TABLE 5. Factors that affect adaptation costs

Aspect	Issues for adapting
Is the content appropriate?	The content should match the needs of your learners as closely as possible. The poorer the match, the more adapting you will have to do. If too much adaptation is needed, it might be cheaper to write your own course.
What prior knowledge is assumed?	If the prior knowledge assumed is more than your learners will have, then you may need to produce a pre-course supplement to bring your learners up to the starting point of the course.
Is the content up-to-date?	This is always an important issue in ODL since materials, once made, may need to continue in use for several years (updating is generally fairly costly). How long will it be before your version of the course needs updating?
Is the content accurate and authoritative?	A few inaccuracies are not a problem – you can draw attention to them in your study guide or deal with them in your adaptation. Too many inaccuracies will increase your adaptation costs.
Is the coverage comprehensive?	How much new material will you need to add? If it is too much, it might be better to write your own course.
Is the language level appropriate?	For example, is the vocabulary appropriate and are the sentences not too long or complex? If you will need to translate the text, will this present any special problems?
Are there plenty of activities and are they of high quality?	Activities are the most important part of ODL materials. If the activities are few or poor, you will have to create new ones.
Are the progress tests adequate?	Does the material include self-tests so that learners can check their own progress? If not, you will need to add these, although that is quite easy to do.
Is it acceptable in terms of cost?	How much will it cost you to produce a course using these materials? How much will it cost you to write your own course?

A three-page checklist for evaluating materials for adaptation is presented in Lewis and Paine (1986).