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Website Evaluation Assignment

Directions: Begin this assignment by selecting a topic of your choice and student population that is relevant to a specific K-12 grade level. Next, select a website that you might consider using to teach a lesson plan about this subject to the students. After you have selected the website, complete this worksheet by filling in the blanks and **highlighting your selections in the rubric**. The rubric will help you to determine if the website is suitable for use with your intended K-12 student audience (elementary, intermediate, or senior high). When describing the strengths and limitations of the website, include the top 3 of each from the rubric. Finally save this worksheet and submit it as an attachment in the assignment dropbox.

1. **Enter the topic you have selected:** Food Chains

2. **Enter the grade level of students you have selected:** 4th grade

3. **Website Title:** Sheppard Software

4. **Website Link:** http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/

5. **Copyright Date:** not provided

6. **Website Subject Area:** Math, Science, Geography, Language Arts, History, Art

7. **Who is the website intended for?** __Teachers __Students _x **Both**

8. **What grade levels is this website suitable for?** It is primarily geared towards PK-5, but

    some games provided, such as a periodic table of elements game, can be suitable for older

    students. The website claims these activities can be used by all ages, including high

    schoolers and adults but the games seem too juvenile for this demographic.

9. **Provide a brief description of the website:**

    This website provides games, quizzes, articles, and activities for a wide variety of subject areas. Each subject area has both an icon and words for assistance in navigation around the site. This would be especially helpful for younger learners who would be able to identify a picture more easily than words. The articles provided in each subject area are brief but straightforward. For elementary students, this website gives plenty of information for the student to be informed about a subject but not be overwhelmed by subject specific vocabulary. Additionally, while perusing the site, children are directed through clickable links only to other pages within the site. This means the content students are accessing is safe content that has been looked through and approved by the editor. There is also a section where teachers can contact the editor if they have any suggestions regarding the content on the site.

10. What standards and objectives will the use of this website address?

This website addresses a variety of subject area standards and objectives, including those related to science, math, history, language arts, geography, and art. I found this website to enhance a lesson targeted at teaching the 4th grade science TEK, 9 (B) "describe the flow of energy through food webs, beginning with the Sun, and predict how changes in the ecosystem affect the food web such as a fire in a forest".

11. Prerequisites (e.g. prior knowledge, reading ability, vocabulary level, etc.):

For PK-K topics, the site audibly gives information about icons on the page when hovered over by a mouse or clicked on. For example, a game aimed at the goal of teaching students the names of different colors, will verbally tell students the colors of different objects when they hover over or select that object's image. For older students, games, quizzes, and articles require reading ability as there is not a read aloud option, but these activities do not require much prior knowledge as they are giving students the foundational information and skills for the topics being researched. All vocabulary utilized, whether audibly or in print, is accessible for students from prekindergarten and up.

12. What are the top 3 website strengths (from the rubric):

This website has many "high quality" ratings according to the rubric provided below. Of these strengths, the top three I chose are:
- Standards/outcomes/ objectives addressed and use of Web resource should enhance student learning.
  - The games and activites provided on the site enhancing student learning by engaging students whilst requiring them to apply knowledge. This allows students to interact fully with content to more effectively internalize the information.
- Topic is presented so that students are likely to be interested and actively engaged in learning.
  - The games and activities are engaging, creating buy-in amongst students.
- Use of Web resource gives students many opportunities to engage in new learning experiences.
  - Each new page students are directed to has games, illustrations, texts, or activities that keep the student engaged while navigating the site.

13. What are the top 3 website limitations (from the rubric):

The top three limitations from the rubric are listed below:
- Information is correct, but does contain material that is out of date.
  - o Since there was no copyright date or date of last update provided, the user cannot assume that all material is up to date.
- The user guide is good resource for use in a lesson. Directions may help teachers and/or students use the material.
  - o The homepage and main page to each concept provide minimal directions that assist users in utilizing the material, but these directions could be made clearer.
- Navigation is logical for main use, but can be confusing.

o   Navigating from the homepage to subject specific pages is logical, however, if the user wanted to get back to the homepage from the specific content area page they clicked on, the clickable link is sometimes more difficult to find or unavailable.

14. **Website Special Features:**

This website features interactive games and quizzes that coincide with article content. This allows students to interact with information more fully and internalize content. For younger learners, content is provided audibly. Also, if you are a teacher, some of the software is available to download free of charge so it can be used on devices without internet connection.

15. **Do you recommend this website for classroom use? __x__ Yes _____ No**

Website Selection Rubric

Rating Area	High Quality	Medium Quality	Low Quality
Alignment with Standards, Outcomes, & Objectives	Standards/outcomes/ objectives addressed and use of Web resource should enhance student learning.	Standards/outcomes/ objectives partially addressed and use of Web resource may enhance student learning.	Standards/outcomes/ objectives not addressed and use of Web resource will likely not enhance student learning.
Accurate & Current Information	Information is correct and does not contain material that is out of date.	Information is correct, but does contain material that is out of date.	Information is not correct and does contain material that is out of date.
Website Author	The website was created by a creditable author with their credentials clearly stated on the website.	The website appears to created by a creditable author, but their credentials clearly stated on the website.	The website was not created by a creditable author.
Age-Appropriate Language	Language used is age appropriate and vocabulary is understandable.	Language used is nearly age appropriate and some vocabulary is above/below student age.	Language used is not age appropriate and vocabulary is clearly inappropriate for student age.
Interest Level & Engagement	Topic is presented so that students are likely to be interested and actively engaged in learning.	Topic is presented to interest students most of the time and engage most students in learning.	Topic presented so as not to interest students and not engage them in learning.
Technical Quality	The material represents the best available technology and media.	The material represents technology and media that are good quality, although there may be some problems using it.	The material represents technology and media that are not well prepared and are of very poor quality.
Ease of Use (User may be Student or Teacher)	Material follows easy-to-use patterns with nothing to confuse the user.	Material follows patterns that are easy to follow most of the time, with a few things to confuse the user.	Material follows no patterns and most of the time the user is very confused.
Bias Free	There is no evidence of objectionable bias or advertising. The	There is little evidence of bias or advertising and the website does not appear to be propaganda.	There is much evidence of bias or advertising and/or the website is propaganda.

This rubric was adapted from Smaldino's Web Resources rubric available at:
http://wps.prenhall.com/wps/media/objects/4299/4402431/rubrics/chap07.pdf
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	website is not propaganda.		
User Guide & Directions	The user guide is an excellent resource for use in a lesson. Directions should help teachers and/or students use the material.	The user guide is good resource for use in a lesson. Directions may help teachers and/or students use the material.	The user guide is poor resource for use in a lesson. Directions do not help teachers and/or students use the material.
Clear Directions	Navigation is logical and pages are well organized.	Navigation is logical for main use, but can be confusing.	Navigation is not logical and pages are not well organized.
Stimulates Creativity	Use of Web resource gives students many opportunities to engage in new learning experiences.	Use of Web resource gives students some opportunities to engage in new learning experiences.	Use of Web resource gives students few opportunities to engage in new learning experiences.
Visual Design	The Web resource is designed with appropriate use of graphics and text to ensure student understanding.	The Web resource is designed with graphics and text that are of average quality.	The Web resource is designed with graphics and text that are of poor quality and distract students from understanding.
Quality of Links	The Web resource links facilitate navigating the material and finding additional information.	The Web resource links are not easy to navigate and make it difficult to find additional information.	The Web resource links make it very difficult to navigate the material and to find additional information.
Site Map	The Site Map is available and useful to help navigate and access information.	The Site Map is available and somewhat useful to help navigate and access information.	The Site Map is not available or not useful to help navigate and access information.