

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF A WEB SITE: WEB SITES FOR USE BY EDUCATORS

© 2006. Kathleen Schrock (kathy@kathyschrock.net)

Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators <http://discoveryschool.com/schrockguide/>

What type of connection do you have to the Internet?

Dial-up connection: modem speed 28.8 33.6 56k

High-speed connection 56K DSL T1 T3 **Broadband/cable** Other

What Web browser are you using? Firefox

What is the URL of the Web page you are evaluating? <http://www.santamariaesl.com>

What is the name of the site? ESL Materials by Competency

DOUBLE-CLICK IN THE CHECKBOX TO SEE THE MENU FOR ADDING THE CHECK!

Part 1: Technical and visual aspects of the page As you look at the questions below, put an X in the yes or no column for each.	YES	NO
Does the page take a long time to load?		√
Do any pictures or photographs on the page add to the information?	√	
Is the spelling and grammar correct on the page?	√	
Are there headings and subheadings on the page?	√	
• If so, are they helpful?	√	
Is the page signed by the author?		√
Is the author's e-mail address included?		√
Is there a date on the page that tells you when it was last updated?		√
• If so, is it current?		
Is the format of the page standard and readable with your browser?	√	
Is there an image map (large clickable graphic with hyperlinks) on the page?		√
Is there a table (columns of text) on the page? (Check the source code to be sure.)	√	
• If so, is the table readable with your browser?	√	
If you have graphics turned off, is there a text alternate to the images?	√	
On supporting pages, is there a link back to the home page?	√	
Are the links clearly visible and annotated or explanatory?	√	
Are there photographs or sound files on the page?	√	
• If so, can you be sure that a picture or sound has not been edited?		√
• If you're not sure, should you accept the information as valid for your purpose?	√	

Summary of Part One

Using the data you have collected above, write a short statement explaining why you would or wouldn't recommend this site to a fellow educator.

I do use this site since it contains most of the content that I use to teach at my high school. The information that is on the site is for student use, and could also be used by other teachers as material they could use to teach their lessons.

©2006. Kathy Schrock. All rights reserved. Permission to reproduce for classroom use granted.

Part 2: Content As you look at the questions below, put an X in the yes or no column for each.	YES	NO
Is the title of the page indicative of the content?		√
Is the purpose of the page indicated on the home page?	√	
When was the document created?	?	
If there is no date, does the information appear to be current?		√
Does up-to-date information matter for your purpose?		√
Is the information found on the page useful for your purpose?	√	
Would it have been easier to get the information somewhere else?		√
Would information somewhere else have been different? • Why or why not? Yes. Much of the information on this site is an amalgam of content found in Spanish language and English language web sites.		

Did the information lead you to other sources, both print and Web, that were useful?	√	
Is a bibliography of print sources included?		√
Does the information appear biased? (One-sided, critical of opposing views, etc.)		√
Does the information contradict something you found somewhere else?		√
Do most of the pictures supplement the content of the page?	√	

Part 3: Authority As you look at the questions below, put an X in the yes or no column for each.	YES	NO
Who created the page? I created the web page.		

What organization is the person affiliated with? Long Beach Unified School District.		
---	--	--

Conduct a <i>link</i> : command in a search engine to see who links to this page. Can you tell if other experts in the field think this is a reputable page?		√
Does the domain of the page (k12, edu, com, org, gov) influence your evaluation?		√
Are you positive the information is valid and authoritative? • What can you do to validate the information? I have worked hard to make it so, but there are always various interpretations of historical date. The content on accents and AP language readings is accurate.		

Are you satisfied the information useful for your purpose? • If not, what can you do next? Yes, but there is a whole lot of work that needs to be done, preferably by moving the site to a quality content management system to make it more easily searchable and updatable. Another benefit would be that such a CMS would automatically date the content so the users of the site would know when it was created.		√
---	--	---

--	--	--

If you do a search in the newsgroups (i.e. Google Groups) on the creator of the page, do you find additional information that shows the Web page author is an expert in the field?	√	
--	---	--

Part 4: Pedagogy As you look at the questions below, put an X in the yes or no column for each.	Y	N	N/A
Does the information on this page adhere to research-based principles of teaching?			√
Does the information on this page provide easily-replicable best-practice information?			√
Does the information on the page provide links to professional teaching standards?			√
If the site is intended to provide professional development for educators, is the information presented using multiple modes of presentation, such as the use of text, illustrations, videos, audio, etc.?			√

Looking at all of the data you have collected above while evaluating the site, explain why or why not this site is (or is not) valid for your purpose. Include the aspects of technical content, authenticity, authority, bias, pedagogy, and subject content.

I think it is valid for the purpose of having a repository of the content I use in teaching my classes, and as a resource for students some of the time. Technically the site uses XHTML, CSS and some PHP for making content includes. I need to make sure that my authorship is clear and that content is dated in order for people to view the content as good, authentic content with some level of authority.