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


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 assessing 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.

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

"When you assess" 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 2003, DLESE information about user feedback came from analysis of requests to the Search and Browse functions of the DLESE Discovery System. DLESE assessed 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 (video broadcast, sound, radio, and audio book) were underrepresented in the DLESE collections relative to the number of these types represented in the DLESE Discovery System.

These audio resource types are crucial for visually-impaired learners. During spring and fall 2004, we systematically targeted audio resource types for review, gathering and cataloging to fill this gap in the collection (graph at right).

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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 case feedback about DLESE resources.

Identifying individual resources that work well for specific learner characteristics.

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. color-blindness, limited English, limited experience with technology), and, if so, would they recommend or advise against using the resource with such students.

If respondents answered “yes” to any of these questions, they were asked to indicate whether they would recommend using this resource for students who have the specific characteristics (e.g. color-blind, have limited English proficiency, have limited experience with technology).

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

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

Toward a DLESE Annotation: Evaluating the effectiveness of user feedback.

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