



FINDING AND EVALUATING DIGITAL RESOURCES



UNIT 3: EVALUATING DIGITAL RESOURCES

Implemented by:





UNIT 3:

EVALUATING DIGITAL RESOURCES

Disclaimer

This material has been funded by UK aid from the UK government; however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

Unit 3: Evaluating digital resources

Overview

This is the first of **third of six units** in a CPD module which aims to build your skills and knowledge in finding, using and evaluating digital resources for use in teaching and learning. These units are for Leadership Teams and Teacher Educators in the 25 Education Degree Colleges across Myanmar.

1. What are digital resources and why use them?
2. Finding digital resources
3. **Evaluating digital resources**
4. Using found resources (copyright)
5. Adapting resources
6. Developing policies for digital resource use (Leadership Team only)

In this third unit, you will develop your skills in evaluating digital resources for use in teaching and across Education Degree Colleges in Myanmar to enable you to find, assess and use appropriate materials.

Learning Journal

As you work through these units, please keep a learning journal to record your progress and identify topics that you want to explore further. The learning journal can be a digital one, using Word or another document creation tool. Or you can use a pen and paper format like a diary or notebook. The important thing is that it is easy for you to use. You can return to this journal as you progress through your professional development journey.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/photos/search/journal/> (Creative Commons license)

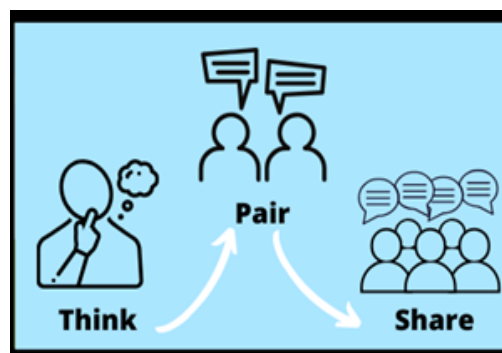
Working alone or with colleagues

This unit is designed for self-study. The answers are after each activity, and additional resources are in the Appendices at the end of this unit.

However, we recommend working in a pair or group so you can share ideas, ask questions, check your work, and give feedback.

If you work in a group, we recommend using 'Think, pair, share' for each activity.

- = **Think** – work alone and make brief notes of your own ideas.
- **Pair** – check your answers with a partner
- **Share** – discuss your ideas in a group, and then check the answers on the next page(s) together.



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/cNSFqTSr6NhwkZxT6> (Creative Commons license)ensed)

Learning outcomes

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. describe what “appropriacy” means in relation to digital resources.
2. adapt a checklist to assess the appropriacy of digital resources.
3. use key criteria to assess accessibility in digital resources.
4. develop a checklist to assess digital resources based on your own criteria.

Pre-learning: Key vocabulary in this unit

Vocabulary Item	Definition	Myanmar Translation
appropriacy (n.) appropriate (adj.)	An appropriate digital resource is one we can use in our own classes: it will work for the teacher, the students and the situation we teach in. e.g. I think these materials are not appropriate for primary students because there is too much text.	
checklist (n.)	A list of things to be checked or done.	
criteria (n. pl.) criterion (n. sing.)	A measurement used as a reason to make a judgment or decision, e.g. success criteria.	
accessible (adj.)	Accessible resources can be used and understood by everyone. e.g. We use large font so it is accessible for all students.	
assistive technologies	These help everyone to use digital resources. e.g. text-to-speech apps, voice recognition software	
caption (n.)	A phrase written next to a picture or video to explain what it says.	
to transcribe	To make a written copy of an audio or video recording.	

3.1 Evaluating digital resources

As you saw in the previous units, there are many digital resources available to you for teaching and learning. However, simply finding a set of resources is not enough: you need to know if they are appropriate for you and your students.

The activities in this unit will help you to develop your own systematic approach to assessing the appropriacy of digital resources. This will help you to find the best resources for you to use with your students.

Activity 3.1.1 - What do you think about when choosing digital resources? 🕒 15 minutes

THINK: work alone for this task.

1. Think about what is important when you are selecting resources for teaching and learning.
2. Look at the list of criteria below and tick (✓) which criteria you think are important.

The resources are free to use.

The learning objectives are clear.

I can use the resource with my learners.

Many people have used the same resource.

It is quick and easy to download.

There is a variety of activity types.

Can you think of any more criteria for appropriate resources for your teaching situation?

Now write down at least **four new criteria** for selecting **appropriate teaching and learning resources**. Write your ideas in the box below or use your learning journal.

PAIR and SHARE

Now share your list and discuss with a colleague or with a friend:

- Are your lists the same?
- What is different?
- Do you agree with everything on your colleague's list? (If not, why not?)
- What do you want to change on your list?

When you finish, you can find some criteria on the next page we can use to assess the appropriacy of teaching and learning resources.

3.1.1. Discussion

Criteria for evaluating resources

Perhaps you agree that there are many different views about what makes a good teaching and learning resources. Your list of criteria may include some of the following items:

- The learning objectives are clear.
- I can use it with my learners.
- There is a variety of activity types.
- It has examples which include both girls and boys, and different ethnic groups.

Don't feel that you have to accept our ideas if they don't seem appropriate to your EDC. The ideas you wrote down may suit your situation more. There are many ways you can assess the appropriacy of learning resources. We are going to look at some examples in the next activity.

3.2 Adapt a checklist to assess the appropriacy of digital resources

Many educational programmes and projects have their own systems to assess appropriacy in teaching and learning resources.

For example, TREE has created a Materials Development Checklist for the TREE Project. This checklist focuses on resources in general, not only on digital resources. It is designed for TREE facilitators to use to evaluate the resources we choose and create for you.

Activity 3.2.1 – Using an example checklist to assess the appropriacy of digital resources

 15 minutes

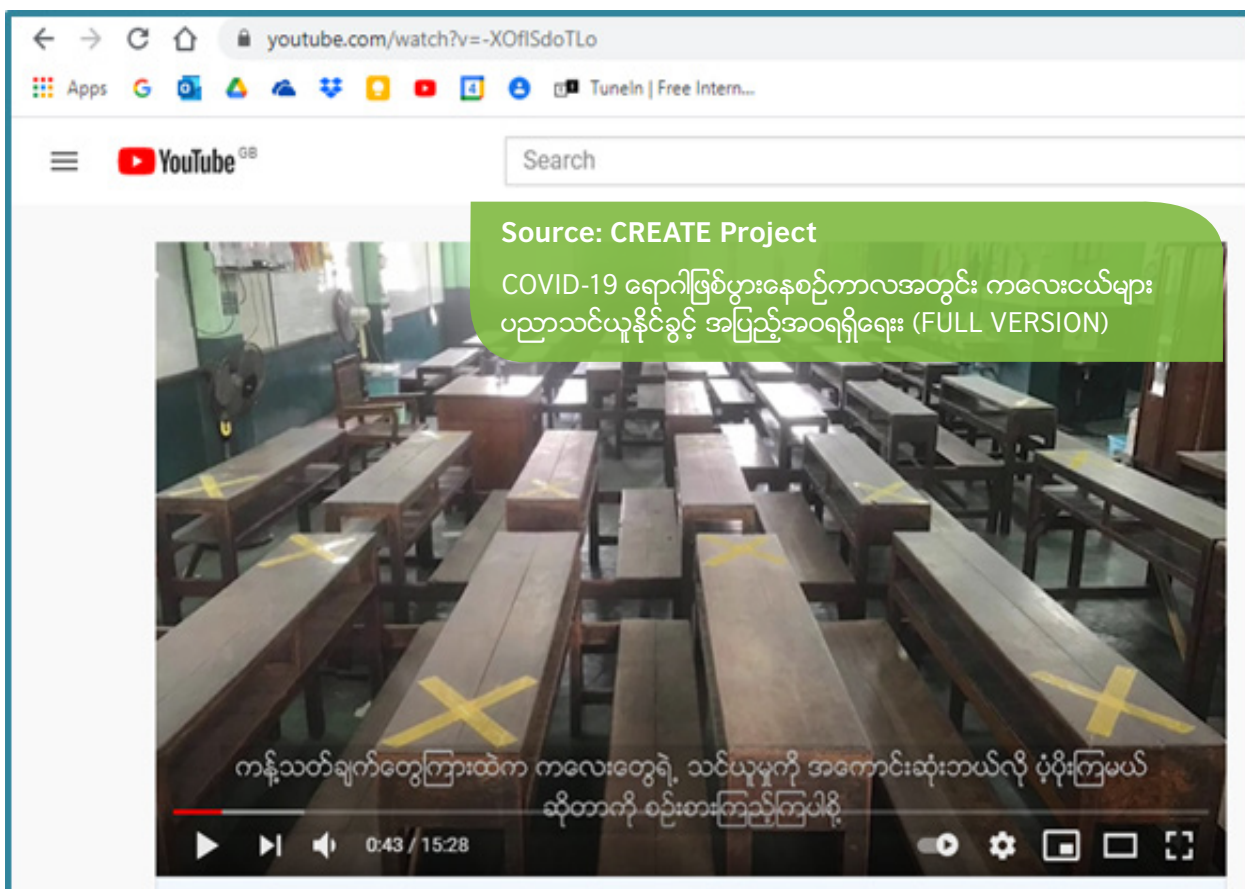
THINK and APPLY: Work on your own for this task.

Let's look at an example of a digital resource. You are going to assess its appropriacy using the criteria below.

1. Read this **situation** carefully.

You want to find an appropriate digital resource about the importance of social distancing in primary and middle schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. You want to use this digital resource as a model for your student teachers, so they can apply what they learn in their own classes with young learners.

2. Here is the digital resource you found.



3. Now look at the criteria below:

Criteria	Criteria question(s)	Y/N	ACTION
Practical	Can TEs and STs use it for digital / online teaching and learning e.g. flipped learning, independent study or homework?		
	Is the file (audio/video/worksheet etc.) accessible for STs? e.g. is the file size small enough so STs can watch / download / use the resource on their mobile phones or laptops?		
	Can you adapt the resource easily so it is appropriate for your STs?		

4. Use the 3 criteria above to assess this digital resource for your STs: answer each question, with **Yes** or **No**, according to your own opinion about the resource.
5. Check your answers on the next page.

Activity 3.2.1 Sample answers

Criteria	Criteria question(s)	Y/N	ACTION
Practical	a) Can TEs and STs use it for digital / online teaching and learning e.g. flipped learning, independent study or homework?	yes	
	b) Is the file (audio/video/worksheet etc.) accessible for STs? e.g. is the file size small enough so STs can watch/download/use the resource on their mobile phones or laptops?	yes / no	
	c) Can you adapt the resource easily so it is appropriate for your STs?	yes	

3.2.1. Discussion

Using an adapted checklist to evaluate digital resources.

Overall, this is an appropriate digital resource for the following reasons:

a) STs can watch this video alone, in pairs or in groups, so it is useful for independent learning.

b) YouTube is easy to access on phones, tablets and laptops. However, the file size may be too large and expensive for STs to watch because it is over 15 minutes long and will use a lot of data.

What ACTION can you take? Send STs a short section of the video (so it uses less data – you can do this with a video editing app on your phone) or make the resolution (YouTube “quality”) lower using the “gear” icon in the YouTube Window. This will also save data.

If the TE uses the video in class they can record the YouTube video in their phone, transfer to a laptop and then use with a projector.

c) It's good that the video is in Burmese and shows a real Myanmar classroom, so this is easily adapted. The TE will need to adapt the video with pre-listening questions and then follow-up questions to make their students think more deeply about the topic.

Activity 3.2.2. – Adapting a checklist to assess the appropriacy of digital resources for your student teachers



15 minutes

In this activity you are going to adapt and apply the TREE Project checklist to **evaluate digital resources**.

PAIR: Work with a partner for this task if you can.

1. Read through the TREE Materials Development Checklist below. Is each item **relevant** for **digital resources**? Change any of the items to make them more relevant for digital resources.
2. Also, adapt/add to any of the criteria in the checklist so you can use it to evaluate digital resources for your student teachers.

You will find a **revised checklist for digital resources** in Appendix A at the end of these materials so you can compare your ideas to questions 1 and 2 above with the revised checklist in Appendix A.

TREE materials development checklist

Name of Materials:

Purpose:

Date:

Criteria	Criteria question(s)	Y/N	ACTION
Sense check	Does the material make sense?		
	Do you understand it?		
	Have you tried it out yourself or on your peers?		
Aims and objectives	Does it fit with your aims and objectives? (to improve teaching and learning outcomes for teacher educators (TEs) and student teachers (STs) in support of the new curriculum)		
Learning Outcomes	Are they expressed in terms that the TE/ST can understand?		
	Is it clear what the TE/ST will be able to do after the lesson/ session?		
Assessment	Is assessment clearly linked to learning outcomes and learning activities?		
Learner-centred	Is it learner-centred?		
Practical	Can TEs and STs use it in the classroom?		
	Does the material give TEs / STs enough chance to practise?		
	Are the units/lessons the right length – not too long/short?		
	Is it pitched at the correct level? Check that it is not too complex.		
	Remember who your target group are and the context.		
Interesting	Are there a variety of activities in the material?		
	Are there are a variety of interactions?		
	Is there a good balance of knowledge and practice?		
	Is it interesting for both TE and ST to use?		
Realistic and Relevant	Is the material realistic in terms of the objectives and resources?		
	Is it relevant to the teaching/ learning context that you are working in?		
Appropriate	Is the material appropriate in terms of gender, culture and an awareness of bi-lingual/ multi-lingual contexts?		
	Are there negative images or stereotypes?		
User-friendliness	Is the layout and design logical and easy to follow?		
	Are there separate TE and ST materials?		

Activity 3.2.3 – Using your own checklist to evaluate digital resources 30 minutes

In this task, you are going to adapt and start to develop your own assessment criteria checklist to evaluate digital resources you may want to use in your own teaching.

In the last part of this section, you will be able to share and discuss your assessment criteria and adapt your checklist so it is relevant for you and your own STs. The aim of this section is to help you choose the most appropriate resources for you in a systematic way, and to help you save time when choosing digital resources. There are a lot of resources online but not all of them are good or appropriate!

SHARE IDEAS: Work with a partner or group of friends/colleagues for this task. You may choose to look at the same digital resource together or choose different resources. It's up to you!

1. Find a digital learning resource that you want to evaluate: this could be one of the OERs that you found in Unit 2 *Finding digital resources*, or it could be a resource that you have already used. Look at the examples on the next page if you need some ideas.

Teaching and learning websites (a few examples from Unit 2):

<https://www.futurelearn.com/>

<https://edc.moe.edu.mm/en>

<https://www.digitallibrary.io/en>

<http://mdep.moe.edu.mm/index.html>

<http://www.aseanoer.net/main.acu>

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/resources>

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/find>

2. Use the checklist you adapted in Activity 3.2.1 to evaluate the appropriacy of your chosen resource. Answer each question with Yes or No, according to your own opinion about the digital resource.

Activity 3.2.4 Evaluating and revising your own checklist

 20 minutes

Questions to discuss with your partner or group

PAIR/GROUP WORK

Now compare your completed checklist from 3.2.1 with your colleagues and discuss the questions below together:

- Was the checklist easy to use?
- Did your assessment help you decide if the resource meets your needs?
- Are all the questions in the checklist relevant for your situation? Which checklist questions are most relevant?
- What questions, if any, would you add to the checklist? Maybe you want to delete some questions. Look again at your checklist and change it if you need to.

Make notes from your discussion in the box below or in your learning journal.

3.2.4. Discussion

Approaches to evaluating resources

We hope you were able to complete the checklist easily. There are many things to consider when assessing the appropriacy of resources: we hope this activity has helped you think about what is important for you in your teaching and learning situation.

Like TREE, many other organisations have a system to evaluate teaching and learning resources with checklists and sets of criteria to assess the appropriacy of resources. These are often designed for the needs and situation (the context) of each organisation, and they may not always be appropriate for your situation. However, you may find some useful ideas if you look at more examples.

This example comes from the Australian government:

<https://guides.service.gov.au/content-strategy/audit-content/analyse-evaluate/content-evaluation-checklist/#check-content-quality>

Here is another checklist from SlideShare:

<https://www.slideshare.net/betsi19/105419728-evaluationchecklist>

Finally, you might like to look at an example from The Open University Library: it is explained through a short activity in the link below. The PROMPT framework will help you evaluate the appropriacy of any information that you find online. It uses a set of criteria represented by each of these letters: P R O M P T – Presentation, Relevance, Objectivity, Method, Provenance, Timeliness.

<https://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/activity/XK1087#page1>

3.3 Use key criteria to evaluate digital resources

In Unit 1 - *What are digital resources and why use them?* - we discussed inclusion and why it is important to consider inclusion when using digital resources.

In this section, we focus on **accessibility** as a key area to consider when evaluating digital resources for inclusion. It may be easy or difficult to use a particular resource: this can make a big difference to every learner, not only people with additional needs.

It is not always easy to see if a resource is accessible, but **format** is important when assessing the accessibility of digital resources. You learned about formats in the last two Units.

When you are evaluating a resource, check if it is available in many formats, or only one format. If there are many formats, then the resource may be more accessible for your STs. Why is this? The resource may be made available in a version to suit every learner's needs.

For example, a partially sighted learner may not be able to access some PDFs if she or he needs a **screen reader*** for reading. Screen readers don't work with some PDFs, so this learner needs a version of the text in Microsoft Word to access the file and be included in the learning process.

Vocabulary

* A **screen reader** is designed for computer, laptop, smartphone and tablet users who have little or no useful vision. Screen reading software read content aloud for the learner. In this way, items like icons, file lists, emails, webpages and documents are made accessible for partially sighted people. Word documents work well with screen readers, but PDFs do not.



<https://www.google.com/search?q=screen+reader&safe> (Creative Commons license)

3.3.1 What makes a resource accessible?



20 minutes

Work alone for this reading task.

First, read the **Guidelines and tools for digital accessibility** in this box, then answer the questions on the next page:

Guidelines and tools for digital accessibility

The accessibility of digital resources that you want to use in your own teaching is a key criterion in assessing appropriacy. Guidelines and tools are available online to help you evaluate the accessibility of digital resources.

If you are interested in learning about basic features of accessibility, spend a little time exploring some of the links given here.

OpenWashington (www.openwa.org/module-9/) lists six key accessibility questions to ask when considering using learning materials.

1. Is all written content presented as text, so that students using assistive technologies (such as screen readers) can read it?
2. If the materials include images, is the important information from the images adequately communicated with accompanying alt text?
3. If the materials include audio or video content, is it captioned or transcribed?
4. If the materials have a clear visual structure including headings, sub-headings, lists, and tables, is this structure properly coded so it's accessible to blind students using screen readers?
5. If the materials include buttons, controls, drag-and-drop, or other interactive features that are operable with a mouse, can they also be operated with keyboard alone for students who are physically unable to use a mouse?
6. Do the materials avoid showing information using colour alone (e.g. the red line means X, the green line means Y)? Colours are difficult to see for some learners.

Read these questions about **digital accessibility** and answer True/False:

1. PDFs and Word documents are accessible to all learners.
2. Text in captions and transcripts under pictures and video can help learners access digital resources.
3. Long paragraphs with no headings help partially sighted learners to read more easily.
4. If learners cannot use a computer mouse, they also cannot use a keyboard.
5. If we use dots (.....) or dashes (-----) in graphs (not just colours) it is easier for partially sighted learners to see each line more easily.

3.3.1 What makes a resource accessible? ANSWERS

1. **FALSE.** Assistive technologies like screen readers can read Word documents, but PDFs create problems with this software, so PDFs are not so accessible.
2. **TRUE.** Yes, this helps learners to access the information more easily, and screen readers can follow text like this.
3. **FALSE.** A clear visual structure with headings, sub-headings, lists and tables can help learners access text more easily with screen readers.
4. **FALSE.** Some learners may have problems using a mouse, but using computer letter/number keys is easier for them. We may need to choose software and websites which can be used with a keyboard only.
5. **TRUE.** Some learners have difficulty seeing specific colours, so a different system like dots and dashes is more accessible for these learners.

3.3.2 What makes a resource accessible?

 10 minutes

In this activity we ask you to reflect from your own experience and the reading task in 3.3.1.

THINK alone:

What features of digital resources make them easy or difficult for you to use?

Write examples you can think of in the box below or use your learning journal. If possible, add some brief notes to explain why it is important – the first example will help you get started.

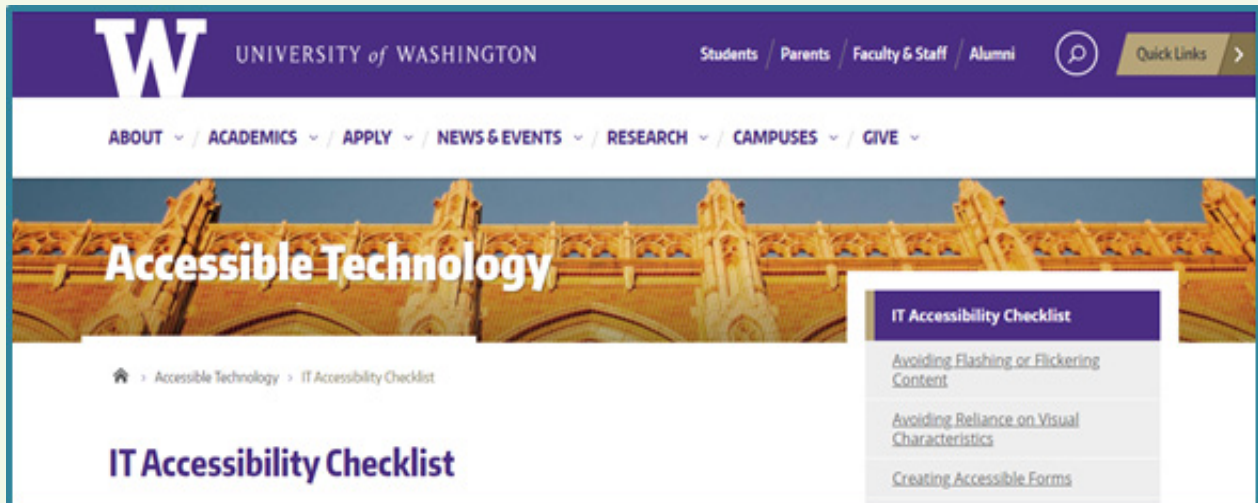
PAIR and SHARE:

Share your accessibility list from 3.3.2 with a partner.

- Are your lists the same or different?
- Do you know about any online tools to help you evaluate accessibility? What are they?
- Add more items to your list after reading the discussion box below.

3.3.2 Discussion and useful resources

See <https://www.washington.edu/accessibility/checklist/> for a full IT Accessibility checklist.



There are many online and offline tools that can help you assess the accessibility of a digital resource: try exploring these tools to help you:

Useful “How to” guides:

MS Office’s Accessibility Checker feature (search this phrase on Google)

PowerPoint’s Accessibility Checker feature (search this phrase on Google)

Links to the tools:

AChecker or **WAVE** (for webpages)

These tools can be helpful, but you must always use your own judgement and common sense when considering the result. They should just be part of a more detailed assessment: usually you will also need to apply some of the other criteria that we have discussed here.

If you are interested in exploring digital accessibility further, please take some time to look at the additional resources in Appendix B at the end of this unit.

3.3.3 Integrating accessibility into your digital resource criteria

 10 minutes

Now it's time to look back at this unit. So far, you thought about criteria for appropriacy in digital resources, you tried out the TREE checklist as a tool to assess **appropriacy**, and you considered **accessibility** as an important area in assessing digital resources.

At the end of this unit, you are going to complete a **full checklist** for evaluating digital resources based on your own criteria, **including your accessibility list** from Activity 3.3.2, and your adapted TREE checklist from Activities 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

Look again at the main TREE criteria below. In which **category** (or categories) can we put *Accessibility*?

TREE materials checklist criteria

- a) Sense check
- b) Aims and objectives
- c) Learning Outcomes
- d) Assessment
- e) Learner-centred
- f) Practical
- g) Interesting
- h) Realistic and Relevant
- i) Appropriate
- j) User-friendliness

You can find suggested answers on the next page. Compare your answers with a partner before you look!

3.3.3 Suggested answers

You may disagree with your partner about this! That is fine. However, the most important thing to remember is that inclusion and accessibility **MUST** be included in any assessment of digital resources. We need to include every child and every student in our teaching and learning.

- ✓ e) Learner centred – this is part of accessibility and inclusion.
- ✓ f) Practical – if students can't use or follow digital resources, then this is not practical for anyone, so this is also another possible category you can choose.
- ✓ i) Appropriate – when we choose resources, they must be appropriate for all.
- ✓ j) User-friendliness – another possible category to choose. We are being friendly when we choose / adapt resources to make them accessible to everyone. Our students are “users” in this sense.

Alternatively, you might want to create a separate criteria just for so it is easier and more systematic. In the end, it's up to you and what you think is best for your teaching and your EDC.

Unit 3 Wrap up

Check your learning / Exit card

Think about what you've learned in this unit. Can you answer these questions? Use the table below or write your answers in your learning journal. The answers are on the next page – don't look yet!

1. Name one **of the criteria questions** for Learning Outcomes from the TREE materials checklist.
2. You want to share a video file with your learners, but after you evaluated the video, you found that it is very large. List **two** ways you can help STs who have a slow/poor internet connection.
3. Name **three** important points to remember when choosing the right **format** for your digital resources (hint: accessibility!).

Unit 3 Wrap up - Your answers

Q1.

- Are the learning outcomes clear enough so the STs can understand them?
- Is it clear what the STs will be able to do after the lesson / session?

Q2.

- Save the video on your phone, then make the video shorter using a video editor on your phone.
- Show STs how to make a YouTube video smaller size with the “gear” icon.
- Show STs the video in class time.

Q3.

- Some learners cannot recognise colours (choose another way to make images and graphs clear to them).
- Screen readers cannot read PDFs easily.
- Text format always helps (not text in images).
- Use captions and transcripts under pictures and videos.
- Headings, titles and sections also help all learners to read more easily.

Well done! You have now completed Unit 3: Evaluating digital resources.

Appendix A

TREE materials development checklist

Adapted for TEs to check the appropriacy of digital resources.

Name of Materials:

Purpose (What's it for? Who's it for?):

Date:

Criteria	Criteria question(s)	Y/N	ACTION
Sense check	Does the material make sense?		
	Do you understand it?		
	Have you tried it out yourself or on your peers?		
Aims and objectives	Does it fit with your aims and objectives? (to improve teaching and learning outcomes for teacher educators (TEs) and student teachers (STs) in support of the new curriculum)		
Learning Outcomes	Are the Learning Outcomes clear?		
	Is it clear what the TE/ST will be able to do after the lesson/session?		
Assessment	Is assessment clearly linked to learning outcomes and learning activities?		
Learner-centred	Is it learner-centred?		
Practical	Can TEs and STs use it for digital / online teaching and learning e.g. flipped learning, independent study or homework?		
	Is the file (audio/video/worksheet etc.) accessible for STs? e.g. is the file size small enough so STs can watch/download/use the resource on their mobile phones or laptops?		
	Can you adapt the resource easily so it is appropriate for your STs / YLs?		
	Does the material give the STs enough chance to practise?		
	Are the units / lessons the right length – not too long/short?		
	Is it the correct level for STs? Check that it is not too difficult. Remember who your STs are and their specific needs.		
Interesting	Are there a variety of activities in the material?		
	Are there are a variety of interactions? Can STs work in pairs, groups as well as independently?		
	Is there a good balance of knowledge and practice?		
	Is it interesting for both TE and ST to use?		
Realistic and Relevant	Is the material realistic in terms of the objectives and resources?		
	Is it relevant to the teaching / learning context of your EDC?		
Appropriate	Is the material appropriate in terms of gender, culture and an awareness of bi-lingual / multi-lingual contexts?		
	Are there negative images or stereotypes?		
User-friendliness	Is the layout and design logical and easy to follow?		
	Are there separate TE and ST materials? Are there answers for STs to self-check later if necessary?		
	Accessibility. E.g. Is it easy for your STs to read or hear? Is the font large enough? Is the sound or video clear enough?		

Appendix B

Additional resources: guidelines and tools for accessibility

Additional resources: guidelines and tools for digital accessibility

If you would like more information on accessibility, there is a resource on simple website accessibility from “W3C Web Accessibility” here: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/>. It doesn't cover all the possible file formats, but it is a good place to start.

Further study

Also, there are a number of online courses for you to study if you would like to explore accessibility further: the links are given below

- Week 6 of 'Take Your Teaching Online' <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=77525>
- Accessibility of e-Learning <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/education-careers/accessibility-elearning/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>
- Digital Accessibility: Enabling Participation in the Information Society <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/digital-accessibility>
- An Introduction to Accessibility and Inclusive Design <https://www.coursera.org/learn/accessibility>

Appendix C

Unit 3 Activity 3 – What makes a resource accessible?

Accessibility: what to look for

- **Format:** different formats - better to suit every learner.
- **Colour contrast:** some contrasts can be more difficult to read (e.g light colour on light background)
- **Transcriptions** or written text for audio and video content: some learners may find it difficult to hear, others may find it easier to concentrate on the information in multiple formats.
- **Visual structure** including headings, sub-headings, lists, and tables: screen reader software for blind learners relies on this: also helps other learners to focus on the information.
- **No** information should be given with **colours** only: some learners can't see all colours.

Acknowledgements

Activity 3 – What makes a resource accessible? discussion text has been adapted from the open course 'Take Your Teaching Online' from the Open University (UK)

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=77525§ion=3>

Funded by:



Implemented by:



© Except for third party material, these resources are licensed under a Creative Commons attribution Non-commercial (CC-BY-NC) licence 4.0. This authorises anyone to use these materials as long as they are not used for a commercial purpose and that the following attribution is applied 'These materials were produced as part of the TREE project led by the British Council and funded by FCDO / UKAid. The original materials can be found at <https://www.britishcouncil.org.mm/tree>'