide range of experiences and resources in English language arts broadens students' understanding of social, historical, geographical and cultural diversity and enables students to conceive of places and conditions different from their own.

Students read the literature of many cultures and investigate how forms of language construct and are constructed by particular social, historical, political and economic contexts. Such activities develop students' sense of cultural identity and promote their understanding of the contribution of diverse cultures to society. Inquiry into a range of issues enables students to consider issues and experiences from a range of viewpoints, explore their own identities and values and reflect on the bonds they share with humanity.

Through the entry-graduation continuum, students participate in larger and larger language communities, from social interaction within the classroom to communication with provincial, national and global correspondents and audiences.

Key-stage curriculum outcomes which contribute to students' achievement of this essential graduation learning include the following. Students will be expected to

- identify some forms of oral language that are unfair to particular individuals and cultures and use vocabulary that shows respect for all people (by the end of grade 3)

- demonstrate awareness of the needs, rights and feelings of others (by the end of grade 6)

- read widely and experience a variety of literature from different provinces and countries (by the end of grade 9)

- examine how texts work to reveal and produce ideologies, identities and positions (by the end of grade 12)

## Communication

**G**raduates will be able to use the listening, viewing, speaking, reading and writing modes of language(s) as well as mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn and communicate effectively.

Graduates will be able, for example, to

- explore, reflect on and express their own ideas, learnings, perceptions and feelings

- demonstrate understanding of facts and relationships presented through words, numbers, symbols, graphs and charts

- present information and instructions clearly, logically, concisely and accurately for a variety of audiences

- demonstrate a knowledge of the second official language

- access, process, evaluate and share information

- interpret, evaluate and express data in everyday language

- critically reflect on and interpret ideas presented through a variety of media

Using language to think, learn and communicate is of central importance in the English language arts curriculum. On a daily basis students use talk, writing and other ways of representing to express, extend, clarify and reflect on their thoughts, ideas and experiences, and to consolidate their learning. The curriculum builds students' awareness of the language skills, strategies and processes they use to learn, and the ways they use language to extend their learning in other subject areas.

Learning experiences expand and extend students' abilities to use language effectively in a wide variety of communication situations and offer students multiple opportunities to use language in formal as well as informal situations. These include planned activities in social situations which demand certain types of language and build students' skills in social language use.

The curriculum emphasizes spoken, written and visual communication which is precise, clear and engaging. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively involves the correct and appropriate use of language conventions and mechanics. Students' learning about these elements enables them to become increasingly competent in their ability to communicate with confidence and eloquence.

Key-stage curriculum outcomes which contribute to students' achievement of this essential graduation learning include the following. Students will be expected to

- experiment with the combination of writing and other media to increase the impact of their presentations (by the end of grade 3)

- contribute thoughts, ideas and questions to discussion and compare their own ideas to those of others (by the end of grade 6)

- consistently use the conventions of written language in final products (by the end of grade 9)
- apply knowledge of what strategies are effective as creators of various writing and media productions (by the end of grade 12)

## Personal Development

**G**raduates will be able to continue to learn and to pursue an active, healthy lifestyle.

Graduates will be able, for example, to

- demonstrate preparedness for the transition to work and further learning
- make appropriate decisions and take responsibility for those decisions
- work and study purposefully both independently and in groups
- demonstrate understanding of the relationship between health and lifestyle
- discriminate among a wide variety of career opportunities
- demonstrate coping, management and interpersonal skills
- demonstrate intellectual curiosity, an entrepreneurial spirit and initiative
- reflect critically on ethical issues

Language development is essential for success in life, including further education, work and social interaction. Well-developed language abilities are essential for the lifelong learning required to live and work in a changing world. The English language arts curriculum fosters students' growth as collaborative and independent learners who can take responsibility for their own learning. Language experiences improve the quality of students' lives by putting them in touch with themselves and others. The ability to express themselves clearly and to negotiate, co-operate and work effectively with others helps graduates to build strong relationships within the family, in the workplace and in the community.

Enjoyment of literature, live theatre, public speaking, film and other media can lead to enriched use of leisure time. The curriculum provides students with opportunities to develop a habit of reading as a rewarding pursuit and to enhance their use of media, visual and audio texts for entertainment as well as information. Learning experiences also focus on developing students' abilities to meet the literacy demands of the outside world.

Key-stage curriculum outcomes which contribute to students' achievement of this essential graduation learning include the following. Students will be expected to

- use writing and other ways of representing to discover and express personal attitudes and opinions and to explore how and what they learn (by the end of grade 3)
- independently select texts appropriate to their range of interests and learning needs (by the end of grade 6)
- integrate information from several sources to construct and communicate meaning (by the end of grade 9)
- interact in both leadership and support roles in a range of situations (by the end of grade 12)

## Problem Solving

**G**raduates will be able to use the strategies and processes needed to solve a wide variety of problems, including those requiring language, mathematical and scientific concepts.

Graduates will be able, for example, to

- acquire, process and interpret information critically to make informed decisions
- use a variety of strategies and perspectives with flexibility and creativity for solving problems
- formulate tentative ideas and question their own assumptions and those of others
- solve problems individually and collaboratively
- identify, describe, formulate and reformulate problems
- frame and test hypotheses
- ask questions, observe relationships, make inferences and draw conclusions
- identify, describe and interpret different points of view and distinguish fact from opinion

The English language arts curriculum builds students' awareness of the strategies and processes they use to construct meaning and to solve information-related problems. Students apply critical, analytical and creative thinking skills to all kinds of texts. They identify and solve problems and make decisions independently and collaboratively. They engage in thinking about and discussing the problems and issues that concern them.

Language processes such as reading and spelling are essentially problem-solving processes in which students apply language knowledge, meaning-making strategies and prior experience. Students also develop problem-solving skills through their experiences in using a variety of processes, resources and technologies to gain, manage, evaluate and produce information.

Key-stage curriculum outcomes which contribute to students' achievement of this essential graduation learning include the following. Students will be expected to

- ask and respond to questions to clarify information and to explore possibilities or solutions to problems (by the end of grade 3)

- use and integrate the various cueing systems and a variety of strategies with increasing independence to construct meaning (by the end of grade 6)

- reflect on problems and responses to problems (by the end of grade 9)

- listen critically to analyze and evaluate concepts, ideas and information (by the end of grade 12)

### Technological Competence

**G**raduates will be able to use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, and apply appropriate technologies for solving problems.

Graduates will be able, for example, to

- locate, evaluate, adapt, create and share information, using a variety of sources and technologies

- demonstrate understanding of and use existing and developing technologies

- demonstrate understanding of the impact of technology on society

- demonstrate understanding of ethical issues related to the use of technology in a local and global context

Students use a range of technologies in the process of learning in English language arts. They use computer and media technology in English language arts both as a requirement for some learning experiences and as a choice the student may make to complete a learning task.

These experiences focus on building students' confidence and competence in using technology to explore, create and evaluate texts and to retrieve, process, produce and communicate information. The curriculum offers students opportunities to use computers, software, databases, electronic mail, and emerging features of the Information Highway, audio and video production and playback. Students also have the opportunity to explore issues related to the use of technology in society.

Key-stage curriculum outcomes which contribute to students' achievement of this essential graduation learning include the following. Students will be expected to

- experiment with technology in writing and other forms of representing (by the end of grade 3)

- use technology with increasing proficiency to create, revise, edit and publish texts (by the end of grade 6)

- access and select specific information to meet personal and learning needs, using the electronic network (by the end of grade 9)

- make informed responses to challenging media texts (by the end of grade 12)

*E*nglish language arts encompasses the experience, study and appreciation of language, literature, media and communication. It involves language processes: speaking, listening, reading, viewing, writing and other ways of representing. The application of these interrelated language processes is fundamental to the development of language abilities, cultural understanding, and creative and critical thinking.

The English language arts curriculum engages students in a range of experiences and interactions with texts designed to help them to develop increasing control over the language processes, to use and respond to language effectively and purposefully, and to understand why language and literacy are so central to their lives. It is these experiences and interactions which define the English language arts curriculum.

## THE LEARNING CONTINUUM

It is important to remember what we know about learning. Students are likely to be at different stages at different times, developing at their own pace. The curriculum at each level, therefore, should focus on

- expanding their knowledge base

- extending the range of strategies each student uses to construct meaning

- extending the range of texts each student can create, interpret and respond to

- providing consistent challenge and support to enable students to grow beyond their current literacy level to one of increasing experience and maturity

## USING LANGUAGE PURPOSEFULLY: THE UNIFYING IDEAS

Students are most likely to develop their language competence, the depth and complexity of their thinking, and their ability to communicate and relate to others when they have opportunity to integrate new understandings with existing knowledge and experiences and to use language purposefully.

The English language arts curriculum is unified by a continuum of experiences and interaction in which students use language meaningfully for the following purposes:

- to think and learn

- to communicate effectively and clearly with a range of audiences for a variety of purposes

- to gain, manage and evaluate information

- to explore, respond to, and appreciate the power of language and literature and other texts and the contexts* in which language is used

*\* e.g., the relationship between reader/ author/text and other contexts—historical, social, cultural, political and economic*

These purposes are best accomplished through meaningful learning experiences which balance and integrate the language processes: speaking and

*In this document, the term **text** is used to describe any language event, whether oral, written, or visual. In this sense, a conversation, a poem, a novel, a poster, a music video, a television program, and a multimedia production, for example, are all texts. The term is an economical way of suggesting the similarity among many of the skills involved in "reading" a film, interpreting a speech, or responding to an advertisement or a piece of journalism. This expanded concept of text takes into account the diverse range of texts with which we interact and from which we construct meaning.*

listening, reading and viewing, writing and representing. A student's growth in one area influences, contributes to and is affected by development in all the others. For instance, it is difficult to grow as a reader or writer without talking about what one is feeling, visualizing and thinking.

Although the statements of learning outcomes on the following pages are organized for convenient reference under the strand headings **Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, Writing and Other Ways of Representing,** it is important to recognize that all these language processes are interrelated and can be developed most effectively as interdependent rather than discrete processes.

*The term **talk** integrates speaking and listening. Talk is the flexible interchange of ideas, feelings and experiences created by the individuals participating in any talk event. It is the creation of verbal and non-verbal language in a social context. Talk includes exploration, questioning, giving of information and the building of relationships. Through talk ideas are constructed and adapted. Talk is an immediate vehicle for mediation and resolution of conflict. The structures of talk are defined by the speakers' communicative ability to respond meaningfully in the context of a social event or electronic exchange. Talk is one of the most powerful tools in determining and developing individual and collective relationships as well as our social positions in the world.*

*In this document the term **viewing** refers to the act of making meaning of texts that are part of the constructed and unconstructed visual environment in which we live. It is an active, intentional process which involves making sense of what we see and learning how to communicate using visual texts. Critical viewing takes into consideration the purpose and significance of the constructed visual environment and its component parts. It involves reflecting upon intent, purpose, content, context, and developing the ability to analyze and communicate the meaning of what is viewed.*

*In this document, the term **representing** is used to suggest the range of ways in which students create meaning. Forms and processes of representation students use to explore and communicate their understandings include, in addition to spoken and written language, visual representation, drama, music, movement, and media and technological production.*

# ORGANIZING STRANDS

### Speaking and Listening

It is important that students use talk to explore, extend, clarify and reflect on their thoughts, feelings and experiences. Students should have opportunities to use talk to communicate and understand information and to respond personally and critically. Students should interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience and purpose.

### Reading and Viewing

Reading and viewing are meaning-making processes. They include making sense of a range of representations including print, film, television, technological and other texts. It is important that students reflect on, synthesize and evaluate ideas and information in increasingly sophisticated ways. They monitor their own understanding by questioning, rereading/reviewing and revising. They value reading and viewing for a range of purposes.

### Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Writing and other ways of representing involves students in working through various processes independently and collaboratively to explore, construct and convey meaning; clarify and reflect on their thoughts, feelings and experiences; and use their imagination. This variety will include, in addition to written language, visual representation, drama, music, dance, movement, media production, technological and other forms of representation.

### VISION

The Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum

is shaped by the vision of enabling and encouraging students

to become reflective, articulate, literate individuals

who use language successfully for learning and communicating

in personal and public contexts.

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### GENERAL CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

The following ten general curriculum outcomes statements identify what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of study in English language arts.

## Speaking and Listening

Students will be expected to

- speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences

- communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically

- interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience and purpose

## Reading and Viewing

Students will be expected to

- select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, visual and audio texts

- interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies

- respond personally to a range of texts

- respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre

## Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Students will be expected to

- use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences and learning; and to use their imagination

- create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes

- use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness

## KEY-STAGE CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Key-stage curriculum outcomes are statements which identify what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 as a result of their cumulative learning experiences in English language arts.

Outcomes at the four key stages reflect a continuum of learning. While there may appear to be similarities in outcomes at different key stages, teachers will recognize the increase in expectations for students at the various key stages according to

- the developmental nature of learning language processes

- students' maturity of thinking and interests

- students' increasing independence as learners

- the complexity and sophistication of ideas, texts and tasks

- the level or depth of students' engagement with ideas, texts and tasks

- the range of language experiences and the repertoire of strategies and skills students apply to those experiences

For each key stage, the ordering of outcomes is not intended to suggest any priority, hierarchy or instructional sequence. While these outcomes provide a framework on which educators may base decisions concerning instruction and assessment, they are not intended to limit the scope of learning experiences in any key stage. Although it is expected that most students will be able to attain the key-stage curriculum outcomes, some students' needs and performance will range across key stages. Teachers should take this variation into consideration as they plan learning experiences and assess students' achievement of the various outcomes. Students' attitudes, experiences, knowledge, abilities and engagement in learning will also influence their ability to achieve the key-stage curriculum outcomes.

Curriculum guides for each of the four key stages—entry-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9 and grades 10-12—detail the curriculum at each grade level. These guides elaborate on program design and components, the developmental nature of learning and the range of learners that can be expected at each key stage, specific curriculum outcomes and learning experiences, instructional and assessment strategies, and resources.

## Students will speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

*By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to*

describe, share and discuss thoughts, feelings and experiences and consider others' ideas

ask and respond to questions to clarify information and to explore possibilities or solutions to problems

express and explain opinions and respond to the questions and reactions of others

listen critically to others' ideas or opinions

*By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to*

contribute thoughts, ideas and questions to discussion and compare their own ideas with those of peers and others

ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts

defend and/or support their opinions with evidence

listen critically to others' ideas or opinions and points of view

Speaking and Listening

## Students will speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

examine others' ideas in discussion to extend their own understanding

ask relevant questions calling for elaboration, clarification or qualification and respond thoughtfully to such questions

articulate, advocate and support points of view, presenting viewpoints in a convincing manner

listen critically to assess the adequacy of the evidence speakers give

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

examine others' ideas and synthesize what is helpful to clarify and extend their own understanding

ask discriminating questions to acquire, interpret, analyze and evaluate ideas and information

articulate, advocate and justify positions on an issue or text in a convincing manner, showing an understanding of a range of opposing viewpoints

listen critically to analyze and evaluate concepts, ideas and information

## Students will be able to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

| *By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to* | *By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to* |
|---|---|
| participate in conversation, small group and whole group discussion; understand when to speak, when to listen | contribute to and respond constructively in conversation, small group and whole group discussion |
| adapt volume, projection, facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice to the speaking occasion | use word choice and emphasis, making a conscious attempt to produce a desired effect |
| give and follow instructions and respond to questions and directions | give and follow instructions and respond to a variety of questions and instructions |
| engage in and respond to a variety of oral presentations and other texts | engage in, respond to and evaluate a variety of oral presentations and other texts |

Speaking and Listening

## Students will be able to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

participate constructively in conversation, small group and whole group discussion and debate, using a range of strategies which contribute to effective talk

adapt vocabulary, sentence structure and rate of speech to the speaking occasion

give and follow instructions and respond to complex questions and directions

evaluate their own and others' uses of spoken language in a range of contexts, recognizing the effects of significant verbal and nonverbal language features

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

interact in both leadership and support roles in a range of situations, some of which are characterized by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter

adapt language and delivery for a variety of audiences and purposes in informal and formal contexts, some of which are characterized by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter

respond to a wide range of complex questions and directions

reflect critically on and evaluate their own and others' uses of language in a range of contexts, recognizing elements of verbal and nonverbal messages that produce powerful communication

## Students will be able to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.

| *By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to* | *By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to* |
|---|---|
| use basic courtesies and conventions of conversation in group work and co-operative play | listen attentively and demonstrate awareness of the needs, rights and feelings of others |
| identify some forms of oral language that are unfair to particular individuals and cultures and use vocabulary that shows respect for all people | detect examples of prejudice, stereotyping or bias in oral language, recognize their negative effect on individuals and cultures and attempt to use bias-free language |
| demonstrate a growing awareness that different kinds of language are appropriate to different situations | make a conscious attempt to consider the needs and expectations of their audience |

Speaking and Listening

## Students will be able to interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

demonstrate active listening and respect for the needs, rights and feelings of others

demonstrate awareness of the power of spoken language to influence and manipulate and to reveal ideas, values and attitudes

demonstrate awareness that spoken language has different conventions in different situations and cultures and use language appropriate to the situation

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

consistently demonstrate active listening and concern for the needs, rights and feelings of others

demonstrate how spoken language influences and manipulates and reveals ideas, values and attitudes

address the demands of a variety of speaking situations, making critical language choices, especially of tone and style

## Students will be able to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

*By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to*

*By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to*

select, independently and with teacher assistance, texts appropriate to their interests and learning needs

select, independently, texts appropriate to their range of interests and learning needs

read widely and experience a variety of children's literature

read widely and experience a variety of children's literature with an emphasis on genre and authors

use pictorial, typographical and organizational features of written texts to determine content, locate topics and obtain information

use a wider range of pictorial, typographical and organizational features of written texts to obtain, verify and reinforce their understanding of information

use and integrate, with support, the various cueing systems (pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and graphophonic) and a range of strategies to construct meaning

use and integrate the various cueing systems and a variety of strategies with increasing independence to construct meaning

describe their own reading and viewing processes and strategies

reflect on and discuss their own processes and strategies in reading and viewing

Reading and Viewing

## Students will be able to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

select texts which address their learning needs and range of special interests

read widely and experience a variety of young adult fiction and literature from different provinces and countries

demonstrate understanding that information texts are constructed for particular purposes

use the cueing systems and a variety of strategies to construct meaning in reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts

articulate their own processes and strategies for reading and viewing texts of increasing complexity

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

select texts to support their learning needs and range of special interests

read widely and experience a variety of literary genre and modes from different provinces and countries and world literature from different literary periods

articulate their understanding of ways in which information texts are constructed for particular purposes

use the cueing systems and a variety of strategies to construct meaning in reading and viewing complex and sophisticated print and media texts

articulate their own processes and strategies in exploring, interpreting and reflecting on sophisticated texts and tasks

## Students will be able to interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

*By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to*

answer, with assistance, their questions and those of others by seeking information from a variety of texts

- identify their own personal and learning needs for information
- generate their own questions as a guide to research
- use a range of print and non-print materials to meet their needs
- use basic reference materials and a data base or electronic search
- reflect on their own research process

*By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to*

answer, with increasing independence, their own questions and those of others by selecting relevant information from a variety of texts

- demonstrate understanding of the purpose of classification systems and basic reference materials
- use a range of reference texts and a data base or electronic search to facilitate the selection process

Reading and Viewing

## Students will be able to interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

independently access and select specific information to meet personal and learning needs

- select, from a wide range, sources appropriate to their purpose
- use the electronic network
- develop approaches and strategies to conduct their research

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

access, select and research, in systematic ways, specific information to meet personal and learning needs

- use the electronic network and other sources of information in ways characterized by complexity of purpose, procedure or subject matter
- evaluate their research process

## Students will be able to respond personally to a range of texts.

*By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to*

make personal connections to texts and describe, share and discuss their reactions and emotions

express and explain opinions about texts and types of texts and the work of authors and illustrators, demonstrating an increasing awareness of the reasons for their opinions

*By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to*

explain why a particular text matters to them and demonstrate an increasing ability to make connections among texts

reflect on and give reasons for their interpretations of an increasing variety of texts

Reading and Viewing

## Students will be able to respond personally to a range of texts.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

respond to some of the material they read or view by questioning, connecting, evaluating and extending

- move beyond initial understanding to more thoughtful interpretations

express and support a point of view about texts and about issues, themes and situations within texts, citing appropriate evidence

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

make informed personal responses to increasingly challenging print and media texts and reflect on their responses

articulate and justify points of view about texts and text elements

# Students will be able to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre.

*By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to*

question information presented in print and visual texts

- use a personal knowledge base as a frame of reference

identify some different types of print and media texts

- recognize some of their language conventions and text characteristics
- recognize that these conventions and characteristics help them understand what they read and view

respond critically to texts

- formulate questions as well as understandings
- identify the point of view in a text and demonstrate awareness of whose voices/positions are and are not being expressed
- discuss the text from the perspective of their own realities and experiences
- identify instances of prejudice, bias and stereotyping

*By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to*

recognize that facts can be presented to suit an author's purpose and point of view

- consider information from alternative perspectives

identify the conventions and structure of a variety of print and media texts and genres

- make connections with the purpose of each text or genre

respond critically to texts

- apply a growing range of strategies to analyze and evaluate a text
- demonstrate growing awareness that all texts reflect a purpose and a perspective
- recognize when language is being used to manipulate, persuade or control them
- detect prejudice, stereotyping and bias

Reading and Viewing

## Students will be able to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

critically evaluate information presented in print and media texts

- assess relevance and reliability of available information to answer their questions

demonstrate that print and media texts are constructed for particular purposes and particular audiences

- describe how specific text and genre character-istics contribute to meaning and effect

respond critically to texts of increasing complexity

- analyze and evaluate a text in terms of its form, structure and content
- recognize how their own ideas and perceptions are framed by what they read and view
- demonstrate awareness that personal values and points of view influence both the creation of text and the reader's/viewer's interpretation and response
- explore and reflect on culture and reality as portrayed in media texts
- identify the values inherent in a text

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

critically evaluate the information they access

show the relationships among language, topic, purpose, context and audience

- note the relationship of specific elements of a particular text to elements of other texts
- describe, discuss and evaluate the language, ideas and other significant characteristics of a variety of texts and genres

respond critically to complex and sophisti-cated texts

- examine how texts work to reveal and produce ideologies, identities and positions
- examine how media texts construct notions of roles, behaviour, culture and reality
- examine how textual features help a reader and viewer to create meaning of the texts

**Students will be able to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination.**

*By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to*

use writing and other ways of representing to

- formulate questions
- generate and organize language and ideas
- discover and express personal attitudes and opinions
- express feelings and imaginative ideas
- record experience
- explore how and what they learn

explore, with assistance, ways for making their own notes

experiment with language choices in imaginative writing and other ways of representing

*By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to*

use a range of strategies in writing and other ways of representing to

- frame questions and design investigations to answer their questions
- find topics of personal importance
- record, develop and reflect on ideas
- compare their own thoughts and beliefs to those of others
- describe feelings, reactions, values and attitudes
- record and reflect on experiences and their responses to them
- practise and apply strategies for monitoring learning
- formulate goals for learning

select appropriate note-making strategies from a growing repertoire

make language choices to enhance meaning and achieve interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

## Students will be able to use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learning; and to use their imagination.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

use a range of strategies in writing and other ways of representing to

- extend ideas and experience
- explore and reflect on their feelings, values and attitudes
- consider others' perspectives
- reflect on problems and responses to problems
- describe and evaluate their learning processes and strategies
- reflect on their growth as language learners and language users

use note-making to reconstruct knowledge and select effective strategies appropriate to the task

make informed choices of language to create a range of interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

use writing and other ways of representing to extend, explore and reflect on

- their experiences with and insights into challenging texts and issues
- the processes and strategies they used
- their achievements as language users and learners
- the basis for their feelings, values and attitudes

use note-making strategies to reconstruct increasingly complex knowledge

make effective choices of language and techniques to enhance the impact of imaginative writing and other ways of representing

## Students will be able to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

*By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to*

create written and media texts using a variety of forms

- experiment with the combination of writing with other media to increase the impact of their presentations

demonstrate some awareness of purpose and audience

- make choices about form for a specific purpose/audience

consider their readers'/listeners'/viewers' questions, comments and other responses in assessing their work and extending their learning

*By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to*

create written and media texts using an increasing variety of forms

- demonstrate understanding that particular forms require the use of specific features, structures and patterns

address the demands of an increasing variety of purposes and audiences

- make informed choices of form, style and content for specific audiences and purposes

invite responses to early drafts of their writing/media productions

- use audience reaction to help shape subsequent drafts
- reflect on their final drafts from a reader's/viewer's/listener's point of view

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

## Students will be able to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to*

demonstrate facility in using a variety of forms of writing to create texts for specific purposes and audiences, and represent their ideas in other forms (including visual arts, music, drama) to achieve their purposes

demonstrate awareness of the effect of context on writing and other ways of representing

- make appropriate choices of form, style and content for specific audiences and purposes

analyze and assess responses to their writing and media productions

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

produce writing and other forms of representation characterized by increasing complexity of thought, structure and conventions

demonstrate understanding of the ways in which the construction of texts can create, enhance or control meaning

- make critical choices of form, style and content to address increasingly complex demands of different purposes and audiences

evaluate the responses of others to their writing and media productions

Students will be able to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

*By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to*

*By the end of grade 6, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 3 and will also be expected to*

experiment with a range of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and presentation strategies

select from a range of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and presentation strategies to develop effective pieces of writing and other representations

use some conventions of written language

use the conventions of written language in final products

experiment with technology in writing and other forms of representing

use technology with increasing proficiency to create, revise, edit and publish texts

demonstrate engagement with the creation of pieces of writing and other representations

demonstrate commitment to shaping pieces of writing and other representations

select, organize and combine relevant information, with assistance, from at least two sources, without copying verbatim, to construct and communicate meaning

select, organize and combine relevant information from three to five sources

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

## Students will be able to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

*By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will have also be expected to*

demonstrate awareness of what prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and presentation strategies work for them with various writing and other representations

consistently use the conventions of written language in final products

experiment with the use of technology in communicating for a range of purposes with a variety of audiences

demonstrate commitment to crafting pieces of writing and other representations

integrate information from several sources to construct and communicate meaning

*By the end of grade 12, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 9 and will also be expected to*

apply their knowledge of what strategies are effective for them as creators of various writing and media productions

use the conventions of written language accurately and consistently in final products

use technology to effectively serve their communication purposes

demonstrate a commitment to the skilful crafting of a range of writing and other representations

integrate information from many sources to construct and communicate meaning

# Contexts for Learning and Teaching

- Language is a primary instrument of thought and the most powerful tool students have for developing ideas and insights, for giving significance to their experiences and for making sense of both their world and their possibilities within it.

- Language learning is an active process of constructing meaning, drawing on all sources and ways of knowing.

- Language learning is personal and intimately connected to individuality.

- Language expresses cultural identity.

- Language learning develops out of students' home language and their social and cultural experiences.

- Language learning is developmental: students develop flexibility and fluency in their language use over time.

- Language is best learned when it is integrated; all the language processes are interrelated and interdependent.

- Language is learned holistically. Students best understand language concepts in context rather than in isolation.

- Students learn language through purposeful and challenging experiences designed around stimulating ideas, concepts, issues and themes that are meaningful to them.

- Students learn best when they are aware of the strategies and processes they use to construct meaning and to solve information-related problems.

- Students need frequent opportunities to assess and evaluate their own learning and performance.

- In the process of learning, students need various forms of feedback from peers, teachers and others—at school, at home and in the community.

- Language learning is continual and multi-dimensional; it can best be assessed by the use of multiple types of evidence that reflect authentic language use over time.

- Students must have opportunities to communicate in various modes what they know and are able to do.

- Assessment must be an integral and ongoing part of the learning process itself, not limited to final products.

## INTRODUCTION

Students need an environment rich in opportunities to use language in an ever-widening variety of school and community contexts. At school students continue a process that begins naturally and informally at home and goes on both in and outside the classroom after they start their formal education. The wider community offers students multiple opportunities to construct meaning, to communicate in public contexts for a range of purposes and audiences, and to use knowledge from different sources.

English language arts classrooms provide special places which build on natural learning experiences outside of the school. They provide a supportive environment where risk taking is recognized as integral to learning, and experimentation and approximation are treated as signs of growth and indicators of students' changing ideas about language and language use. They provide an inviting environment where discussion and sharing of ideas are common and valued experiences. They provide a literate environment which immerses learners in the the widest possible range of texts, including engaging and exemplary models of literature, language and media.

English language arts learning environments are characterized by an emphasis on inquiry, interaction and collaboration, and by balanced, challenging learning experiences supported by a wide range of resources, including technology.

## BALANCE

When planning learning experiences, it is important that teachers consider appropriate emphasis on specific aspects of the curriculum, including

- oral activities that provide the scaffolding for growth in reading and writing

- opportunities for students to use talk for different purposes, including the use of exploratory talk to explore and shape their ideas

- opportunities for teacher talk and student talk

- access to information texts, literature, media texts and technological texts

- reading experiences appropriate to the developmental needs of the students; these experiences should include at all levels, reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading

- involvement in individual, paired, small group and large group activities

- experiences designed, selected or directed by the teacher and experiences designed, selected or directed by the student

- writing for different purposes and audiences, including themselves

- assessment procedures that gather information on all areas of English language arts

## CHALLENGE

Experiences that challenge learners are essential to language development. Students need to experiment with language and try out new ideas. If they are at the limits of their knowledge and abilities, they will make mistakes. In a supportive environment, students will take risks and learn without anxiety.

Within an inviting and stimulating environment, all students must be continually challenged to

- expand their knowledge base (including their capability and ease of use of vocabulary, syntax, punctuation, structure, rhetorical techniques/stylistic devices)

- develop increasing facility with a range of strategies for reading, writing, speaking, listening, representing and viewing (including inferring, adapting, substituting, regrouping, attending to cues, predicting, synthesizing, assessing, judging, exploring)

- create and respond to texts of increasing complexity

- use and respond to language from progressively more sophisticated perspectives

- develop increasing confidence with language (including level of comfort, willingness to risk and extend, adaptability, flexibility, valuing and appreciating)

## INQUIRY

English language arts classrooms need to be centres of inquiry where students and teachers investigate their own language learning, both individually and as a learning community. They should be places where students learn to reflect, in a focussed way, on the powers and limitations of language use and usages.

At all levels students need to reflect on their own language use and on the ways in which others use language. They need to grapple with the problems of understanding how language works, what effects certain language has, and why. This sort of inquiry challenges their thinking about language.

Such critical and self-critical perspectives become accessible to students in classrooms where they know their own words are heard and respected and where teachers are critically aware of and reflective about their own language use. Under these circumstances students can become sufficiently self-critical to improve their work and to adapt what they know to a variety of situations. Critical perspectives also enable students to recognize when others use language powerfully and eloquently to influence and manipulate them as well as to engage and inspire them.

## RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING

Resource-based learning actively involves students, teachers and teacher-librarians in the effective use of a wide range of print, non-print and human resources. Resource-based learning fosters the development of individual students by accommodating their varied interests, experiences, learning styles, needs and ability levels. Students who use a wide range of resources in various mediums for learning have the opportunity to approach a theme, issue or topic of study in ways which allow for a range of learning styles and access to the theme or topic via cognitive and affective appeals.

When students engage in their own problem solving or research process with appropriate teacher support and supervision, they

are more likely to take responsibility for their learning and to retain the information they gather for themselves.

In a resource-based learning environment, teachers encourage students to use a wide variety of resources to seek information and solve problems. Students and teachers make decisions about appropriate sources of information and tools for learning and how to access them. They use

- a range of print resources such as textbooks, novels, magazines, newspapers, World Wide Web texts and library reference works

- multimedia technologies such as videotape and videodisc, CD-ROM, software tools and simulation/modelling tools

- primary documents such as historic records, original studies and reports, legislative documents

- computer networking and telecommunications for both data access and participation in learning communities

- their school library/resource/ media centres to locate and use many of these resources

- their local communities for the rich supply of materials, human resources and information provided by businesses, social service agencies, citizens' groups, teachers' centres, public and university libraries, cultural federations, theatres and cinemas

- the mass media—cable and network television, radio broadcasts, and other national and international print and electronic services

It is necessary that administrators, teachers, teacher librarians, other library/resource/media centre staff, parents and community agencies collaborate to ensure students' access to available resources to support resource-based teaching and learning.

## THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The explosion of technology has contributed to the revised concept of "literacy" discussed in the introduction to this document to encompass print literacy, visual literacy, media literacy and all of the other "literacies" needed to use the emerging technologies of our culture.

Given available technologies, the curriculum at every level should, to the fullest extent possible, include experiences which build students' confidence and competence in using a range of information-retrieval and information-processing technologies to meet their own information needs. Such experiences should involve students, for example, in

- using a word processor to develop a piece of writing
- constructing simple data bases and spreadsheets as ways to organize information

- exploring the applications of interactive CD-ROM software and laserdiscs
- using graphic communication software
- producing a variety of desk-top-published texts
- using multimedia
- using e-mail
- using listservs, newsgroups, file transfer, electronic bulletin boards and web browsers
- using appropriate technologies to organize and create complex information with multiple textual and graphic sources
- distinguishing sources which are central, reliable and relevant among the vast number of choices offered by technologies

## INTERACTIVE LEARNING

Learning language is both personal and social—language is social in origin and in purpose. Teachers should use a variety of social interactions as instructional contexts—including pairs, small group, whole class and across-age groupings—to take advantage of different language and learning possibilities.

Growth in language is fostered in situations which invite students to interact and collaborate with each other and with teachers and other adults. Such interaction allows students to explore their own ideas, get feedback, build on insights of others and construct knowledge collaboratively.

This curriculum emphasizes interactive learning in an environment that fosters development of the abilities to communicate effectively and to think critically both within and beyond the classroom.

## HOMEWORK

Research studies show a strong correlation between homework and academic achievement. Meaningful and positive homework experiences can

- contribute to personal growth, self-discipline, and learning responsibility
- reinforce the ideas and processes students have learned or developed at school
- enhance students' development as lifelong learners who know how to extend their learning and apply it in other situations
- develop students' confidence in their ability to work without others' help
- provide opportunities for students to reflect on what they are learning and how well they are learning it
- help parents/guardians/caregivers to understand what their children are learning
- clarify the role of parents/guardians/caregivers in supporting their children's learning

Learning experiences and tasks judiciously assigned for completion outside the classroom should help students to

- recognize that learning occurs in many places, not only in school

- integrate literacy strategies and skills into their daily lives outside the school

- make decisions about when, where, and how they can attend to homework in balance with their other activities outside the school

- organize, consolidate, and reinforce their understandings

- integrate new learning with what they already know

- activate prior knowledge and provide a focus in preparation for future learning

It is important that teachers design experiences which each student understands in terms of requirements, criteria and expectations and can approach with confidence. Activities and tasks should

- be developmentally appropriate

- draw on the students' abilities and provide challenge

- be manageable without home support or access to resources to ensure that students retain ownership of their learning

*T*he intent of this curriculum is inclusion. There is a place for the interests, values, experiences and language of each student and of the many groups within our regional, national and global community. The society of Atlantic Canada, like all of Canada, is linguistically, racially, culturally and socially diverse. Our society includes differences in gender, ability, values, lifestyles and languages. Schools should foster the understanding of such diversity.

In a learning community characterized by mutual trust, acceptance and respect, student diversity is both recognized and valued. All students are entitled to have their personal experiences and their racial and ethnocultural heritage valued within an environment that upholds the rights of each student and requires students to respect the rights of others.

To contribute to the achievement of equity and quality in education, the curriculum must

- reflect students' abilities, needs, interests and learning styles

- expect that all students will be successful regardless of gender, racial and ethnocultural background, social class, lifestyle or ability

- enable students to value individual variation among members of their classroom community

Teachers should ensure that classroom practices and resources positively and accurately reflect diverse perspectives. The selection and use of a wide range of resources and learning experiences can expand the world of students and teachers.

Students learn from their differences as well as their similarities. To enhance their ability to appreciate diversity, students need opportunities to

- communicate with others who may differ in attitude, knowledge, point of view and dialect

- critically examine different experiences and perspectives within social and cultural contexts

- explore how and why readers find different meanings in the same text

- learn about different kinds of writing and other ways of representing experience, points of view and ways of thinking

- examine ways in which language and images are able to create, reinforce and perpetuate gender, cultural and other forms of stereotyping and biases

- use their own voices to understand, shape and share their worlds

- understand, imagine and appreciate realities other than their own

- challenge prejudice and discrimination which result in unequal opportunities for some members of society

Instructional and assessment practices should

- be free of racial, ethnic, cultural, gender and socio-economic bias

- recognize and address materials, resources and experiences which exhibit racial, ethnic, cultural, gender and socio-economic bias or which students, parents or teachers perceive to exhibit those biases

- promote equity by giving each student optimal opportunity to learn and to demonstrate what he/she knows and can do

## THE COMMUNITY'S ROLE

The community includes not only school, parents and teachers, but also volunteers, service and youth groups, cultural groups, business and media agencies, social service agencies and other groups. It is important that all of these groups view the education of young people as a shared responsibility. As partners, the school and community promote student growth as language learners by

- finding ways to involve the school in the community, for example, seeking the school's help with community projects and making use of school facilities

- creating ways for students to become active, productive citizens

- sharing and exchanging resources

- providing audiences for and encouraging English language arts projects and activities

- promoting the flow and exchange of information

- visiting schools to volunteer in English language arts class-rooms and acting as guest speakers

- providing opportunities for students to volunteer and to participate in community service projects

- creating opportunities for students to explore the workplace

- encouraging students to discover and use the social, recreational and cultural opportunities to be found in their community

- participating in the on-going conversation about education

## THE EDUCATION SYSTEM'S ROLE

While the structure of the educa-tion system varies from province to province, generally it can be defined as including the follow-ing: universities and community colleges; the department of education; school boards, super-intendents and their professional staff; schools and school advisory committees. These organizations, collectively and separately, have various responsibilities and make important decisions which have an impact on the teaching and learning of English language arts, including decisions about

- the allocation of personnel, time and materials, including technology—to ensure that all students have access to adequate learning experiences and appropriate resources

- provision for professional growth of teachers, adminis-trators and curriculum person-nel at school, district and department levels, in support of this curriculum

- provision of a mechanism for addressing challenges in terms of controversial issues and texts

- ways to ensure that the program at all levels is anti-discriminatory and reflective of a commitment to redress educational inequities based on class, race, gender, ability or geography

## THE PARENT'S ROLE

Parents and other caregivers are important partners in education and have valuable contributions to make to the English language arts program.

As well as attending to the basic health and safety needs of their child, parents can

- be active learners by demon-strating that they themselves read, view and write for various purposes

- encourage their children to take risks as learners

- assist their children to pursue their own areas of interest through reading, viewing, writing, investigating and participating in community activities

- engage their children in conversations about texts, issues and the world around them

- share in their children's successes

- communicate regularly with the classroom teacher/school

- share areas of expertise, information and materials with their children's teachers/school

- volunteer to assist with various activities in their children's classroom and/or school

- show support for school policies and goals

- participate in decision making by taking an active role in parent-teacher organizations and/or school advisory councils

## THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE

Principals and other school administrators can support learning and teaching English language arts by

- working to ensure that teachers of English language arts have appropriate support and ongoing opportunities for professional growth

- working with English language arts teachers to ensure that the variety of resources and experiences available meet the needs of all learners

- working with teachers to ensure that learning experiences, instructional techniques, assessment strategies, the learning environment and use of resources are consistent with those described in this document

- demonstrating that they themselves read, view and write for various purposes

- ensuring equitable access to school facilities, technology and other learning opportunities for all

- working collaboratively with teachers to plan, facilitate and support English language arts experiences and related events

## THE STUDENT'S ROLE

In order for students to share responsibility for and have ownership of their learning, they must have choice as well as direction in that learning. Students, as they grow as learners, need to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and should organize their learning tasks by

- making decisions about how they organize their time for language experiences

- selecting from a range of information resources to support their learning— human, material and electronic

- making choices about which texts to read and view and choosing modes of response to those texts

- generating and selecting their own writing topics and making decisions about content, style and form

- exploring different arts and media to seek forms of language and representation that fit their individual learning styles

- planning individual and group learning projects

- exploring areas of individual interest in independent research

- addressing issues and grappling with problems that are important to them

- selecting the medium or activity in which to demonstrate their learning

- reflecting on and evaluating their learning

- identifying and expressing problems, issues and questions which arise from the learning process

## THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Teachers have major responsibilities as decision-makers, learners, facilitators and resources within the classroom community. Teachers are responsible for

- structuring and organizing learning tasks

- selecting teaching strategies from a wide repertoire

- providing appropriate direct instruction

- providing knowledgeable guidance and support

- ensuring student access to a range of learning resources

- ensuring that students have a wide range of learning opportunities through which language processes are integrated and developed

- monitoring, assessing, evaluating and reporting on student learning

- providing appropriate modelling

- learning about and then using students' motivations, interests, abilities and learning styles to improve teaching and learning

- identifying their own learning needs and seeking opportunities for professional growth

As members of the classroom learning community, English language arts teachers need to read and write and learn along with their students, sharing their thinking as the experiences proceed. Such implicit and explicit demonstrations are essential components of student learning. Teachers should

- demonstrate that they read for pleasure and for other purposes

- share their thinking and strategies at various stages in the process of their own writing, reading or viewing

- share drafts of their writing with their students and seek their response as readers/listeners

- model lifelong learning and demonstrate the role of risk taking in learning

**Modelling** includes demonstrating strategies and skills, language and social conventions, and learning tasks—showing students how to do something and talking about it. Modelling also involves demonstrating what it means to be a risk taker, reader, writer and lifelong learner; and consistently displaying the attitudes and values of reflective, articulate, literate individuals.

Similarly, administrators and teachers across the curriculum have responsibilities as language role models to demonstrate that they are active learners and critical thinkers, readers, viewers and writers.

Since students use language as a tool for learning and as a means of communicating across the curriculum, all classrooms are contexts for language development. Teachers in all subject areas, therefore, need to understand the role played by language in learning and to apply that understanding in the language experiences and learning environments they create and structure for their students.

For example, science teachers can help students understand and use the various structures of scientific writing and expand their range of scientific writing for different types of audiences. Math teachers can help students to use talk and writing to explore their mathematical understanding. History teachers can help students investigate history through literature and experience multiple perspectives through role playing.

**Assessment**
is the systematic process of gathering information on student learning.

**Evaluation**
is the process of analyzing, reflecting upon and summarizing assessment information, and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered.

*A*ssessment and evaluation are essential components of teaching and learning in English language arts. Without effective assessment and evaluation it is impossible to know whether students have learned, whether teaching has been effective or how best to address student learning needs. The quality of the assessment and evaluation in the educational process has a profound and well-established link to student performance. Research consistently shows that regular monitoring and feedback are essential to improving student learning. What is assessed and evaluated, how it is assessed and evaluated, and how results are communicated send clear messages to students and others about what is really valued—what is worth learning, how it should be learned, what elements of quality are considered most important, and how well students are expected to perform.

Teacher-developed assessments and evaluations have a wide variety of uses, such as

- providing feedback to improve student learning

- determining if curriculum outcomes have been achieved

- certifying that students have achieved certain levels of performance

- setting goals for future student learning

- communicating with parents about their children's learning

- providing information to teachers on the effectiveness of their teaching, the program and the learning environment

- meeting the needs of guidance and administration personnel

## ASSESSMENT

To determine how well students are learning, assessment strategies have to be designed to systematically gather information on the achievement of the curriculum outcomes. In planning assessments, teachers should use a broad range of strategies in an appropriate balance to give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Many types of assessment strategies can be used to gather such information, including, but not limited to,

- formal and informal observations

- work samples

- anecdotal records

- conferences

- teacher-made and other tests

- portfolios

- learning journals

- questioning

- performance assessment

- peer- and self-assessment

## EVALUATION

Evaluation involves teachers and others in analyzing and reflecting upon information about student learning gathered in a variety of ways. This process requires

- developing clear criteria and guidelines for assigning marks or grades to student work

- synthesizing information from multiple sources

- weighing and balancing all available information

- using a high level of professional judgment in making decisions based upon that information

## REPORTING

Reporting on student learning should focus on the extent to which students have achieved the curriculum outcomes. Reporting involves communicating the summary and interpretation of information about student learning to various audiences who require it. Teachers have a special responsibility to explain accurately what progress students have made in their learning and to respond to parent and student inquiries about learning.

Narrative reports on progress and achievement can provide information on student learning which letter or number grades alone cannot. Such reports might, for example, suggest ways in which students can improve their learning and identify ways in which teachers and parents can best provide support.

Effective communication with parents regarding their children's progress is essential in fostering successful home-school partnerships. The report card is one means of reporting individual student progress. Other means include the use of conferences, notes and phone calls.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to provide accurate, useful information about the achievement and instructional needs of students, certain guiding principles for the development, administration and use of assessments must be followed. *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* articulates five basic assessment principles.

- Assessment strategies should be appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and context of the assessment.

- Students should be provided with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviours being assessed.

- Procedures for judging or scoring student performance should be appropriate for the assessment strategy used and be consistently applied and monitored.

- Procedures for summarizing and interpreting assessment results should yield accurate and informative representations of a student's performance in relation to the curriculum outcomes for the reporting period.

- Assessment reports should be clear, accurate and of practical value to the audience for whom they are intended.

These principles highlight the need for assessment which ensures that

- the best interests of the student are paramount

- assessment informs teaching and promotes learning

- assessment is an integral and ongoing part of the learning process and is clearly related to the curriculum outcomes

- assessment is fair and equitable to all students and involves multiple sources of information

While assessments may be used for different purposes and audiences, all assessments must give each student optimal opportunity to demonstrate what he/she knows and can do.

## ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

### Using a Variety of Assessment Strategies

The assessment program should reflect the full range of student learning in English language arts and involve the use of a variety of information-gathering strategies which allow teachers to address students' diverse backgrounds, learning styles and needs, and allow students a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

This variety of assessment strategies should

- enable teachers to assess student performance on specific tasks

- provide information about how students learn as well as what they learn

- take into consideration students' abilities both to learn and to apply their learning

- enable teachers to observe overall performance

- provide multiple indicators of student performance

- reflect curriculum emphases

- reflect that experimentation, risk taking and creativity are valued

- enable students to discover their own interests, strengths and weaknesses

- engage students in assessing, reflecting upon and improving their own learning

- encourage students to take responsibility for their own growth

- engage students in assessing their own and others' skills in co-operative and collaborative projects

## Specific Strategies

### Anecdotal Records

Observations of students can serve as a record of how and what they are learning. Comments, questions and observations might be noted in a log or notebook, on index cards or post-it notes while students are en-

gaged in authentic learning experiences, for example,

- during reading or writing workshops

- as students work with a group on a task that requires collaboration

- when they participate in an oral reading activity such as readers' theatre

- during interviews and conferences

It is important that teachers take the time necessary and use effective techniques for recording and analyzing anecdotal notes. Effective techniques of analyzing anecdotal records include making inferences from the notes, looking for developmental trends or patterns and identifying both strengths and weaknesses in learning and teaching. Anecdotal records should lead to interpretation and explanations of patterns of learning which emerge over time. Gathering, recording and reflecting on anecdotal comments based on systematic observations of students' learning and language processes yield rich information for making judgments or decisions.

### Checklists

Developing checklists to use in conjunction with other assessment strategies (such as anecdotal comments) gives teachers a useful strategy for

- clarifying precisely what behaviours are indicative of successful learning in a given context

- focussing observations

- recording whether or not a particular characteristic is present

- providing consistency from one observation to the next

- documenting changes over time

Checklists are particularly helpful when they are designed to meet the needs of specific students. Student participation in developing checklists helps them to learn what is valued in a particular learning context and to take ownership of their own learning. Such checklists can be developed to provide, for example,

- a list of language expectations for literacy development

- an overview of reading and viewing interests

- an overview of the processes and strategies students use at various stages in developing a piece of writing or a media product

- a list of specific revising strategies

- a list of specific editing strategies and skills

- information on levels of attainment

- a summary of writing folder information

- a summary of demonstrated skills in drama, visual arts and media production

- self- and peer-assessment tools

Checklists are also helpful for program evaluation and planning.

By providing visual records of students' learning experiences and achievements, checklists can help teacher to identify

- strengths and deficiencies in the instructional program

- areas to stress in coming weeks

- topics for discussion with other teachers or further professional exploration

### Conferences and Interviews

Conferences and interviews with students are valuable sources of information on students' language processes, attitudes and work habits. Conferences and interviews also provide students with immediate and personal feedback and give teachers an opportunity to recommend new directions, shifts of emphasis, and particular activities, and materials and also to give reasons for those recommendations.

Conferences are an effective strategy for assessing, describing and commenting on

- reading processes and strategies

- journals and logs

- traits and trends in the student's writing and other products

- the roles the student takes in groups

- progress to date

- current work

- the student's goals for future work

- work and study habits

- the student's willingness to take risks

Teachers may find it helpful to use checklists, questions, guides and/or logs to focus and guide conferences, interviews and recordkeeping.

### Miscue Analysis and Running Records

Miscue analysis and running records are particularly helpful with beginning readers or readers who are struggling with the reading process.

Running records are written records of the student's oral reading as observed and recorded by the teacher. Running records allow teachers to keep systematic notes about students' reading during normal classroom activities.

A miscue is any oral reading response that does not match the text. Miscue analysis and running records provide information about the strategies and cueing systems students use when they read. Observing students' miscue patterns enables teachers to

- ascertain the degree to which they seek meaning

- ascertain the extent to which students use pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues

- discover if students rely too heavily on one cueing system for reading

- observe how students' miscue performance varies as a function of texts or of students' background experiences

- identify students' reading strengths

- identify students' concepts about reading and reading strategies

- plan and adapt instruction to the needs of individual students

### Observation

Observing students as language learners and users in the classroom and other learning environments provides multiple opportunities for informal assessment. Planning should allow for recordkeeping on observations of each student in various learning situations throughout the year. Observation is a powerful source of information.

- It is grounded in authentic, contextualized experiences.

- It captures descriptive, longitudinal data to use for comparison over time.

- It can assess developmental characteristics.

Systematic, ongoing observation provides information about students'

- thinking processes

- oral work

- work habits

- persistence

- participation in drama

- feelings about themselves as language learners and users

- attitudes toward English language arts

- specific areas of strength and weakness
- preferred learning styles
- social development (e.g., ability to work collaboratively and co-operatively)
- development and understanding of language processes

A variety of record-keeping systems may be used for organizing observations, including anecdotal records and checklists. Careful recordkeeping is important both for responding to the needs and development of individual students and for communicating with parents. Teachers may find it helpful to supplement observations with audio- and videotapes and to use those tapes for sharing information about a student's learning with parents.

*Performance Assessment*

Performance assessment allows teachers to observe directly students' application of what they know and are able to do. Performance assessment in English language arts focusses on the process as well as the product. It involves

- presenting students with a task
- observing what students do and say, watching for selected/ particular characteristics, making anecdotal records
- interviewing students during or after the task
- developing and applying criteria to assess student performance (using scoring tools such as rubrics, rating scales, task-specific guides, checklists)

- developing criteria for product assessment to provide students with a clear focus on elements of quality to guide their work
- examining what they produce and applying criteria to assess what they actually know and can do
- identifying future instructional and learning needs

*A **rubric** identifies and describes the criteria used to assess student performance.*

Observations of a student's classroom performance and completion of tasks, together with student-teacher reflection on the learning involved, can provide specific information for assessment of progress which can be used by teachers to design instruction and by students to improve, reinforce and extend their learning.

Performance assessment gives information about a student's ability to

- use concepts, skills and language processes
- raise questions
- reason logically
- think flexibly and creatively, changing strategies when a particular approach does not work
- actively accomplish complex and significant tasks

- use prior knowledge; recent learning; and relevant skills, strategies and processes
- work with partners or small groups
- persist, concentrate and work independently

*Questioning*

Effective questioning allows teachers to identify what the student knows and what the student needs to learn. Effective high-level, open-ended questions challenge students to use cognitively complex skills—to think.

The sorts of questions teachers ask send powerful messages about what they really value. Questions and tasks which demand higher-level thinking demonstrate to students that teachers value this type of thinking. Questions and tasks which require students to apply their skill and knowledge to new situations develop higher-order thinking.

Open-ended questions require students to respond to questions for which a variety of successful responses are possible. Open-ended questions give information about a student's ability to

- organize and interpret information
- make generalizations
- clarify and express their own thinking
- understand concepts
- demonstrate originality/ creativity

### Questionnaires, Inventories, and Surveys

Well-designed questionnaires, inventories and surveys reveal students' feelings and attitudes toward different aspects of English language arts. Information gathered through well-designed surveys can, for example, help teachers to

- tap students' habits, interests and attitudes

- build on students' strengths and expand their interests

- elicit students' perceptions about their learning

### Rating Scales and Analytic Scales

Rating scales indicate a measure of accomplishment and enable teachers and students to assess a wide range of learning experiences by noting the frequency or quality of a particular behaviour. Once the criteria for evaluation have been determined, qualitative judgments can be made about identified aspects of the learning.

Rating scales can be developed, for example, to assess

- specific products, such as a piece of writing, a role-playing activity or a media project

- specific learning outcomes

- participation in and contribution to small-group learning

- writing skills

- reading strategies

- responses to literature and visual texts

It is helpful for students to contribute to the development of rating scales, particularly when the scales are used for self-assessment or peer feedback.

Analytic scales can be used to assess a variety of learning outcomes and products. Analytic scales may be used by teachers to establish and communicate the criteria used for assigning interim or final numerical or letter grades and by students to monitor their own learning.

Developing analytic scales involves

- determining the criteria by which the learning will be assessed

- weighting each criterion to reflect its importance (in terms of what is valued or what has been emphasized in the learning or performance task)

- identifying various levels of achievement or performance for each criterion

It is important that students understand what criteria and weighting will be used to evaluate their work and it is desirable that they collaborate with the teacher in the process of setting and weighting these criteria.

### Self-Assessment

In the process of learning, students need various forms of feedback about their work from their teacher and their peers. However, students learn best when they have frequent opportunities to assess their own learning and performance.

Student self-assessment promotes the development of

- metacognitive ability (the ability to reflect critically on one's own reasoning)

- ownership of learning

- independence of thought

Enhancing students' abilities to assess their own progress is an important goal of assessment in English language arts. Students need frequent opportunities to reflect on what they know and can do and what they need to learn next. When students are engaged in applying criteria for self-assessment (and for peer-assessment), they begin to internalize elements of quality and performance standards that can lead to significant improvements in the quality of their work and learning.

Self-assessment strategies include the use of

- questionnaires, e.g., following a collaborative activity or project to determine how well the group functioned as a team and how well the individual student participated and contributed to the effectiveness of the process/product

- learning logs/journals

- periodic reflective writing or group discussion to identify ways in which students have demonstrated progress toward achievement of learning outcomes

- peer feedback: giving constructive comments on one another's work helps students develop their sense of standards for their own performance

- student-teacher interviews and conferences

- collaborative planning and goal-setting involving students in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, forming options for future learning experiences and making decisions about what they will do to meet their learning goals

Teachers can use student self-assessments to determine

- whether there is change and growth in the students' attitudes, understanding and achievement

- whether students' beliefs about their performance correspond to actual performance

- whether the students and the teacher have similar views of expectations and criteria for assessment

### Student Folders and Portfolios

Collections and selections of student work represent rich sources of authentic information on

- what strategies the student uses

- the level of skill development

- the best work the student can produce

- the student's growth as a language learner and user

The process of keeping student folders and selecting from them to assemble portfolios for various purposes and audiences is a valuable educational activity.

The student folder is a collection of student work which might include pieces of writing (both early drafts and final versions), drawings, journal and log samples, media products and other productions or records that establish what the student has been doing. Pieces of writing, for example, should address a range of purposes and audiences and include a variety of formats, such as

- learning logs (e.g., what I did, what I learned, what questions I still have)

- responses to reading and viewing experiences

- a variety of ways to organize and record information (e.g. notes, charts, outlines, semantic maps, summaries)

- explanations of the steps/processes used in performing a language task

- responses to open-ended questions

- pieces crafted in writer's workshop

The portfolio is a selection of student work. Schools and teachers may do many different things with portfolios, depending on their purpose and the co-ordination of portfolios with other activities for learning, assessment

and evaluation. Portfolios may, for example, be very selective and contain only one kind of work or only certain samples of work. Portfolios may contain items the student and perhaps also the teacher consider representative of the best the student can produce. The process of selection of a student's best efforts can in itself be a very valuable experience. This process should involve students in reflecting on their progress and achievement in reference to specific learning goals.

In responding to and assessing student writing and media products, teachers should consider appropriate comments and assessment criteria in terms of the nature and requirements of the task, its purpose and its intended audience.

Aspects of writing to assess/respond to might include

- clarity (of meaning)

- content (ideas, information)

- organization

- use of appropriate form and style (to suit a particular audience or a specific purpose)

- voice

- use of language structures for clear and correct writing (sentence and paragraph construction, spelling, punctuation)

- presentation

*Tests*

Testing is only one means of collecting assessment data—a test measures achievement at a specific point in time. Tests play a minor role in the total assessment program and should be used in appropriate balance with other assessment practices to ensure that students have frequent and varied opportunities to demonstrate their level of performance in relation to curriculum outcomes.

Tests should be designed to encourage thinking and problem solving rather than memorization and recall of factual information. Test items signal what the teacher considers to be important in the course content. Questions on tests should be framed so that they are relevant, clear and specific. As with other assessment procedures, teachers should refer to curriculum outcomes in developing test items. For example, selected-response formats (multiple choice, true-false, matching) have limitations in measuring learning outcomes in English language arts. Instead of assessing the application of skills, strategies and processes in meaningful situations, selected-response items tend to assess knowledge of factual information and the application of basic skills in isolated, decontextualized ways.

## EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Administration of externally-prepared assessments is on a large scale in comparison to classroom assessments, and often involves hundreds, sometimes thousands of students, allowing for use of results at the provincial, district and/or school levels. Depending on the comprehensiveness of the assessment, information can be used for all of the same purposes as classroom-based assessment, but it can also serve additional administrative and accountability purposes such as for admissions, placement, student certification, educational diagnosis and program evaluation. External assessments offer common standards for assessment and for administration, scoring and reporting which allow for comparison of results over time.

As part of the regional agenda, development of external assessments in the core curriculum areas is being undertaken. Generally, external assessment includes assessments prepared by departments of education, national and international assessment groups, publishers and research groups. Each provincial department of education makes decisions on whether or not to administer external assessments.

## PROGRAM AND SYSTEM EVALUATION

The results from both external and internal assessments of student achievement can be used to varying degrees for program and system evaluation. External assessment results, however, are more comparable across various groups and are therefore more commonly the basis for these types of evaluations.

In essence, the main difference between student evaluation and program and system evaluation is in how the results are used. In program evaluation marks or scores for individual students are not the primary focus of the assessment—it is the effectiveness of the program that is evaluated, and the results are used to show the extent to which the many outcomes of the program are achieved.

When results are used for system evaluation, the focus is on how the various levels and groups within the system, such as classrooms, schools, districts and so on, are achieving the intended outcomes. In many ways student and program evaluation are very much the same in that both emphasize obtaining student information concerning their conceptual understanding, their ability to use knowledge and reason to solve problems and their ability to communicate effectively.

## INTRODUCTION

This curriculum envisages a network of material and human resources extending throughout the school, into the community and beyond to provincial, national and global resources accessible through information and communication technologies. No single resource can provide sufficient material to nurture the development of any one learner or group of learners for any extended period of time. The range of resources must

- reflect the diversity of learners' interests, needs, abilities and experiences

- support the achievement of the curriculum outcomes

- be available to all learners

This curriculum emphasizes the importance of human resources because of the social nature of language learning. Students need to interact with people as well as engage with materials—to use language through human interaction and social experience.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTING RESOURCES

While not all resources will meet all the selection criteria, the range of resources used at any given level should be balanced to reflect the following guidelines. Resources should

- provide motivating and challenging experiences

suitable for the learner's age, ability and social maturity

- elicit personal, thoughtful and critical responses

- represent a range of styles and structures

- have literary merit

- use language effectively and responsibly, and use language that is essential to the integrity of the work

- offer a variety of experiences and values which reflect the diversity of learners' interests, needs and competencies

- broaden students' understanding of social, historical, geographical and cultural diversity

- develop a sensitivity to and an understanding that reflects individual differences such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, class and political/social values

## THE RANGE OF MATERIAL RESOURCES

English language arts classrooms and school resource centres/libraries need a wide array of learning resources for student choice and use. Such variety is not only possible but also essential for individualized and small-group learning, and this is as important in a high school classroom as in a primary classroom. Many of the learning experiences described in this curriculum, for example, require not "class sets" of the same text but single copies or a few copies each of different texts, and

require not whole class viewing/screenings of a video but a small group or individual study. The range of available resources should permit the flexibility and choice necessitated by the differing instructional needs of students.

Appropriate resources include the following

- print, computer software, audio, visual texts (illustrations, photographs, film, video), information bases, videodisc, laserdisc, communication technologies (Internet connections, bulletin boards) and multimedia

- texts at different levels of difficulty, of different genres and from different cultural and social perspectives

- student writing and media productions as text

- texts for the teacher or other fluent reader to read aloud

- texts for shared reading/viewing

- texts for guided reading

- texts for independent reading (at all levels)

- reading material such as books, magazines, instructions, menus, brochures and posters

- resources for the professional development of teachers

- resources from across the range of school subjects

- resources that reflect the contexts of the Atlantic region

## CONTROVERSIAL TEXTS

Teachers of English language arts are sometimes challenged regarding the texts they and/or their students select for study. Challenges may be based on the ideas in the text, the maturity required for understanding them or the language used to express those ideas. Resources used to support the English language arts curriculum represent various points of view and allow students to explore those points of view that are within their understanding.

Teachers should exercise particular care in selecting or recommending texts for classroom study and discussion, considering such factors as

- the differing instructional needs of their students

- the contribution which the text may make to each student's education

- the artistry and literary value of the text

- the readability and appeal of the text for the particular group of students

- the role the text plays in influencing students' cultural/social/personal experiences outside the classroom

- the purpose(s) for which the text will be used

- the sensitivities of the students

- community sensitivities

When the teacher's selection of a text is challenged by a parent, the teacher must acknowledge every parent's right to restrict his/her own child's reading/viewing/listening. However, the rights of other parents to have the selected resource available to their children should also be respected.

If a text assigned to a class is considered unsuitable by a student and/or his/her parent or guardian, an alternative text should be identified and obtained as an acceptable replacement.

Teachers may find it helpful to consider the following arguments for using texts which address issues and themes or contain content that may be sensitive or controversial in some Atlantic communities.

- The text may demonstrate that society has evolved in understanding and tolerance over the years since it was written/produced.

- Attitudes and opinions that were both current and socially acceptable in the writer/producer's day may now be unacceptable and vice versa.

- Opinions expressed by a character are not necessarily those of the text as a whole and therefore do not necessarily detract from the moral acceptability of the text. Some objectionable opinions are intended to illustrate the character's unsympathetic nature or lack of understanding and are not intended to elicit support or approval from the reader/viewer/listener.

- It is important that students understand the value systems of their own culture and time and of other cultures and other times. Different value systems that may now seem deplorable were nonetheless facts of life in different times and places and are legitimate subjects for study and discussion, as are alternative readings of present culture.

- Given the diverse nature and maturity of students, it is important to confront important issues and bring them into the open for discussion. It is also important for students to recognize that they have accumulated a variety of experiences and opinions shaped by family, community, economics, politics and the media.

Despite all these arguments, respect for the students and concern for their feelings are paramount in text selection. The teacher's own abilities, growing awareness and sensitivity should shape the presentation of controversial material so that it will promote critical awareness, further understanding and empathy rather than give or cause offence.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

This curriculum removes the isolation of teacher and students in the self-contained classroom and connects them as language learners to people and places in the broader community. Language learners need people and social experience—the more, the better. This curriculum calls for the full utilization of teacher and students already in the classroom through plentiful and varied interaction but also draws on human resources outside the classroom. Students need to consider the viewpoints of the world beyond the home and immediate peer group by going into the community for field trips and inviting visitors from the community into the classroom.

Students can draw on a variety of community resources to support and enhance their learning, including the following

- peers and other students

- artists, writers, performers, media artists, media producers, communications experts and cultural organizations in the community

- guest speakers who offer a range of perspectives

- community members to interview

- parents, seniors, older students, student teachers and other adults

- "working parties" of mixed maturity

- aides, coaches, tutors

- individuals, groups or classes with whom students can share completed work in a variety of media

- students and classes contacted through computer networks which provide communication venues and exchanges for students

- experts and other sources who can be consulted through online access to e-mail as well as by traditional means (telephone, fax and mail). In addition, students are able to join list servers and subscribe to newsgroups electronically which provide access to global resources through avenues such as "ask an expert"

- local, national, and international audiences with whom to share their products with the world via mounted multi media or hypertext on the World Wide Web