

EVALUATING INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

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Purpose

This job aid is part two of a three part series focused on curating quality instructional resources. This job aid will prepare you to:

- Evaluate the usability of instructional resources for your course

Background

Instructional resources are teaching and learning materials that communicate course content or information. Instructional resources are aligned to elements of the course including learning outcomes or objectives, assessments, activities. The use of instructional resources requires thoughtful planning, selection, and organization. For example, an instructor must examine the breadth and depth of the instructional resources content to ensure it is appropriate for the course and student learning.

Curation is the ability to purposefully and effectively find, evaluate, and share resources with your learners (Deschaine & Sharma, 2015). Curation is an increasingly important skill because we now have access to more instructional resources and information than ever before! However, quantity does not necessarily equal quality. Also, with so many freely available resources online, it can be overwhelming to select which ones to use. Following the steps in this job aid can help you evaluate the usability of instructional resources for your course.

How To

Use this Checklist for Evaluating Digital Resources to help you select quality instructional resources for your courses. Return to your search log that you started in Part 1 of this series: Finding Instructional Resources and write what instructional resources you will use. Include a note about why you choose to use it, and which quality criteria were met.

Now that you've evaluated the instructional resources, what ones will you use and why? Do you have enough instructional resources, or do you need to search again?

- Don't have any instructional resources you will use? Not a problem! This is where the Library can help.
- Not sure if the instructional resource is quality? No worries! This is where the Centre for Learning Innovation (CLI) can help.

Accurate, Credible, and Current Checklist

- Is the information accurate? Does the resource include pertinent information with no glaring omissions?
- Is the resource free of spelling errors and typos?
- Is the creator knowledgeable and qualified in the relevant field?
- Has the resource been peer-reviewed? Is the information based on cited research?
- When was the resource created? Has it been frequently updated?
- Are there more recent resources that can replace this? Or it is a historical resource that provides important and relevant information?

Bias / Point of view

- Is there one overriding point of view being promoted? Be careful to look for not only the information that's present, but also what's missing. If important facts or perspectives have been left out, it might be worth looking for other sources of information.

Context / Alignment

- Does the information directly address one or more learning outcomes or objectives? Don't try to force relevance, if the information doesn't fit, keep looking.
- Is the scope and breadth of the resource appropriate for your course?

Understandable / Coverage

- Is the information clear and understandable?
- Does the resource build on learners' prior knowledge and experience?
- For text-based resources, is the reading level appropriate for your learners?

Accessible / Useable

- Is the resource available in alternative formats?
- For audio or video resources, is there a transcript or subtitles?
- For multimedia resources, are the audio/video quality high?
- What is the cost to students? Is a more affordable or free option available?

Meets Copyright Requirements

- Does the license allow for educational reuse of the materials? See the [Quick Reference Guide to Copyright](#) for five questions to ask when attempting to use materials.
- Does the license allow modifications or adaptations of the materials? If so, can you modify the resource to fit the class objectives better or encourage active learning?

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Example Evaluation Using the Checklist

For this example, we are using the topic of access to health care in Canada. This topic comes from the learning outcome of examine the impacts of the digital divide on access to health care in Canada

A search of Google Scholar, PubMed, and Google returned quite a few results for us to review, more than will be needed for this course. First, we eliminated the results that were older than 5 years. This is because technology, and the use of technology in health care, changes rapidly. This is also because how the digital divide is defined has changed in the last five years, from being about access to devices to also include digital literacy and access to the internet.

Next, we skimmed the abstracts, descriptions, and introduction paragraphs to determine how well aligned the digital resources were with the learning objective. This allowed me to eliminate resources that were not the appropriate breadth or depth for the course like this one:

Makri, A. (2019). Bridging the digital divide in health care. *The Lancet Digital Health*, 1(5). [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2589-7500\(19\)30111-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2589-7500(19)30111-6)

While the Makri (2019) was credible and current, it was more global in scope than the Canadian perspective we are looking for.

As we skimmed, we also assessed how understandable they would be for our students. In this step, we eliminated resources like this:

Latulippe, K., Hamel, C., & Giroux, D. (2017). Social health inequalities and eHealth: A literature review with qualitative synthesis of theoretical and empirical studies. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 19(4), e136. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.6731>

This reading is very theoretical and would require a lot of background knowledge on eHealth that students may not have.

The resource we decided to use is:

Cukier, A. (2020, November 17). Left out of this equation: Why virtual health care is leaving some Ontarian behind. TVO. <https://www.tvo.org/article/left-out-of-this-equation-why-virtual-health-care-is-leaving-some-ontarians-behind>

This is because it is credible, current, aligned with the learning objective, and understandable. We think the real-life examples will make this article interesting for students and provide opportunities to make personal connections to the text.

References

Deschaine, M., & Sharma, S. (2015). The five Cs of digital curation: supporting twenty-first-century teaching and learning. *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching*, 10, 19-24.