Identifying and Finding Resources and Resource Types that Work for DLESE's Various Audiences

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Introduction

It is always a challenge to anticipate information needs of users when building a library collection, and a special challenge when the library's goal is to pro-actively meet the needs of an extremely diverse

audience. Our four-institution collaborative is working on enriching the DLESE Collection for all kinds of users through collections assessment, targeted gathering and cataloging of resources to fill gaps in the collection, and development of a system for gathering and disseminating feedback from users of DLESE resources.

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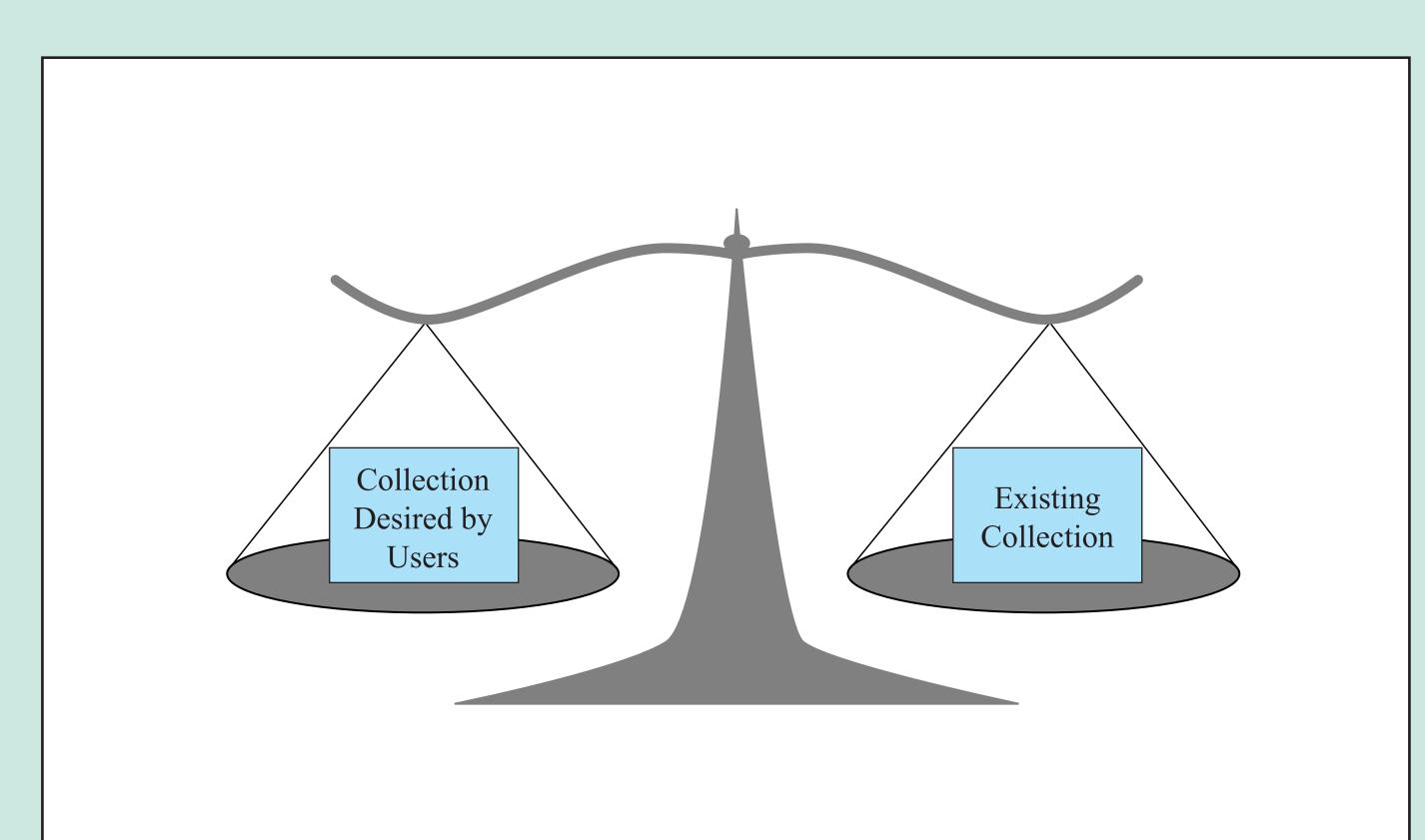
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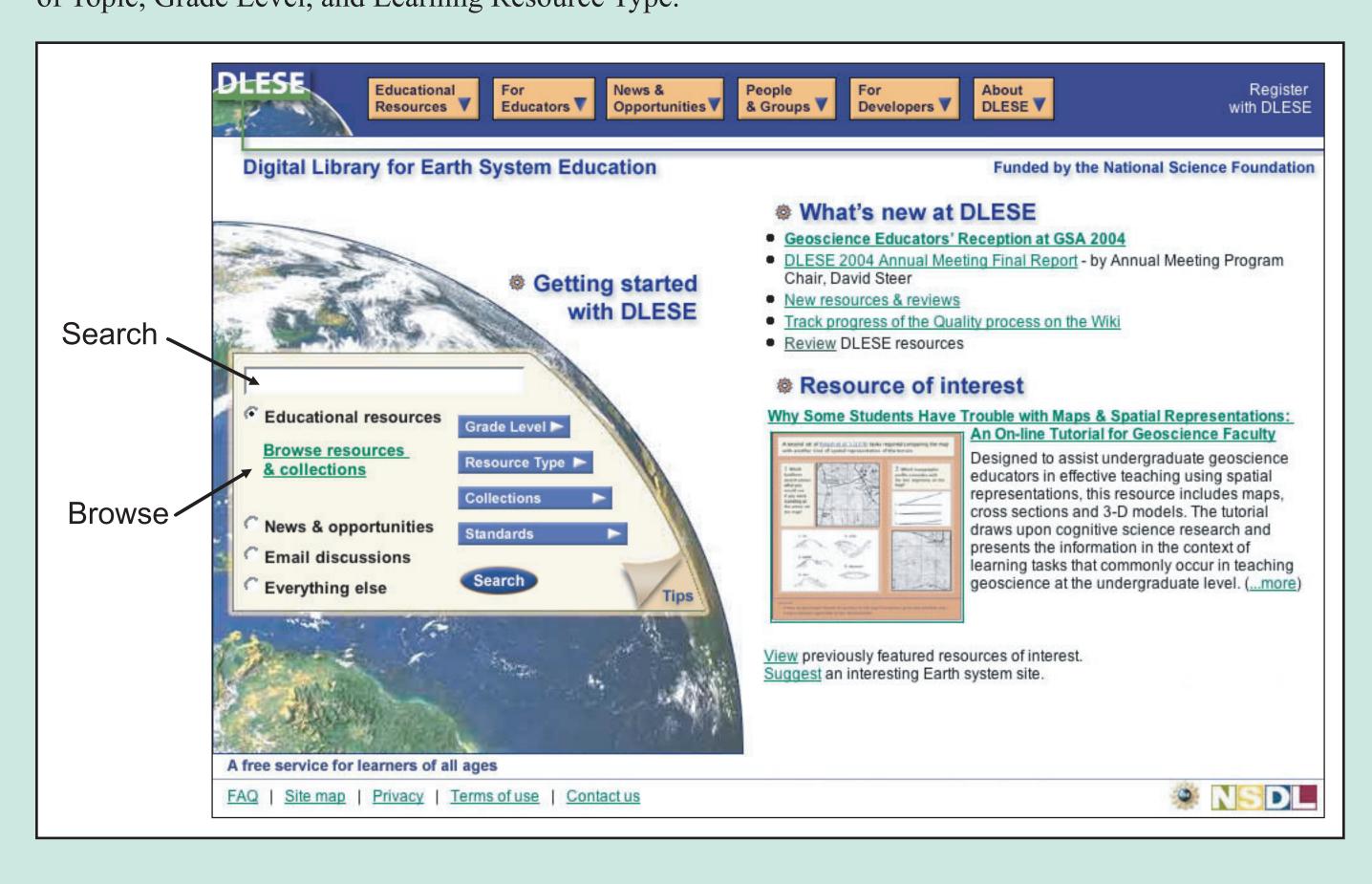
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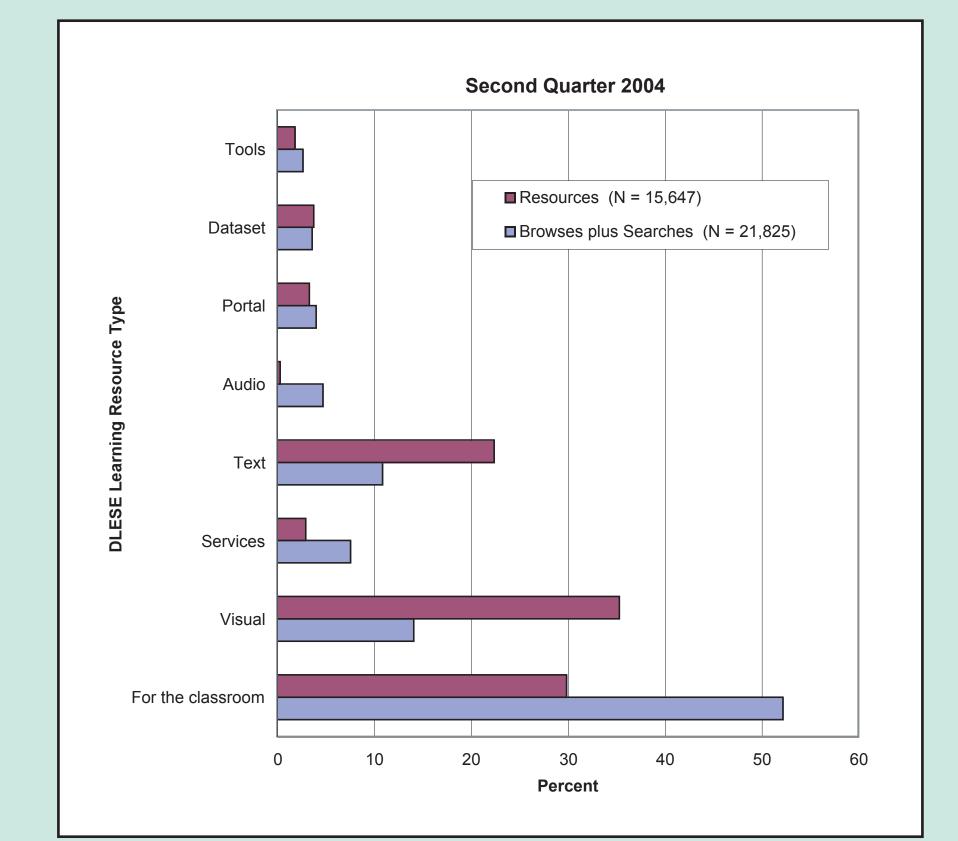
Collection Assessment: Identifying and filling gaps in the DLESE collection to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

"Collections assessment" is the process of systematically comparing the scope and balance of the library's actual collection with the scope and balance of materials desired by the library users.



In the case of DLESE, information about users' desires comes from analysis of requests to the Search and Browse functions of the DLESE Discovery System. DLESE assesses its collection along the dimensions of Topic, Grade Level, and Learning Resource Type.

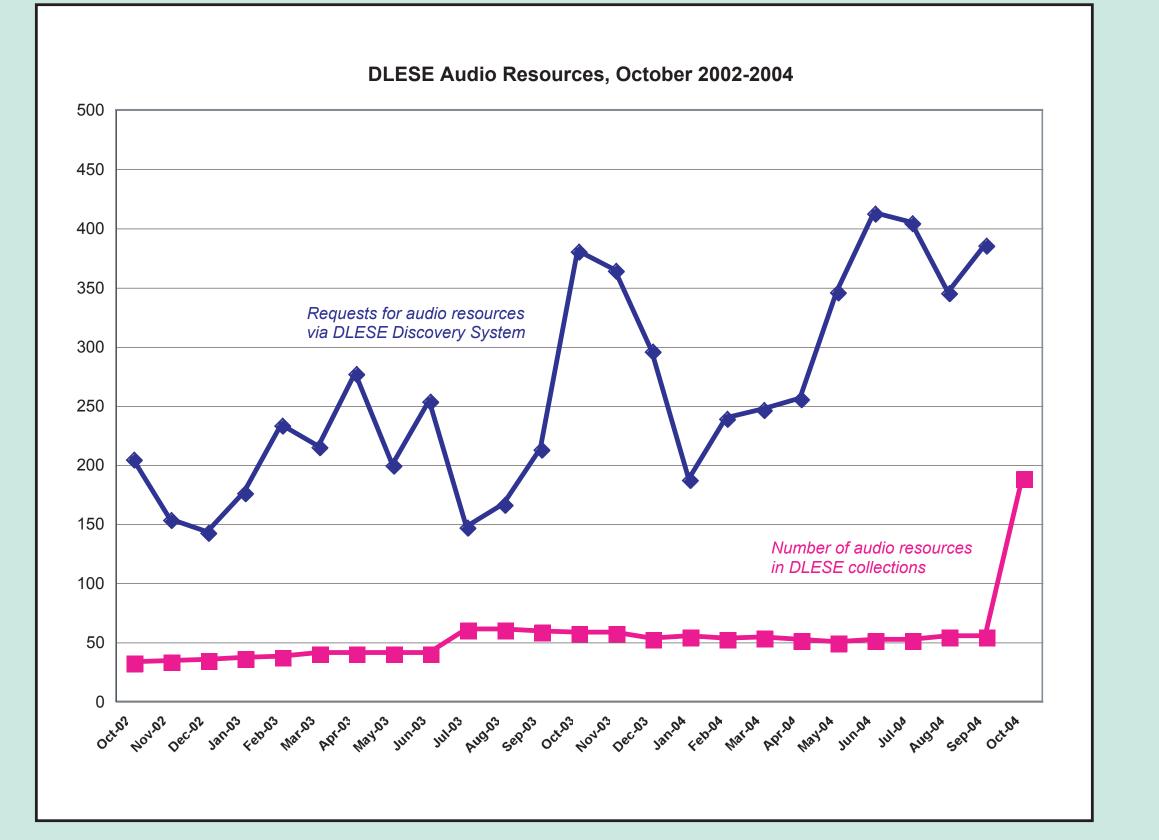




In spring of 2004, we discovered that all of the "audio" Learning Resource Types (audio webcast, sound, radio broadcast, music, lecture, and audio book) were underrepresented in the DLESE collections relative to the frequency of requests for these resource types from Discovery System users (graph at left).

These audio resource types are crucial for visually-impaired learners.

During summer and fall 2004, we systematically targeted audio resource types for intensive gathering and cataloging to fill this gap in the collection (graph at right).



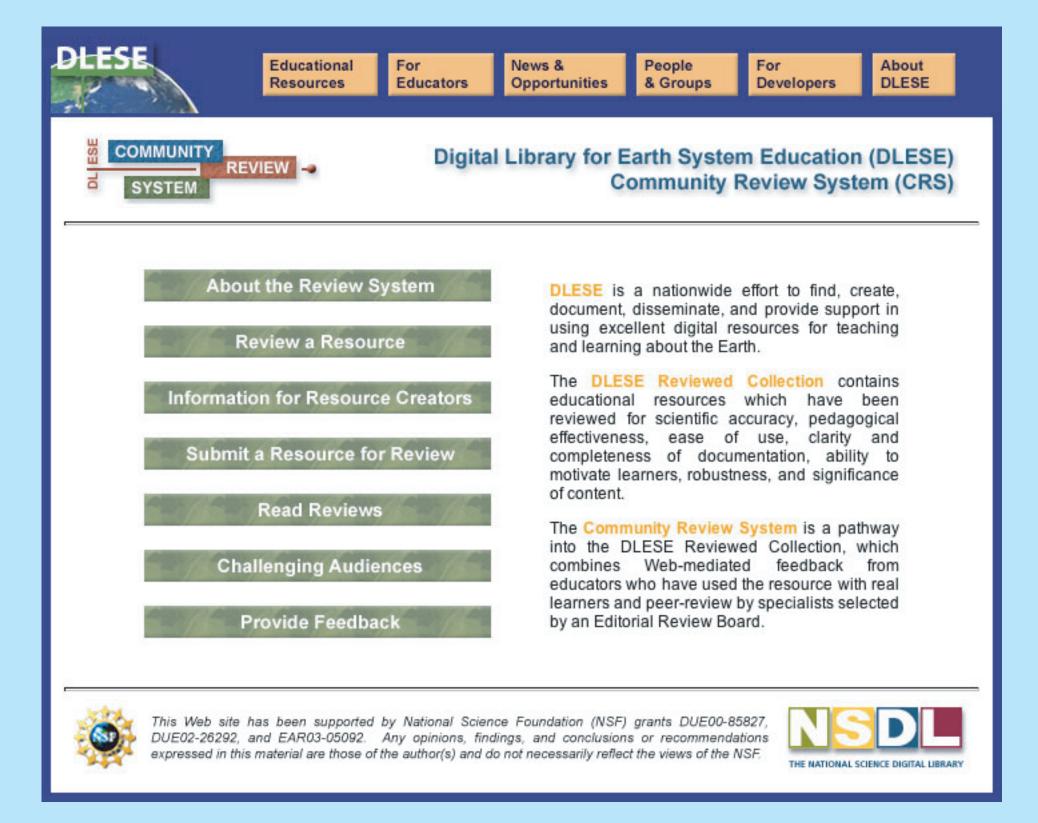


Close your eyes and imagine that you cannot see the Earth or environment. Listen to the audio clips.

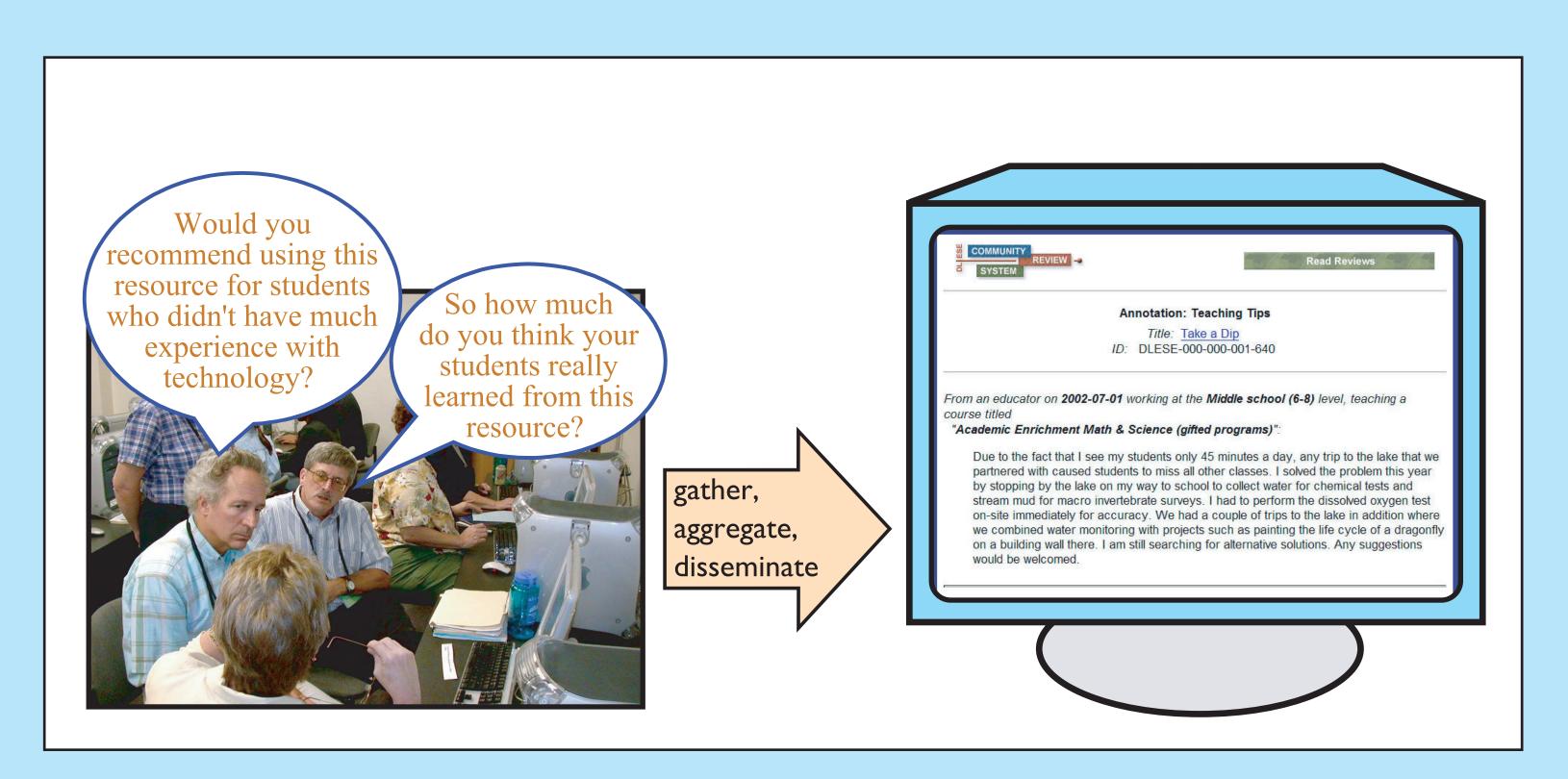
Could you learn Earth system science this way?

Community Review System: Identifying individual resources that work well for specific learner characteristics.

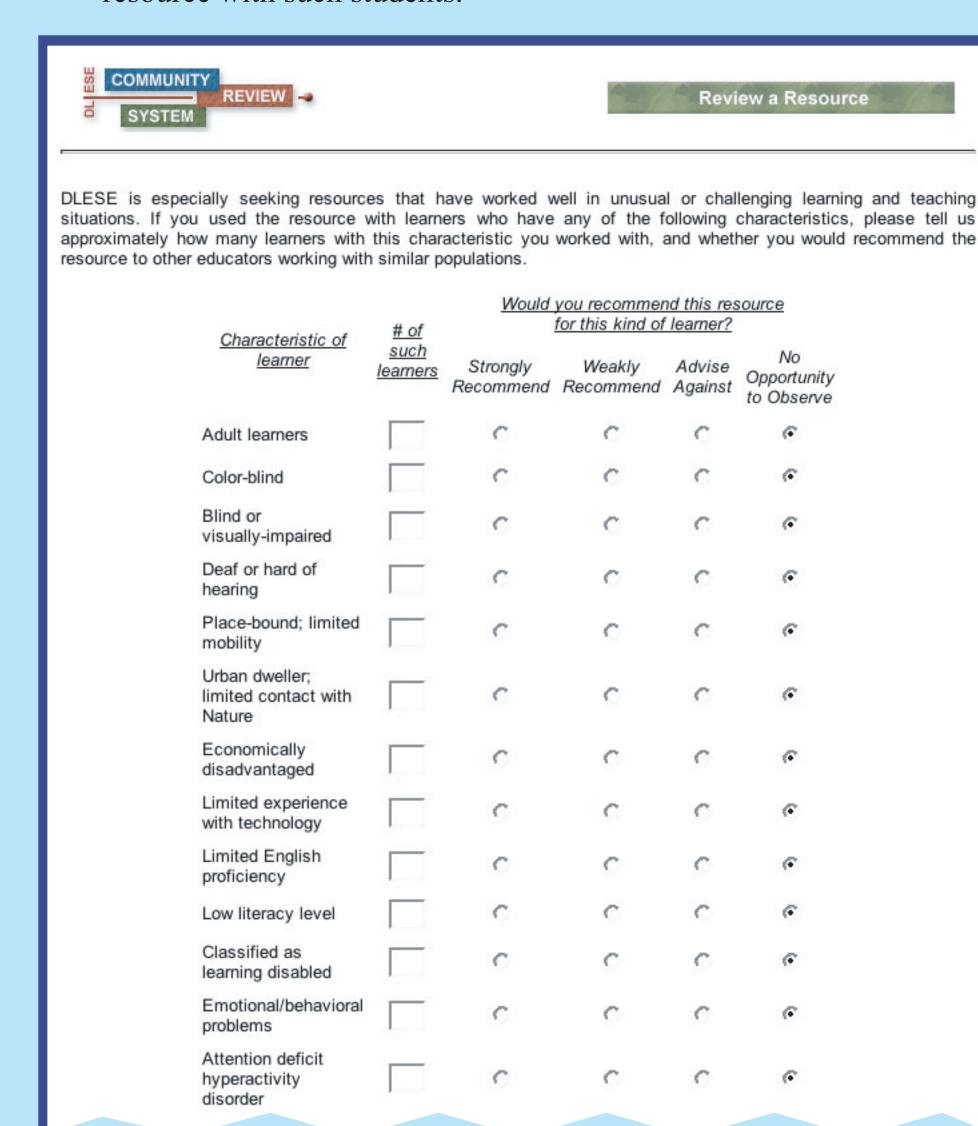
The DLESE Community Review System (CRS; crs.dlese.org) gathers, aggregates and disseminates user feedback about DLESE resources.



You can think of the CRS as a "Virtual Share Fare" in which educators and learners who have used DLESE resources share their experience in using the resource with other educators and learners.



One section of the CRS web questionnaire asks whether the respondent used the resource with students who have specific characteristics that might be factors in how they learn (e.g. colorblindness, limited English, limited experience with technology), and, if so, would they recommend or advise against using this resource with such students.



When sufficient answers have accumulated, a table compiling number of recommendations for and against using the resource is made available as a DLESE annotation, which can be accessed via the "see reviews, teaching tips and related resources" link from the DLESE Discovery System.

Annotation: Challenging Audiences

Title: Fundamentals of Physical Geography
1D: DLESE-000-000-0035

Number of Reviews: 49

Characteristic of Learner:

Strongly Recommend Recommend Against
Adult Learners 7 0 0 10 0 5

Color-blind 0 2 0 0 1 3

Blind or visually-impaired 0 0 0 1 0 0 4

Deaf or hard of hearing Place-bound; limited mobility
Urban dweller; limited contact with Nature

Economically disadvantaged
Limited experience with technology
Limited English proficiency

In addition, a page on the CRS website highlights resources that have been recommended for specific populations by more than five users.

