

Textbook Evaluation Form

Introduction

The authors of *Differentiating Textbooks* have identified the elements that they believe are essential to a good textbook and their information has been compiled into this textbook evaluation form. Used as a general guideline, it will enable you to evaluate textbooks across curriculum areas using a measured, or quantitative, method. It is assumed that the textbooks being evaluated are intended for all learners.

Using a scale from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent), you will rate each category based on its accompanying description. Occasionally, you may find that some do not apply to the subject area you are considering, and in such instances you would simply mark N/A (not applicable) rather than assign a numerical rating. After completing the form, tally your ratings, so you can quickly note which textbooks received the highest marks. You may want to keep the forms on file for future reference within a department, as they could be used to compare existing textbooks with possible replacements.

Book Title:		Ratings			
Author(s):	Publisher:	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
Table of Contents: Material is presented in an order that makes sense for teaching. For example, a building approach is used with math and science subjects; new material is based on previously taught skills or already defined/discussed information.					
Glossary: Unfamiliar or specialized terms are well-defined and their pronunciations are included.					
Bibliography: List of books and other reference works used by author(s) is comprehensive and up to date. (Check publication dates to see if materials are current.)					
Recommended Reading: Includes works that enable the reader to pursue further information.					
Web Sites: Include direct links to pertinent information. (Randomly check a sampling of sites for current availability and to see if they indicate how recently they were updated.)					
Index: Index is thorough and easy to use, and consists of entries that are detailed and cross-referenced.					

Book Title:	Ratings				
Author(s):	Publisher:	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
<p>Writing Style: Writing is descriptive and thought-provoking, and fosters visualization, sparking the reader’s imagination on many levels. Vocabulary consists of words that are both familiar and challenging, and words the reader may not know are clearly defined. Main ideas are explicit, not imbedded in the text.</p>					
<p>Headings/subheadings: Headings and subheadings support the content and preview what is coming so that the reader gets a clear idea about the section and can make predictions and read for purpose—helpful with before-reading activities. Wording is explicit rather than vague or ambiguous.</p>					
<p>Captions and labels: Captions and labels are accurate and informative, and supplement the text or main ideas in that part of the book.</p>					
<p>Sidebars: Sidebars augment the text by highlighting incidental or little-known information, or by expanding upon points or ideas mentioned in the text.</p>					
<p>Topic sentences and section/chapter previews: These communicate what is being discussed/developed in the paragraph or section/chapter; allow the reader to establish, identify, and absorb main ideas; and provide helpful information for before-reading activities.</p>					
<p>Section/Chapter Summaries: Key ideas and main points supporting the topic discussed in the section/chapter are clear and accurately restated.</p>					
<p>Extension Activities: Includes relevant activities offering sufficient practice so that the student can reinforce and retain what has been taught. Activities focus on different ways in which students might continue their study based on various learning styles.</p>					
<p>Page Layout: The text is complemented/supported by graphic elements (illustrations, photographs, maps, charts, etc.) that follow the less-is-more rule: they do not crowd the page or overwhelm the student with too much textual or visual information.</p>					

Book Title:	Ratings			
Author(s):	Publisher:			
	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
<p>End-of-Section/Chapter Comprehension and Critical-Thinking Questions: The questions make connections between the learned content, allow the reader to reflect on main ideas, and extend critical thinking about past and future events. Questions also are multi-leveled, i.e., there are questions that the reader can answer by looking in a specific place in the text, some that require the reader to look in several places to find the answer, and others that require the reader to look for clues in what they have read and combine these with their prior knowledge. The number of questions included provides ample practice for students.</p>				
<p>Type Style, Line Length, and Leading: The point size of the type, length of the line of type, and space between each line all work together, producing a page that is not only visually appealing but also readable and accessible. (A line of text is usually easier to read if it does not span more than half the width of the page.)</p>				
<p>Graphic Elements (photographs, illustrations, maps, charts, etc.): Graphics are located with the text that they refer to rather than pages before or after it.</p>				
<p>Graphics are consistently identified with call outs, such as Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.</p>				
<p>Maps and charts include keys or legends that explain what the symbols mean.</p>				
<p>Each photograph includes a caption that succinctly identifies it and makes a direct connection between it and the text.</p>				
<p>At least half of the graphics are in color.</p>				
Total Each Column				
	Grand Total			

REPRODUCIBLE