



DIGITAL RESOURCES GUIDELINES

SELECTING ITEMS FOR DIGITAL RESOURCES

VERSION 1.0
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Introduction

This TLF *Selecting items for digital resources* guide has been developed for use by all involved in selecting items to be produced as digital resources for The Le@rning Federation.

It is also useful for those selecting items for other reasons, for example an organisation selecting items to appear on its website for the purpose of increasing its profile among educators.

The guide is divided into four sections: the first outlines the range of item types appropriate for digital resources, the second identifies selection criteria on the basis of education value, the third lists selection criteria in terms of relative value, availability and appropriateness and the fourth offers useful points to have in mind when making selections.

Types of item suitable for digital resources

Current types

Still image

- drawings
- artworks
- maps
- diagrams
- text documents
- photographs
- stills
- advertisements
- frame blow-ups

Audio

- songs
- broadcasts
- soundtracks

- recordings
- oral interviews

Moving image

- unedited or actuality footage
- feature films
- short films
- home movies
- cartoons / animations
- documentaries
- newsreels
- advertisements
- sponsored films
- television programs

Possible future types

- podcasts

Selecting for educational value

The educational value of an item is the value it has as a resource for promoting the learning students are expected to achieve through their schooling.

Educational value is fundamental to The Learning Federation's digital resources project and to the *australianscreen online* project. Educational value underpins:

- the selection of items
- research about the items
- the education value statement – the centrepiece of the written text that enriches the items when they are published as resources

When selecting items on the basis of educational value, it is necessary to keep the dimensions of curriculum fit, pedagogical value and suitability in mind.

Curriculum fit

There is little point in selecting an item that promotes learning in an area or theme not taught in Australian or New Zealand schools. While New Zealand has a national curriculum, the curriculum landscape in Australia is much more complex, with curriculum varying from state to state and, in some sectors, from school to school. Accordingly, selectors need to bear in mind the following questions:

- Does the item provide an 'opportunity to learn' from the Australian Statements of Learning for English, mathematics, science, ICT or civics and citizenship?
<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11893>
- Does the item link with the syllabuses or curriculum frameworks of one or more of the Australian states or territories?
www.det.act.gov.au
www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au
http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/education/teaching_and_learning/curriculum/ntcf/index.shtml
www.qsa.qld.edu.au
<http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au>
<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/educators/curriculum>
<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/vels/index.html>
www.curriculum.wa.edu.au
- Does the item link with the New Zealand national curriculum?
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index>
- Does the item link with any of the priority areas (eg Indigenous education) endorsed by Ministers in the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)?
http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/_resources/Australian_Directions_in_Indigenous_Education_2005-2008.pdf
- Does the item link with any of the national statements (eg National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools, National Consumer And Financial

Literacy Framework) endorsed by MCEETYA?

http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/public_html/ae_f_statement.htm

http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/_resources/Financial_Literacy_Framework.pdf

- Is the item relevant to more than one curriculum area or theme?
- Is the item significant within its genre, domain or discipline?

When selecting for TLF digital resource projects during 2006-09, it is also necessary to bear in mind the following priorities and emphases decided by TLF's owners. Many of these are the same as those listed above:

- Literacy, English (early, middle and senior years)
- Mathematics, numeracy (early, middle and senior years)
- Science (early, middle and senior years)
- Civics and citizenship (middle and senior years)
- Languages (middle and senior years)
- Vocational training and education (senior years)
- The needs of Indigenous students and students for whom English is not their first language are to be considered across all these areas.

Pedagogical value

While teachers generally make choices about the particular pedagogical strategies to employ according to the needs of their students, there are two particular strategies that are widely endorsed within school curriculum as being valuable for most students.

The first of these is inquiry. Within inquiry pedagogy, the teacher places the student in the role of an investigator, collecting and evaluating data, formulating and testing hypotheses, forming and justifying conclusions and presenting findings. As the student progresses through schooling, the inquiry methodologies become increasingly discipline specific.

Accordingly, selectors need to take account of the following:

- Is the item likely to be an authentic and valuable source of information for an inquiry?
- Is it a primary or eyewitness source?

The second is critical literacy. Within this pedagogical approach the teacher encourages students to analyse and critique what they are reading, hearing and viewing. It involves students learning to question and challenge the attitudes, values and beliefs within written, visual, spoken, multimedia and performance texts. The approach also flows over to texts that students are producing themselves.

- Does the item take a particular point of view (that students can identify as part of their critical literacy learning)?
- Does the item seek to position the viewer in a certain way?

In addition, teachers are constantly searching for suitable resources that will engage and motivate students. While digital content has been shown to achieve higher levels of engagement and

motivation, it should not be assumed that digitising something automatically makes it more appealing to school-aged learners.

- Is it likely to engage student interest?
 - Engaging items generally involve people doing something (exceptions being scientific/geographic subjects).
 - The student audience is composed of children and relatively young adults. Items that are of interest generally focus on people of their own age engaged in activity or on areas completely beyond their experience.
 - Photographs or paintings of people's faces rarely engage student interest and should be avoided unless the subject or the artist or photographer is of particular significance.
- Is it likely to engage student creativity?
- Will it be useful for a teacher in a classroom or some other learning situation?

Suitability for students

The final aspect of selecting for education value is the appropriateness of items for individual students. It is important to remember that the students using the items are children and adolescents at various stages of in their schooling.

Any item that could promote the learning of students across several stages of schooling is likely to have a greater education value than one that is appropriate for one stage only.

The following questions are important:

- Is the item suitable for Australian and/or New Zealand school-age students?
 - for children in the first years of schooling?
 - for children in lower to mid primary?
 - for children in the middle years?
 - for young people in the upper secondary years?
- Is the item suitable for several stages?

Selecting for availability, relative value and appropriateness

Availability

There is little point in selecting an item that is already widely available, and so selectors need to ask: Does the item provide a learning experience that would otherwise be impossible or difficult due to one or more of the following restrictions?:

- the item is not accessible by all Australian and New Zealand students
- it is not digitised
- it is not online
- it is not available at low or no cost.

Relative value

Selection decisions frequently involve choosing among items that have fairly equal education value and then it is case of considering relative value. For example,

- Is the item likely to be of equal or greater use in a digital and/or online form than in an offline form?
- If only ten items on this topic were to be selected, would this item be among them?

Appropriateness

There are two aspects to appropriateness. The first is whether the item contains images, sounds, and words that are inappropriate for the intended audience. Questions to bear in mind are

- Does the item avoid racist, sexist and defamatory subjects?
Items containing racist or sexist content may be selected provided the item has significant historic or artistic importance or critical literacy value but great care needs to be exercised.
- Is there any branding visible (eg logos and trademarks, such as Nike)?
- Is there a classification rating?

The second aspect is appropriateness across items. Selectors of a large number of items need to analyse their patterns of selection and ask themselves the following

- Is there an overall gender balance among the items selected?
- Is there political balance?
- Is there a cultural balance? For more contemporary items, is there a multicultural focus?

Other factors affecting selection

Intellectual property rights

Please see separate guidelines.

Digitisation requirements

Please see separate guidelines.



Useful things to bear in mind when making selections

Information about the item

- Always note all the details of every item up for selection. There is nothing more frustrating than knowing there is a better item somewhere if only you could remember where.
- Sometimes there is information written on the back of a photograph, the front of a file or on the lid of a can of film. This information can be of immense value to the writer of the description and to the educational value statement

Images

- If an image needs enhancement (such as enlarging part of it or improving the contrast), it is best to note it at the time of selection.
- Colour is almost always better than black and white

Moving image

- A moving image clip should ideally have a lot happening in a short space of time wherever possible.
- If there is a soundtrack, selectors should aim for a pause in the audio before and after each selection.
- Sometimes a still taken from a moving image may work better than an excessively short piece of moving image.
- Colour is almost always better than black and white.
- Likewise sound over silent film.
- The media in which the moving image was originally shown and the date of production and/or release should be noted wherever this information is available.

Audio

- When selecting audio, check for the existence of a transcript or sheet music.
- Make sure the audio can be heard clearly, and remember that children often cannot understand accents and pronunciations used in the past, even the recent past.
- If the audio item is important and parts of it cannot be clearly heard, it should still be selected but a transcript will be needed.