



FACT SHEET: CHOOSING LITERATURE TO SUPPORT SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Well-chosen & engaging literature can be a powerful tool for helping students better understand life experiences.

GOOD LITERATURE CAN:

1. **Inform:** Introduce facts, concepts and new understanding.
2. **Provide Insight:** Explore and provide insight into human behaviours, emotions and dilemmas.
3. **Stimulate Curiosity:** Encourage students to explore new ideas and themes outside of school.
4. **Give Comfort:** Alleviate students' struggles by reassuring them that they are not alone.
5. **Model Strategies:** Demonstrate real life strategies to help students cope with life events.
6. **Develop Problem-Solving Skills:** Give students the tools to address problems in their own lives.

CLASSROOM NOTES:

When choosing literature to use in classroom instruction, be sensitive to circumstances and personalities of individual students. An introductory activity before reading the story can help activate students' curiosity, build background knowledge and teach new vocabulary.

With younger students, consider reading the same book several days in a row to provide more opportunities to talk about the story, predict what will come next, learn new vocabulary and talk about personal experiences. Students need engaging opportunities for responding to the story – through discussion, reflection, writing and other creative activities.

CHOOSING A GOOD BOOK:

Look for quality literature that meets the following criteria:

1. **Good Story:** Has a strong, compelling storyline that will capture students' attention.
2. **Challenging Issues & Relevant Themes:** Addresses challenging issues either directly as part of the storyline, or indirectly by including problem-solving as part of the broader story.
3. **Thought Provoking:** Invites readers to think for themselves and avoids preaching.
4. **Relatable Characters:** Has realistic and relatable characters that inspire empathy.
5. **Developmentally Appropriate:** Provides the right level of challenge without causing students undue emotional discomfort, stress or anxiety.
6. **Positive & Respectful:** Does not encourage negative behaviour or stereotyping by making it appear funny or enjoyable.
7. **Hopeful:** Provides a hopeful and positive ending.