# Primary Programs Framework for Teaching and Learning

## (Kindergarten to Grade 3)

## Guiding Principles

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## Key Learning Skills

## Curriculum Integration

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Alberta
EDUCATION

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# Primary Programs Framework
## for Teaching and Learning
### (Kindergarten to Grade 3)

## Guiding Principles:
## Teacher Suggestions and Self-reflection

## Introduction to the Guiding Principles

Teaching and learning involves putting into action a system of beliefs that are culturally constructed. Culture rests at the heart of selfhood and determines ways of living and seeing the world. Culture is actions, artifacts and the ever-changing meanings given to and derived from the practices, beliefs and social interactions of a community of people. Teachers and students bring their unique and diverse cultural backgrounds to the learning environment.

The guiding principles for primary programs provide the philosophical and theoretical foundation for teaching and learning in the primary grades. They reflect current understandings and contemporary education research on young children, families, communities and schools.

The purpose of the guiding principles is to help Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers reflect on the nature of young children and their learning to make informed instructional decisions and create learning environments that are responsive to children's diverse needs; capabilities; learning styles; dispositions and cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds.

In the guiding principles, children are viewed as diverse learners and active contributors within a variety of cultural and social contexts. Experiences within families and communities define the various pathways through which children learn in and outside of school. In response to these differences, schools can build on children's diverse prior knowledge and experience.

### Central Ideas about Teaching and Learning

Three central ideas about teaching and learning have informed the development of the guiding principles for primary programs.

## Teaching and learning processes are complex

Learning and teaching processes are complex, interconnected and occur in and outside of school. Students and teachers are learners who are simultaneously part of a number of interlinked groups and contexts that affect each other and society. The learning process involves active participation, innovation and creativity. It can transform all learners and, potentially, how they learn. The outcomes of the learning process cannot therefore be entirely predicted.

## Diversity is a condition for and an outcome of learning

Individual learners bring a wide range of different experience, knowledge and skills to the learning process. Understanding of diversity is enhanced when learners actively participate in a variety of learning activities in a collaborative group process. Sharing knowledge, understanding and skills brings learning to a higher level than individuals can achieve on their own. Diversity is therefore a condition for learning as well as an outcome of learning.

## Learning is making meaningful connections that lead to understanding

Learning is a complex process in which all aspects are connected together in a nonlinear, complex and dynamic way. Learners, based on their experiences, have diverse, culturally constructed understandings of the social and natural world. Recognizing the interrelationship between the learning process and students' personal understandings can help teachers guide students to make meaningful connections between the learning process and learning outcomes.

## Principle 1:  Childhoods differ depending on social and cultural circumstances

Childhood is one of life's stages. The developmental milestones of childhood are no longer thought to be universal and consistent across cultures. It is now recognized that explanations of child development, as well as expectations of developmental accomplishments, are socially constructed.

This sociocultural-historical view emphasizes that there are multiple ways of being a child. There is no universal childhood; rather, childhoods differ depending on the social and cultural circumstances in which children live.

Culture and society have a significant impact on the ways in which children develop and learn that expands thinking about teaching and learning in the primary grades.

# Teacher Suggestions

## Create an Inclusive Classroom

- Take time to work on appropriate classroom and school behaviours; e.g., listening, taking turns, asking for help, resolving differences.
- Teach students to articulate their knowledge, hear and listen to what their peers have to say and, when it is appropriate, be a speaker or a listener.
- Use games to teach students how to take turns, share and resolve differences.
- Create a calm corner in the class or allow students to work alone or outside the class when they need to be alone.
- Develop a list of expressions students can use to ask for help:
  – Can someone explain again?
  – I do not understand.
  – I still have some questions; can you help, please?
- Plan cooperative learning activities so students take on different roles and responsibilities.
- Introduce nursery rhymes, legends, books and fairy tales from a variety of cultures to help build common experiences.
- Make it obvious to people seeing your class, or listening to what is being said, that this is a place in which diverse languages and cultures are valued.

## Differentiate Instruction

- Allow students multiple ways to respond; e.g., speaking, writing or representing.
- Allow students some flexibility to work at their own rate and manage their own time to ensure equity.
- Ask students what changes they could do to make their work better.
- Identify with students the various steps in a project and put these on a time line to help them with time management.
- Find opportunities to draw all students into classroom activities in different ways.
- Offer students a choice in the products that will show their skills and mastery of concepts.
- Be flexible in your expectations.
- Give more time to those students who need it during assessments.

# Principle 1: Teacher Reflection

|  | Yes | Not Yet |
|---|:---:|:---:|
| Am I aware of children's social and cultural experiences and how these experiences could affect children's learning? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Am I aware of different verbal and nonverbal behaviours that are based on social and cultural experiences; e.g., averting eye contact or not asking questions? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I look for patterns of behaviour exhibited at different times and in different situations? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I observe students' behaviours in spontaneous, self-initiated activities as well as in teacher-initiated activities and routines? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I have high expectations of all students and differentiate my treatment of students to ensure equity? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are all students welcomed, as they are, into a heterogeneous classroom setting? | ☐ | ☐ |

What are different ways I can offer students to safely share their own cultural experiences?

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How do I support students' differing levels of independence and responsibility?

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How do I demonstrate sensitivity to children's individual family patterns, cultural heritage or special needs; e.g., illness or death of a family member, a new sibling, a recent divorce or separation, poverty, family violence, substance abuse?

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## Principle 2: Children's development is influenced but not determined by their early experiences

Children's early experiences influence social, physical, intellectual, creative, cultural and emotional development. Early childhood is the most active period of brain development although the brain continues to develop well beyond this time. Experience plays an important role in this development, with the nature of a child's early experience having a long-term impact on learning outcomes.

There is not a direct cause-and-effect relationship between children's individual experiences and their later development. Interaction between developmental areas either limits or supports the growth of contextual experience. Young learners need rich and varied opportunities to explore their environment; use language; engage with peers and interact with responsive adults at home, school and in their communities.

# Teacher Suggestions

## Use Students' Prior Knowledge and Experiences

- Help students to use their own prior experiences to predict events and make connections in discussion and stories.
- Teach students to be deliberate in making connections between what is read and personal knowledge.
- Encourage students to draw upon their linguistic and cultural backgrounds and their sense of self and the world in discussions, storytelling and writing by speaking and writing about their experiences; e.g., birthday, pet, celebration, special occasion, birth of a sibling, family recreation.

## Expand Students' Horizons

- Share books, during reading time, that represent a variety of childhood experiences and have students share similarities or differences.
- Use story characters or situations to look at different sides of a story or different points of view.
- Celebrate diversity in the classroom by respecting and sharing children's traditions; e.g., song, food, costume.
- Use various names for the same things, without judgement. Teaching that there are different ways of saying the same thing increases respect for linguistic variety.
- Establish a classroom environment in which students learn to respect others' viewpoints.

## Celebrate the Individual

- Develop an Expert Class Poster or Book that identifies at least one strength from every student in the classroom; e.g., "_____ knows a lot about _____." "If you want to know about _____, ask _____."
- Celebrate students' achievement with bulletin space dedicated to the VIP of the Week.
- Make sure each student gets a turn being a star; e.g., by showing how to solve a problem, being involved in a skit, choosing the way he or she will show his understanding.

# Principle 2: Teacher Reflection

|  | Yes | Not Yet |
|---|---|---|
| Do I encourage students to use their prior experiences to make connections to new learning? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have I considered students' early experiences as reasons for possible difficulties? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I challenge students to think at higher levels and so make judgements, choose, analyze and compare? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I take many opportunities to have students access their strengths to gently work on a weakness? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I use my observations to build appropriate expectations for each student? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I seek to ensure that all students feel welcomed and accepted in the classroom? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I take the time to name each student's successes, even small ones, on a daily and/or weekly basis? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each student? | ☐ | ☐ |

How is my understanding of the learning processes of young children reflected in the classroom?

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How do the class and I make new students feel welcome?

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Learning also occurs in environments other than the home and school. Children gain significant experiences in a range of contexts that reflect and support varying social and cultural beliefs and values.

As members of different communities, children have diverse perspectives about events in their lives. Interaction within the context of these perspectives has a significant impact on the ways in which children form their identities as members of various cultural and social groups.

A close partnership between schools, families and communities can strengthen the connections between children's learning and experiences, within these various contexts, and make them more meaningful. Children are more likely to be successful in negotiating transitions among the diverse environments in which they live if they are intellectually engaged and challenged, while feeling socially comfortable and safe.

## Teacher Suggestions

### Be Aware of and Expose Students to Positive Role Models

- Model how to be an effective learner. Share your own continual desire to learn, your personal learning and the knowledge you have acquired.
- Use the share-aloud approach to model metacognitive and thinking processes for students.
- Show, by your actions and your words, that you value collaborative ways of acquiring and using knowledge.
- Recognize that there are many role models in students' lives and invite others, e.g., parents and community members, to read or work with students.

### Encourage Students to Be Accepting of Diversity

- Offer occasions for children to speak of learning experiences outside of school.
- Discuss with students that people learn in different ways and provide activities for all learning styles.
- Help students understand and respect differences and similarities in individuals and communities; e.g., rules at home and school and ways to greet each other, express thanks and celebrate special occasions.

## Foster Cooperation and Communication between the School, Parents and Community Members

- Maintain open and clear lines of communication with families on a frequent and regular basis through telephone calls, notes in the agenda, newsletters and the school Web site.
- Seek input from school personnel, parents and community members when selecting resources.
- Work with administrators to provide effective, consistent and ongoing communication with parents, the community and all staff members.
- Seek support from administrators for using specialists, parents, community members and older students to assist in the classroom.
- Accommodate the needs of children's families by:
  - communicating with families frequently and in a variety of ways
  - summarizing children's individual development and needs in clear, positive, jargon-free and meaningful language
  - being flexible about meeting times with parents.
- Encourage families to participate in their child's education in a variety of roles according to their interests, skills and availability; e.g., preparing materials for the classroom, assisting on field trips, sending in snacks, sharing expert knowledge.
- Inform the community about the classroom through community involvement; e.g., singing at a senior citizens' residence at a holiday time, putting up students' drawings at the local grocery or convenience store.
- Involve community members in the program by inviting them to volunteer in the classroom or share cultural/family traditions.

# Principle 3: Teacher Reflection

|  | Yes | Not Yet |
|---|---|---|
| Do I encourage and help students accept different points of view? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I understand relationships between home, school and the community and my role in supporting these relationships? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I include students' interests and needs in planning for instruction, themes and projects? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I reflect the cultural diversity of the classroom in planning, instruction and assessment? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I make changes in the learning environment to meet changing needs and interests? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I encourage children to respect, value and celebrate differences? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I actively promote a positive and productive partnership among families, school and the community? | ☐ | ☐ |

How do my language, communication and actions model my respect for the diversity of students and their families?

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How do I establish and maintain an inclusive classroom environment; e.g., respect for cultural groups, genders and disabilities?

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What do I do to help parents or guardians feel comfortable about contacting me?

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Learning is a cooperative and communicative process. Children make sense of the world through interaction with teachers, family members, other children and community members. Through this interaction, children construct knowledge and make meaning of the world. As children extend their interests and prior understanding, they engage in problem solving, shared meaning making and construction of new knowledge. These understandings are greater than those they can construct alone.

Including others in the scaffolding of children's emerging knowledge is essential to help them achieve greater levels of understanding. Children are engaged as active participants as they build knowledge about themselves and the social and natural world. They reformulate ideas based on their intuitive knowledge as they internalize what they have learned in collaboration or in conflict with others.

## Teacher Suggestions

### Encourage Students to Learn from One Another

- Plan so students learn to express themselves as well as listen to others.
- Call upon the group to brainstorm solutions to a problem, e.g., sharing playground equipment, select the best among them and explain their choice.
- Have students share their strategies because, as a group, they possess more learning strategies and knowledge than the teacher alone.
- Use cooperative learning; e.g., model and practise group work in which each group member has a viable role, such as artist, secretary, speaker, and change roles often.
- Use reciprocal teaching in which students take turns playing the role of teacher.
- Encourage metacognition through the sharing of strategies and methods.

### Encourage Students to Make Connections

- Make students aware of similarities and differences between their first languages and other languages; e.g. *sale* in French and *sale* in English, although spelled the same, have totally different meanings; however, *excellent* is the same word with the same meaning in both languages.

- Make text-to-text connections, linking other stories or other ways of giving similar messages; e.g., make the link between the wolf's roles in *Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Three Little Pigs*.

## Encourage Students to Expand Their Horizons

- Have students describe a typical celebration or meal in their home and community to help them realize that our similarities and differences in our ways of living are what makes us unique.
- Discuss with students how the easiest answer is not necessary the best answer and encourage them to be more thoughtful.
- Encourage students to value new ideas by making a list of all of them, without casting judgement.

# Principle 4: Teacher Reflection

|  | Yes | Not Yet |
|---|---|---|
| Do I provide opportunities for students to think critically about ideas and the opinions of others and to make reasoned judgements? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I encourage students to work out metacognitive learning strategies and to share them with others? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I provide opportunities for students to act as teachers as well as learners? | ☐ | ☐ |
| When calling on students, do I make sure they all are heard? | ☐ | ☐ |

How do I include others in the scaffolding of students' emerging knowledge?

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How do I encourage students to take responsibility for their learning?

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How do I provide the supports and strategies needed by students to construct new knowledge?

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## Principle 5:  Children are unique and active contributors to their learning

By the time children start school, they are already capable individuals who have been learning since birth. In school, they bring their unique prior learning experiences and their existing understandings, capabilities, attitudes and dispositions to the learning environment.

Children start school with common but varied experiences as learners because they have different cultural, social and linguistic identities. They have developed implicit knowledge and ideas about everyday events and the world around them.

These understandings create an experiential path that supports the development of the conceptual and procedural knowledge that provides organization to children's thinking processes. Teachers build on or reshape children's understandings to align with the outcomes of the program of studies.

# Teacher Suggestions

## Encourage Students to Be Aware of Their Learning Processes

- Ask students to explain what they have learned. Even very young children can do this if we have taken the time to make them see the difference between the activity and the learning; e.g., regularly include questions of "Why?" and "What if ...?" in discussions following a reading experience.
- Ask students how they solved a problem as this helps them become more conscious of their metacognitive processes.
- Ask students to explain their answers, both when they seem to conform to expectations and when they do not, when they have the right answer and when they do not. Help them use the information to guide further learning.
- Ask students how they solved a problem. Help them attain the metacognitive awareness needed to articulate their cognitive processes.
- Allow students to give voice to their understandings through different media; e.g., discussion, art, music, dance, mime.
- Use critical thinking to help students connect their learning to what they already know; e.g.,
  – How do you know that?
  – Why do you think this is the way it is?

## Provide Opportunities for Students to Express Their Individuality

- Treat children as individuals. Rules may need to be flexible to accommodate individual needs; e.g., some students learn better if allowed to stand, others may need to have their own work space.
- Begin a story collectively and then allow students to create their own endings. Discuss the differences and similarities as well as the students' intentions. Discuss how it is possible to have various interpretations of the same beginning of a story.
- Have students complete a self-reflection that identifies their contributions to the learning process or a group project.

## Encourage Students to Be Open to Different Perspectives

- Think and act beyond the stereotypes that seem to lock children into ways of doing and of learning.
- Share a common story from an unusual perspective; e.g., *The Real Story of the Three Little Pigs* by A. Wolfe.
- Show students that the objective of discussions is to build understanding of different perspectives and not to prove that one is right and the other wrong.
- Create a classroom and school climate that is rich in languages and cultures. Make it obvious that the school celebrates the diversity of languages and cultures.

# Principle 5: Teacher Reflection

|  | Yes | Not Yet |
|---|---|---|
| Do I acknowledge and validate students' interpretations of the world? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I encourage all students to contribute to their learning? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do my learning resources address a wide range of developmental capabilities? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I treat students as individuals with unique strengths and needs? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I recognize and accept different interpretations of the same event or concept? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I help students express what they know and what they can do by providing them with useful vocabulary and expressions? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I see myself as a cultural being that can influence the learning of my students? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I temporarily put aside my cultural practices to facilitate student learning? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Am I providing a variety of learning opportunities and resources to meet student needs? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I actively look for new ways of engaging students' interest? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I offer many opportunities for students to observe each other and share impressions and perspectives? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Am I knowledgeable about and sensitive to each child's special abilities and needs? | ☐ | ☐ |

What guidelines do I use to evaluate classroom books and materials to ensure they promote respect and recognize diversity?

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How does my planning allow for the active contributions of students to their learning process?

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## Principle 6: Children construct and represent knowledge in a variety of ways

Children construct knowledge when their minds are actively engaged in meaningful, shared interactions with adults and peers in a range of social, cultural and linguistic contexts. This knowledge is collective, socially constructed and both enabled and constrained by language, history and traditions.

Language is central to identity and a defining feature of cultures. It is the basis of communication and one of the symbolic tools we use to create meaning. Language is dynamic, with meanings and structures that are constantly negotiated and modified through human interaction.

Thinking, learning and language are interrelated. Children use oral, written and visual language to:

- convey ideas, thoughts, feelings, values and beliefs
- learn to understand themselves and others
- reflect on their own thinking and learning processes.

Learning is not linear and all students do not follow the same learning path. Some children learn best visually, others by describing, some by questioning and others by observing. Encouraging children to use multiple forms of representation as they learn, solve problems, create and reflect allows for the construction of multiple meanings.

## Teacher Suggestions

### Observe How Your Students Learn

- Observe students during classroom activities. Use this knowledge to vary pedagogical approaches. Do they like to read, draw, build and use their imaginations?
- Observe students to learn their preferences, strengths and abilities. Do not depend on generalizations or stereotypes about boys and girls or different racial and ethnic groups or cultures.
- Ask students questions about how they learn; e.g.,
  - How can you best show what you have learned?
  - To feel good about your work, what would you have to do to show me what you have learned?
  - Can you help me understand what you have done?
  - What did you see in your head when you did this?

## Allow Students to Express Their Knowledge in a Variety of Ways

- Develop a climate in which expression in various forms is valued. Allow students to explain their knowledge in their own ways.
- Explore ways of using project-based pedagogies to allow for different ways of representing knowledge and practices. Have students choose how best to represent their understandings of a concept.
- Take learning styles and multiple intelligences into account when planning activities. Include variety in all activities by giving students opportunities to write, draw, represent, sing or act out a concept.
- Recognize that some students are highly kinesthetic and ensure that manipulative materials are available for learning activities.
- Give students multiple chances at success or other ways to succeed by offering motivating choices; e.g., give a synopsis, draw a cartoon strip or act out the main event of a novel or chapter.

## Encourage Students to Experiment with Different Forms of Expression

- Have students represent linear concepts in nonlinear ways; e.g., show a multiplication concept through movement or art.
- Provide a variety of media for learning, assessment and evaluation activities. Have texts, films and picture books on the topic available to students.

# Principle 6: Teacher Reflection

|  | Yes | Not Yet |
|---|---|---|
| Do I encourage students to express themselves creatively and use multiple forms of representation? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I consider students' language skills when assessing their knowledge? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I ask all students to explain their understandings? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I take the time to understand students' thinking before evaluating their learning? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I offer a range of activities to address all students' needs? | ☐ | ☐ |

What do I do when students are having difficulty expressing their learning?

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How do I encourage students to use materials in a variety of ways?

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In my planning, how do I differentiate learning to ensure all students access the curriculum?

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## Principle 7:  Children are citizens and active participants in school and society

Children are citizens in their own right and contribute to the social fabric of the classroom, the school and their communities.

Children should be active participants in shaping their identities as members of various cultural and social communities and as citizens of a pluralistic and democratic society. When children are in learning environments that recognize individual and collective rights, and foster personal and collective responsibility, they develop shared values and a sense of self and community.

Children should participate in democratic dialogue and decision making about their learning and the classroom environment. They should be heard and listen to others, critically assess their words and actions, and have the opportunity to participate fully in class and school activities.

# Teacher Suggestions

## Ensure All Students Have Equal Opportunities for Contribution

- Vary the strategies used in class discussions to ensure all students have opportunities for expression and responsibility for responses.
- Distribute roles in group work in such a way that all students can contribute their knowledge.
- Teach and practise respectful listening and speaking so students know that everyone has the same right to speak, be heard and justify his or her opinions, while accepting that those opinions will at times be challenged.
- Find ways to include all students in all school and classroom activities.
- Make accommodations for differences so all students are included in all school and classroom activities.

## Promote Democracy in the Classroom

- Provide opportunities for students to have input into classroom rules and expectations. Review these periodically with the class.
- Allow students to have input into planning for classroom activities or special events, where appropriate.
- Reflect with students on the positive and negative consequences of rules that they want for the classroom.

- Use a cooperative approach to solve conflicts and to underline successes.
- Have classroom meetings in which students identify what they like about their class or a particular activity.
- Model and practise how to make educated choices and form opinions.

# Principle 7: Teacher Reflection

|  | Yes | Not Yet |
|---|---|---|
| Do I encourage students to take responsibility for themselves and the environment? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I model fair and equitable expectations for all students in the class? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do students have input into classroom rules and expectations at the beginning of the year? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I model how to defend an opinion and encourage students to do so themselves? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I model how to change an opinion when a convincing argument is brought forth and encourage students to do so themselves? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I make an intentional effort to ensure all students have the opportunity to participate in class discussions and answer questions? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I help establish connections between the rights, responsibilities and consequences of respecting or lacking respect for a person's rights? | ☐ | ☐ |

Do I create a classroom community where everyone treats each other with respect? How do I encourage healthy and collaborative class interaction? Do I ensure all students feel included in the class?

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How do students practise active citizenship in the classroom?

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## Principle 8:  Children are active collaborators in and users of assessment

Children's learning is enhanced when teachers engage in an ongoing process of gathering information about what is being learned and reflecting on the meaning of that information.

Assessment is effective in supporting and enhancing both teaching and learning. It is a cyclical process in which connections, relationships and new questions emerge as information is gathered and evaluated.

Self-assessment and feedback from peers, teachers and parents facilitate and guide children's reflections and take learning to a deeper level.

Learning is more purposeful and effective when children and teachers reflect and dialogue on ways children construct and represent knowledge and participate in the learning process. Helping children set goals, monitor their own learning and reflect on their progress empowers them to see themselves as competent and confident learners. If children are involved in identifying the assessment criteria, they will be more likely to be successful and complete the task.

# Teacher Suggestions

## Involve Students in Your Planning

- Plan a project together by discussing standards and criteria before work gets under way. Students should know what success looks like before they get started.
- Plan experiences and evaluations on the basis of students' questions.
- Discuss and post the criteria, along with examples of student successes, while students work.
- Describe learning objectives in child-friendly language.

## Encourage Students to Self-assess and Reflect

- Use questioning to guide students through the assessment and evaluation process; e.g.,
  - What are the strengths of your work?
  - What would you like to improve?
  - What will you try next?

- Use questioning to encourage students to reflect on their learning and search for answers. What have they learned and what will they try next?
- Teach students how to use assessment tools for learning. Discuss the results indicated on rubrics or checklists and model how to enhance and improve work.
- Use learning portfolios with student reflections. Model the use of portfolios to reflect on learning; e.g.,
    – I am proud of the precise vocabulary I used in this writing.
    – Next time, I will know to check for the proper way to write the plural of words.
- Ask students, on a regular basis, to describe new learning.
- Allow students to use their own language in learning, assessment and evaluation.
- Help students learn to set and monitor group and personal goals; e.g., use questioning techniques, self-reflection.

## Involve Students in Assessment Reporting

- Include students in parent–teacher interviews.
- Include student comments on report cards.
- Include a student-made report card with the school report card.

# Principle 8: Teacher Reflection

|  | Yes | Not Yet |
|---|---|---|
| Do I encourage students to learn from their mistakes? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are my assessments **for**, **as** and **of** learning? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I understand the purpose of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I help students define and monitor their personal learning goals? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I ask students to explain their reasoning to me before I assess and evaluate their products? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do I make regular time to discuss students' individual plans and completed activities? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are my assessment materials free of cultural, linguistic and gender biases? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Am I using current educational theory to guide my assessment, evaluation and reporting procedures? | ☐ | ☐ |

How do my assessment methods reflect individual, cultural and linguistic diversity?

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What opportunities do I provide students to reflect on and assess and evaluate their own learning?

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How can evaluation become a positive experience in the classroom?

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Primary Programs Framework – Guiding Principles: Teacher Suggestions and Self-reflection

# Planning for Instruction and Assessment

The guiding principles for primary programs should inform teachers' views of themselves as educators and provide direction for instructional decisions.

## Educators:

- learn, as well as teach, when they participate with children in co-construction of knowledge
- facilitate the exploration of relationships, among all levels of complex phenomena, that result in meaningful connections among related concepts across curriculum areas
- guide children's understanding of themselves, including their membership in social and cultural groups that shape their multiple identities and ways of being and becoming
- are reflective practitioners who are aware of their own historically, culturally and socially constructed views of children as learners
- examine, both willingly and capably, their own and others' stereotypes, biases and misconceptions about differences among people
- respect children's specific cultural interests and learning styles
- engage in ongoing dialogues with children and members of their families and communities about culturally relevant knowledge and ways of knowing
- use language that simultaneously empowers all children and diminishes possibilities of exclusionary and/or marginalizing practices
- appreciate diversity as a source for and condition of meaningful learning
- participate in ongoing dialogues with children and their families about their learning and possible methods of assessment.

## The learning environment:

- enables all children to develop competencies, confidence and senses of independence and interdependence within supportive social communities in the classroom and school
- is inclusive and supportive of diversity in children's life experiences, their cultural backgrounds and their emerging identities
- encourages children's ways of constructing and representing knowledge
- engages, stimulates, intellectually challenges and supports different approaches to problem solving and learning tasks

- supports children as contributing members of diverse learning and social communities in their schools
- fosters opportunities for all children to participate in a democratic dialogue regarding their learning and the various ways in which their learning is demonstrated and assessed.

## Classroom space:

- is organized and used in an ongoing process of active negotiation between teachers and children
- is used flexibly to allow different social and learning communities to emerge
- reflects the particular learning community, including being safe and culturally sensitive.

## Content:

- is presented in diverse ways, in collaboration with children
- links to children's diverse, real-life experiences in a variety of contexts
- supports children in the development of their identities as members of various cultural and social communities and as citizens of Alberta, Canada and the world
- is scaffolded and builds on children's diverse intuitive conceptions to help them develop broader understanding
- supports children's understanding of their experiences within the context of their families, their communities and society
- encourages alternative ways of seeing everyday issues and/or natural phenomena
- supports the emergence of new understanding and knowledge that result from making connections among various content areas
- reflects diversity and promotes respect for individuals, families, communities, society and the world.

## Learning resources; e.g., people, materials, places:

- are meaningful to children and representative of their backgrounds
- represent multiple perspectives on various topics
- engage and intellectually stimulate children by creating genuinely challenging tasks/questions for children to explore and solve
- represent diverse ways in which children construct and represent knowledge; i.e., use a wide range of such symbolic forms as language, drawings, music notes, numbers, gestures, movements.

## Assessment:

- purposes can be **for**, **as** and **of** learning
- is ongoing, based on curriculum outcomes and supports children's learning processes and understanding
- is collaborative and is based on teachers' in-depth knowledge of individual children and children's peer and self-reflection
- allows the teacher to establish goals and future learning experiences for individual children and the class
- includes diverse ways of demonstrating knowledge and understanding; e.g., oral presentation, visual displays, performance, demonstration, conversation, written representation
- involves continuous dialogues with children and their families about children's learning and their learning needs and goals.

## Time:

- is organized flexibly to allow for in-depth exploration of single or interrelated issues, topics and phenomena
- is used flexibly to meet the individual and diverse learning needs of children.

# Bibliography

The sources in this bibliography have informed the conceptualization of ideas embedded in the guiding principles for primary programs. This bibliography is a representative list of key writings and each item has its own multiple connections to other sources of rich ideas. Readers of these sources can and should construct meaning, based on their own experiences, understanding and interests.

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