

## **If You Are Evaluating the Purpose of the Material**

Basic things to look for in educational materials:

1. Currency
2. Authority
3. Ease of use
4. Quality of information

Three categories specific to ESL:

1. Skills and students targeted
2. Teaching methods
3. The book or website--inside and out

### **1. Skills and Students Targeted**

Skills taught:

Reading  
Writing  
Listening  
Speaking  
Grammar  
Vocabulary  
Cultural knowledge

Objectives:

For cultural or linguistic information  
For composition, discussion, etc.  
Providing student feedback  
Providing language practice  
Providing language tutorials

Additional objectives for online resources:

Linking to resources  
For online activities  
Supporting interchange via email or via bulletin board  
Teaching Internet skills

Audience scope:

Specific class(es)  
A school or institution  
Regional  
Worldwide

Target level:

Beginning  
Intermediate  
Advanced  
Multiple levels

## **2. Teaching Methods:**

Context:

Is there a context for the language use or are points presented in a rote manner?

Communicative:

Does the material encourage communication rather than memorization?

Authentic language:

Does the material offer real language and authentic situations?

### **New to online resources:**

Sensory input:

The site should create a rich sensory environment for language learning. Does it use multimedia--text, graphics, sound, and video--effectively?

Interactivity:

How much interactivity is there? (In other words, is the site static or is it dynamic based on user input?)

Feedback:

Is there feedback and error correction; and if so, how well does it work?

## **3. The Book or Web Site-Inside and Out**

Content:

Is the content interesting, relevant, original, and of good quality?

Re-usability:

Would the learner use the material more than once?

Appearance: Different for materials in the real world and in cyberspace

In the real world: Is the book attractive, clean and not cluttered?

In cyberspace: Does the site have good graphics and legibility?

### **New To Online Resources**

Navigation: Easy to use

Loading time: Fast

**Tips:**

Warning: Many materials are classroom materials (i.e., textbooks) and may not be appropriate for libraries, because they require a teacher. Unless you are offering classes, look for self-study materials.

Beware of those Internet sites...

- Publishing course materials (syllabus, assignments, etc.)

- Publishing student work

- Set up for specific class(es)

Based on Jeffrey T Nelson's thesis, entitled "A system for the evaluation of ESL web sites," for his Master of Arts Thesis at Washington State University. Available at [http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~jtnelson/thesis/complete\\_thesis.html](http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~jtnelson/thesis/complete_thesis.html)