

“Be as careful of the books you read, as of the company you keep; for your habits and character will be as much influenced by the former as by the latter.”

– Paxton Hood

Many resources and existing programs support initiatives in the classroom and in the broader school community. Many provide strategies for both character and citizenship that range from explicit teaching of values to responsibilities and actions associated with active participation in a democratic society. The following chart outlines types of resources developed with specific contexts and purposes in mind.

Types of Character and Citizenship Education Resources

| Character education | | Citizenship education | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Individual | | Communities | | Society |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character education resources focused on the development of virtues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social skills resources Conflict resolution resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and Caring Schools and Communities resources Cooperative learning resources Classroom meetings, collaborative decision making and cooperative discipline resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention of violence, anti-racism, drug and alcohol abuse prevention resources Peer mediation resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights resources Cross-cultural awareness resources Service learning resources |

Schools and/or jurisdictions need to develop their own criteria for selecting and assessing resources based on the needs of their students, and the goals and purpose of their particular character and citizenship initiative.

Assessment of resources takes into account:

- effectiveness based on practice—classroom implications, examples, student samples
- effectiveness based on research—research base of resource
- effectiveness based on implementation—practicality, flexibility, choices and requirements involved in implementing resource.



Consider the following types of questions.

- For what context was this resource developed? Is this context similar to the setting for our initiative?
- Is there research that supports implementation of this resource?
- What kind of training or inservice is necessary to implement and maintain the resource? Is there any support provided? What are the costs?
- How much flexibility does this resource allow for implementation?
- What demands does the implementation of this resource place on staff?
- How much planning and instructional time does this resource require?
- Are additional materials needed to support this resource?

Assessing Contexts in Resources

The context in which a resource is designed to be used is an important consideration; resources can support multiple approaches, from the improvement of student achievement, to the reduction of discipline-related problems, to the promotion of a more democratic culture in the school. Resources related to character and citizenship education can be designed for use within the classroom community or the wider school environment.

Appropriate resources for use in character and citizenship education initiatives, for classroom- or school-based use, should reflect:

- the diversity of learner interests, needs, abilities and experiences
- accessibility to all learners
- opportunity for students to develop critical, creative and reflective responses to learning experiences
- sensitivity to individual diversity and multiple perspectives.

Using an assessment scale such as the following provides criteria for decisions on whether or not a resource aligns with the philosophy of a character and citizenship education initiative. This scale is based on some of the principles developed by the Character Education Partnership. Similar scales can be developed from the philosophical base of any school or jurisdiction's initiative.



Assessing Resources for Character and Citizenship Education

| Indicator | Great extent | Some extent | Little extent | Not applicable |
|---|--------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| To what extent does the resource: | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage core values as a basis of character and citizenship? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> define “character and citizenship” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and behaviour? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a comprehensive, intentional, proactive and effective approach to character and citizenship development? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage a caring school community? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide students with opportunities for moral action? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strive to foster student self-motivation? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage the school staff in sharing responsibility for character and citizenship education? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> foster shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character and citizenship education initiatives? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage families and community members as partners in the character and citizenship-building efforts? | | | | |

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has a wealth of print and video resources for character education. For example, the Character Education/Service 2001–2002 Learning Topic Pack contains full-text articles selected from *Educational Leadership* magazine, *Education Update* and other ASCD publications; a list of ASCD books, videotapes and audiotapes; ERIC articles and abstracts; a bibliography of journal articles, and a list of selected Internet resources. For more information, visit the Web site at www.ascd.org.

