

Does it matter what country teaching resources come from?

Many educators feel that the best resources come from their own country, from their own province or even from their own region. This is sometimes the case, but not always.

If one is teaching a Law class, then it would be absolutely necessary to use teaching materials which deal with the laws in one's country or province. If I am teaching German, however, it makes sense for me to use resources from Europe.

Many Canadian educators try to avoid resources from the United States. Sometimes this is indeed necessary. They use a different system of measurement, so it would be awkward to use American textbooks for Math or Science. History and other Social Science books from the United States often neglect to share the Canadian perspective, so they too should be avoided. Beyond these exceptions, however, the choice of textbook should be left to the professional discretion of the educators who will be using them.

If my school district needed to choose a new series of textbooks for French as a Second Language (FSL), the origin of the books would be of less importance than their content. The more important questions for me and the colleagues would be:

Do we want to stress the learning of Quebecois or Français Standard?

Do we want to use the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or not?

Do we want to look at French as a North American and European language, or do we want to examine its use as a language of colonialism as well?

It is also important to note that each individual teacher will make the course their own, regardless of the primary textbook that is used, and for this they will add supplementary materials as they see fit.

It should also be noted that we are now asked to introduce Indigenous content. If I am teaching French in Canada, it would make sense to add a Métis component. If I am teaching English, I might add a memoir written by an Indigenous Elder from my particular region.

My point is, we do not have to choose Canadian resources simply because they are Canadian or avoid American resources simply because they are American. The resources should be evaluated on their educational merit by the professionals who will be using them.

Perhaps the more important question regarding Canadian content is, "Do the educators understand the Canadian context?" Teachers are the most valuable resource in educating our students. They will ensure that Canadian values are taught in our schools, regardless of the textbooks and other resources that are used in the classroom.