The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Evaluating Web Sites

Description:

Two lessons in one! This can be used for any subject to evaluate Web Sites. In addition, there is also an activity tied in with evaluating Web Sites and the causes of the Civil War.

Students will be given a lesson on how to judge the accuracy of a Web Site and if it should or should not be used for research. The instructor will go through the Web Site http://www.quick.org.uk/menu.htm which will show students how to evaluate Web Sites. Later they will find three Web Sites (on the related subject) and evaluate sites of their choosing.

This lesson plan has been modified to include two worksheets on the causes of the Civil War. These worksheets should be used by the social studies teacher to evaluate students' learning. Any subject may use the evaluation Web Site links and worksheets.
Goals & Objectives:

Instructional Goals:

* To evaluate Web Sites efficiently

* To evaluate different types of Web Sites

Learning Objectives:

Given the Web Site

http://www.lib.vt.edu/instruct/evaluate/

students will be taught how to accurately critique sites on the Internet.

Optional:

Social Studies objective: Students will be able to explain in detail two reasons for the Civil War.

Motivational Goals:
* They will gain confidence that they have acquired important knowledge that will help them become successful throughout their lives.

Materials & Sources:

* Computers(enough for the entire class and the teacher)
* Worksheets (INCLUDED IN MEDIA ELEMENTS)
* A projector that is connected to the teacher's computer
*White board

Introduction:

Student's computers should be off. Inform students that the Internet is now an acceptable form of information and that many people cite Web Sites in their papers. This is not only done in middle school but in college as well and is even used in the workplace. Go on to say that not all sites have good information and that some have agendas. For an example of a bad Web Site take them to: http://home.inreach.com/kumbach/velcro.html

Have them look over the Web Site and ask them if they find any false statements. Give the students a moment to process the question. Make sure students raise their hands and do not call out. Call on individual students who have their hands raised. If you are near a white board, write down the answers students give. Ask the students how they knew the information was false? (most will say it is a bad site because velcro doesn't grow on farms) Then ask students how they would find out the information is false if they did not already know. Wait for them to process information. Call on students who have their hands raised. write their answers on the board. Tell them they have just evaluated a Web Site. Also say that they have just learned a valuable tool that they will need to have throughout their lives. This is something that they do not only need in school but in the workplace as well.

Body:

The teacher will then go to another Web Site. Student's computers should be off while the teacher is going through the lesson. This will keep students focused on the teacher and will prevent them from surfing the net. In addition, each student should have their own computer because they should be doing the research by themselves. If this cannot be done then students should pair up. There should not be three people at a computer.

Go to http://www.quick.org.uk/menu.htm

and then proceed through the site with the students. Again students should not be logged onto the computer. Read to students what is written on the Web Site and give detailed explanations if you believe your students are unsure of the content. If students are not listening, then call on random individuals to read. When you come to the interactive part of the lesson(questions on websites) call on students individually to answer the question. Wait for them to process information. Do not have them call out. Continue until the eight steps have been completed.

When you have finished going through the Web Site tell them they know have important knowledge and the power to evaluate if a site is a good source or if it is bad. Remind them that this information will be used throughout their lives and is very important. Ask them how they can identify a good site. Wait for them to process information. write answers on the board. Then, the teacher will hand out one set of the worksheets on how to evaluate a Web Site. Go over worksheets briefly. Ask if they have questions. Call on a student to repeat the directions.

As soon as all students have the worksheets read the directions for everyone and then go over the two worksheets. Ask students if there are any questions. Tell them this is not a group activity and that they are to work alone on this project. If they have any questions they can raise their hands and the teacher will be around to assist them.

Students will answer questions about the Web Site they are viewing. Then they will have to write an explanation why they believed the Web Site they have evaluated is a good source or a bad one. They need to give three reasons to support their answer. This will allow students an opportunity to use the knowledge they have just gained.

***If this is a social studies lesson teachers may use the addtional worksheets, which are attached in media elements.

Part: 3

Compare the North and the South

Directions: Fill in the boxes below with the correct information. You must use at least one of the good Web Sites you have just evaluated as you searched for information about the economic, social, and cultural differences between the North and South before the Civil War.

Part 4:

Directions: Using the table above, choose at least two topics(Dred Scott, Economics etc.). Compare and contrast the views of the North and the South on these topics and how it created tension between the two regions.
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Conclusion:

Before students leave for the next class, ask them some ways to identify a bad Web Site. Wait for them to processes information. Ask them if anyone found a bad site, and if so

Assessment:
Student's will be assessed on the accuracy of the worksheets.

Sources:
http://home.inreach.com/kumbach/velcro.html

http://www.quick.org.uk/menu.htm

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Name:_____   Date:_____

What is the URL of the Web Site?

Http://

Part 1:

Directions: Put a check in the correct box. Please remember to answer the short answer questions.

	Yes	**No**
Does the Web Site have a title?		
Did the author sign the Web Site?		
Does the author's email appear on the Web Site		
Is the author of the Web Site an expert? *How do you know?		
Is the author affiliated with a group? *If so who?		

Does the site have an agenda?		
Is the information biased? *If so how?		
Is the information correct? *How did you check the information to make sure it was accurate?		
Did this site help educate you on your topic?		
Has the page been updated recently? *When was the last update?		
Are there any grammatical(spelling, punctuation etc.) errors		
Will you use this Web Site in your research?		

Part 2

Evaluation:

Directions: With the information you have gathered explain in *detail* why the Web Site you have just evaluated should or should not be used as a reference. Please include specific reasons. You must have a minimum of **three** examples.

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Part: 3
Compare the North and the South

Directions: Fill in the boxes below with the correct information. You must use at least one of the good Web Sites you have just evaluated as you searched for information about the economic, social, and cultural differences between the North and South before the Civil War.

North	South
Economic:	Economic:
Culture[society/customs]	Culture"
Constitutional perspectives:	Constitutional perspectives:

Uncle Tom's Cabin:	Uncle Tom's Cabin:
Dred Scott Decision:	Dred Scott Decision:

Part 4:

Directions: Using the table above, choose at least two topics(Dred Scott, Economics etc.). Compare and contrast the views of the North and the South on these topics and how it created tension between the two regions.

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