

PBS TeacherLine Course Syllabus

Title

Evaluating and Organizing Internet Resources and Content

Target Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers of grades K-12.

Prerequisites

To successfully participate and complete the assignments in this course, the learner must:

- Past experience in working with and teaching K-12 students.
- Past experience in using e-mail and the Internet.
- Access to a group of students at the K-12 level in order to complete activities and assignments.
- Access to a computer with Internet access for students to use.
- Be familiar with taking an online course or have completed the PBS course "Practice Learning Online with TeacherLine."

Course Description

The digital world has changed with the advent of the read-write Web, or Web 2.0. Educators face both exciting possibilities and new challenges now that anyone can easily publish information online. The possibilities include the meaningful ways students can use the Web – including finding information as well as responding to, interacting with, changing, and publishing their own content. The challenges include finding reliable and credible sources, organizing and sharing the materials found, and using the resources and tools in both legal and safe ways. This course will help learners to prepare students for evaluating and organizing Internet resources and content and help them effectively use the Internet, in order for students to work collaboratively, meaningfully, and safely on research projects. As part of the course project, learners will create a curriculum guide on preparing students for Web research, integrating the use of free online Web 2.0 tools. Then, learners will create a Web portal containing teacher, student, and parent resources, helping students to evaluate and organize Internet resources and content. Learners will also be required to implement one of the Web 2.0 tools they learned about in their classroom or with a group of students.

Please note that this is not a course on searching the Web and conducting research. Rather it is on evaluating Web sites; organizing the sites in ways that are meaningful to the user and to others you are collaborating with; and understanding copyright laws and school policies on safe and effective Internet use. It is recommended that learners also take course TECH325: Searching and Researching on the Internet, which explores Web research topics and integrates the newest tools available in the classroom for effective and efficient use.

Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet.

Credits

To be determined by college or university.



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Goals

In this course, learners will explore the concepts and practices associated with evaluating and organizing Internet resources and content, including the use of Web 2.0 tools. Learners will also identify and create evaluation criteria to help them and their students assess the validity and credibility of Web sites used for academic research.

By the end of this course, learners will:

- Learn about Web technologies, digital citizenship, and the skills students need to possess in order to be able to evaluate and organize information.
- Learn how to use and develop evaluation criteria for Web site search results.
- Learn how to use tools to help organize and share Web sites and content.
- Understand the importance of and how to create Internet research method guidelines for classroom and student use to avoid issues of plagiarism and copyright law.
- Understand ways to help educate families and parents on evaluating and organizing Web resources and content.

Outline of Content and Assignments

After previewing the documents in the Course Information area, learners will proceed to Course Content to complete the following six sessions, working through each session in order. Throughout the sessions, learners are asked to articulate their ideas in various forms: they are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and experiences and the discussions in the discussion forum are designed to allow learners to glean information from other learners' experiences. For the course project, learners will develop a curriculum guide and Web research portal that will help develop skills in evaluating and organizing Internet resources and content.

This course is designed to address ISTE's *Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for All Teachers*. These standards define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings. This course specifically addresses the following ISTE NETS*T:

1b, d; 2a, b; 3a, b, c, d; 4a, c; 5a, c, d

Visit cnets.iste.org for a full list of the ISTE's *Educational Technology Standard and Performance Indicators for All Teachers* and more information about these standards.

Session 1: The Digital World

The digital age, in a very short time period, has greatly expanded the number of resources and methods of communication available. In conducting research, we can not only find great Web sites, read online newspaper articles, search for interesting images and photographs, and contact experts through e-mail, but we can now interact with and improve the material we are finding. With the ability to publish, highlight, annotate, and amend, it's easy to respond to personal blogs; share knowledge; post video and audio; highlight Web pages; label photographs; and have new content delivered to our personal pages.

However, with so much information available, it's impossible to shield or block children and students from sites that may be potentially harmful to them. They are confronted with unfiltered content as soon as they walk out of our classrooms. Students need to learn how to be information literate, in order to determine what information is appropriate for them to use; what graphics, images, and videos are important to getting a point across; and what is or is not credible Web site information. This session will help learners to understand how the Web has changed in the last several years and the kinds of skills students need to possess in order to be digital citizens. They



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will also begin thinking about what is important to look for when evaluating Web sites. They will start the session by introducing themselves to fellow learners in the discussion forum and setting goals and questions to guide their learning in this course.

Learners will:

- Define their professional goals and expectations for this course in their online journal.
- Explain their prior knowledge about evaluating Internet resources.
- Explain their view on the impact the information revolution has or will have on their students, classroom practices, and responsibilities as a teacher.
- Determine the skills needed by students and teachers in order to evaluate and organize information effectively.
- Identify and evaluate a good Web site for a specific curriculum content area that could improve instruction.

Read

- “It’s All About the Tags
- “Tagging to Help Teachers”
- “What is RSS?”
- “The New Literacy”
- “Nine Themes of Digital Citizenship”

View Videos

- “Information R/evolution”
- “RSS in Plain English”
- “From Content to Context”

Write Reflections

- Reflect on expectations for the course.
- Reflect on prior experiences in evaluating and organizing Internet resources and content.
- Reflect on the impact the information revolution will have on students, classroom practices, and teacher responsibilities.

Participate in Online Discussions

- Introduce themselves in the Virtual Café
- Discuss skills needed in order to evaluate and organize information effectively.

Complete Activities and Assignments

- Complete the Find a Site Activity

Session 2: Harnessing the Web

At first glance, a Web site may look like it’s a valid resource. The graphics are professional looking, the page layout looks appealing, and the title makes readers believe that the page contains exactly the kind of information you are looking for. Upon closer observation however, they may discover that the content may not exactly match the quality or validity of what the site initially appeared to be. In this session, learners will learn to determine which criteria to use when evaluating Web sites, and begin to plan ways to teach this information to students.

Learners will:

- Identify the challenges of having students find and evaluate Web sites for online research.
- Identify strategies for helping students find and evaluate Web sites for online research.
- Develop a Web site evaluation tool(s) to be used by the learner and students.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of using Web site evaluation tools.



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Read

- “Intentionally Misleading Web Sites”
- “Evaluating and Using Web-Based Resources”
- “Teaching Students to Evaluate Internet Information Critically”
- “Finding Web Sites Checklist”

View Video

- “The Smithsonian Dinosaur Site”

Write Reflections

- Reflect on helping students with online research

Explore Interactives

- Explore Evaluation Exploration interactive

Participate in Online Discussions

- Discuss the use of the Web site evaluation tool created through the Web Site Evaluation Tool Assignment.

Complete Activities and Assignments

- Review the following Web sites containing Web site evaluation tools:
 - “Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask”
 - Teacher Tap: “Evaluating Internet Research Sources”
 - Virtual Salt: “Evaluating Internet Research Sources”
 - Evaluating Web Content
 - Evaluating Internet Resources – Georgetown University Library
 - Kathy Schrock’s Guide for Educators: Critical Evaluation Surveys
- Web Site Evaluation Tool Assignment

Session 3: Organizing the Web

Web 2.0 tools have significantly changed the way that the Internet can be used, with the advent of tagging and RSS aggregation. These tools have in turn, significantly changed the way we can do research – one of the most prominent, being the social aspect which allows us to share, communicate, and collaborate with others. In this session, learners explore various tools to help organize Web resources, and learn how they can be integrated into the classroom curriculum and get students collaborating with one another.

Learners will:

- Identify ways social bookmarking, as an organizational strategy, can benefit teachers and students and enhance the curriculum.
- Analyze ways that certain features of Web start pages and RSS feeds expand the worldview of students and enhance their learning.

Read

- “Sites to See: Social Bookmarking”
- The Classroom: “Using Diigo for Organizing the Web for your Class”
- “Mining for Gold with RSS”
- “Using Pageflakes as Student Portal”

View Videos

- “Netvibes Screencast: Setup, Configuration, Tab Sharing”

Write Reflections

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- Discuss the benefits of using a social bookmarking site as an organization strategy after opening up a free account and creating a page of bookmarks.

Participate in Online Discussions

- After exploring various tools such as Web start pages and RSS feeds, discuss how the features of the tools expand the worldview of students and enhance learning.

Session 4: Copyright Issues and the Web

For too long, educators have been left in the dark as to what they can use and what they cannot use from the Internet in the classroom. And this has often resulted in several strategies or approaches: 1. Not using any materials for fear of doing something illegal, 2. Following some sort of rule-of-thumb by using passages containing only a certain number of words or video clips of a certain number of minutes, or 3. Closing the classroom door and just using whatever they felt was good to use in the classroom. Educators, however, do have the legal right to use materials in their classroom. It's time to learn what the legal rights are and confidently use materials -- without working in doubt, in fear, or in a bubble anymore.

There are many factors involved in teaching students media literacy and preparing them to use Web resources. Evaluating Web sites help to determine whether the information is appropriate. The organizational techniques of saving Web site addresses online and then pulling content from Web sites helps educators to save time and be efficient as well as communicate and collaborate with others easily. Additional aspects of organizing both sites and content include understanding how and under what circumstances the materials can be used, how to properly give credit to the authors and creators of the content to be used, and how to help students avoid copying or plagiarizing Web content. In this session, learners explore various copyright and fair use issues and learn strategies for helping students use Web resources in appropriate ways.

Learners will:

- Develop a classroom activity using a Web site evaluation tool, social bookmarking site, or Web start page, which they will implement in the classroom, and share in the discussion forum.
- Assess and provide feedback on two classroom activities.
- Explain and discuss how they have proceeded in their classrooms when confronted with copyright issues and what they would do now in the same situation.
- Explain how good teaching and assessment strategies can help to avoid plagiarism

Read

- "Ready Reference and Copyright Sources"
- "Plagiarism in the Internet Age"
- "Avoid the Plague"
- "In Search of Appropriate Usage Guidelines"

View Videos

- "The Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Media Literacy"

Write Reflections

- Reflect on how to avoid plagiarism through solid assessment and good teaching.

Participate in Online Discussions

- Explain past experiences with copyright issues with students and what approaches they would take now if confronted with the same issues.

Complete Activities and Assignments



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- Tool Implementation Assignment: Overview
- Tool Implementation Assignment: Peer Review
- Acceptable Use Policy Activity

Session 5: Connections

Using technology to connect families is a great way to teach adults about the benefits of using technology and helps them understand how their students or children can become media literate. In this session learners explore resources that they can share with parents and then integrate into the course project. They also complete the Tool Implementation Assignment and begin working on the course project.

Learners will:

- Evaluate the implementation of a classroom activity using a Web site evaluation tool, social bookmarking site, or Web start page and explain changes they would make based on observations.
- Discuss the implications of the Report of the Digital Youth Project on teaching students and their parents the importance of learning to evaluate and organize Web resources.

Read

- “Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth Project”

Write Reflections

- Reflect on the implementation of the Tool Implementation Assignment.
- Tool Implementation Assignment: Reflection

Participate in Online Discussions

- Discuss the implications of the Report of the Digital Youth Project on teaching students and their parents the importance of learning to evaluate and organize Web resources.

Complete Activities and Assignments

- Tool Implementation Assignment: Classroom Implementation
- Explore the following resources:
 - PBS Parents: Children and Media
 - Incredible Internet: Smarter Surfing Starts Here
 - SchoolFamily.com: Computers and the Internet Articles
 - Parents as Partners: Supporting Students in the 21st Century
 - Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the digital Youth Project

Session 6: Moving into the 21st Century

In the past five sessions, learners acquired skills and information to enhance their understanding of the evaluation and organization of Internet resources and content, and developed and implemented an activity with students. This final session provides learners with the opportunity to complete the curriculum guide and Web portal, as well as look into the future as they watch a short video on learners of today.

Learners will:

- Identify ways to meet the needs of digital students of today.
- Create a curriculum guide containing a mission statement of how they will teach the evaluation and organization of Internet resources and content.



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- Create a Web portal using free Web 2.0 tools containing teacher, student, and parent resources that are directly relate to the curriculum guide on evaluation and organization of Internet resources and content.
- Assess their learning in this course by comparing their prior knowledge and acquired knowledge.
- Analyze the learning experience in this course by reflecting about their professional goals and expectations.

View Videos

- "A Vision of Students Today"

Participate in Online Discussions

- Discuss how to meet the needs of students living in the digital age.

Write Reflections

- Reflect on acquired knowledge
- Reflect on professional goals and expectations

Complete

- Course Project: Preparing Students for Web Research—Resource Evaluation and Organization
- Post-Course Evaluation Survey

Schedule

It will take about 30 hours to complete this course. Each session should take approximately 4-5 hours. If you find yourself spending several hours more than this in any given session, please contact your facilitator to make sure this is necessary to complete the given assignments.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments.
- Maintain notes and reflections.
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge.
- Be self-directed and self-motivated.
- Ask for assistance when they need it.

Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)

Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by university institution only

Evaluation



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This course is evaluated on a letter grade basis, and may be available for graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

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