Tracie Talerico
Website Evaluation Review

General Information:

Website #1: http://www.inquirybydesign.com (Inquiry By Design)
Website #2: http://springboardprogram.collegeboard.org/oregon (Springboard)

Type of computer: Macbook 1.4 GHz Intel Core i5
Browser: Chrome
Internet Connection: DSL/Cable

Both of the websites I chose to evaluate come from two different curriculum developers, and last year Portland Public Schools considered both programs for possible adoption into their Language Arts curriculum. Ultimately, Portland Public Schools decided to move forward with Inquiry By Design.

Design and Development:
        Both of the websites I evaluated utilized a generally effective and purposeful design. Inquiry By Design included supporting pages, which were all coordinated in a fairly logical manner; whereas Springboard's main page was a one page layout subdivided into clearly defined sections. I did find Inquiry By Design's site to display more overall uncluttered space, as well as make better use of coordinating colors, as compared to Springboard's site. Springboard's site used colors that did not coordinate as well as compared to Inquiry By Design, which in turn made the overall layout hard to decipher in regards to which sections were most important, less important, etc. Even though Inquiry By Design's site is not as cluttered, I did find the site to be almost too plain and almost rudimentary in regards to design aesthetics, especially regarding multimedia content. On the other hand, Springboard far surpasses Inquiry By Design in regards to design and multimedia content, considering that Inquiry By Design only included graphics and Springboard included graphics, videos, and sample PDF's of their program (even though the sample units do take a while to download). By including videos on their site, Springboard's overall presentation of their material is far more engaging and is a more enriching experience, because a user can interact with the material in multiple ways, rather than simply reading it. Both sites did include text that is easy to read as well as content that is easily accessible.

Content:
        The content for both sites is appropriate, with a clear purpose for an intended audience. All links are functional and up-to-date, with accurate and current information throughout every page. However, both sites also contained valuable material and information deep within the site; far more than two layers deep within the website. I was surprised that both sites buried such important information regarding their programs, such as model lessons, sample units, and first-person perspectives, so far within their website rather than closer to the main pages. Both sites also included a hidden navigation menu, but Inquiry by Design's hidden navigation menu was simply a copy of the same menu on

the bottom of its web pages. Springboard's hidden menu was a "Global Menu", which takes users to completely other topics associated with Collegeboard, such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT, etc. Rather than utilizing the hidden menu as quick links to more pertinent information and material, both hidden menus did not appear to serve an effective purpose for the site itself. Despite this weakness in both sites, they do encourage users to return to their sites in order to continue exploring their in-depth content.

Credibility:

For Inquiry By Design, the only credibility shown is on the "About Us" page; whereas the Springboard site provides a link to the Collegeboard website. Even though Inquiry By Design does give some information about who they are, the information is sparse when compared to Collegeboard. However, both sites provide contact information, including an email address (at the very least), and Inquiry By Design even provides a contact form for users to fill out in order to request further information. Both sites are free from any punctuation, grammar, and/or spelling errors, and all their material appears to be original and includes appropriate citations and copyright information. Both sites provide a few dates of when material was created, but most of the dates are used as a form of citing quotes from people who have used their products, not too much in regards to creation of the site itself.

Comments from Peers:

Angelica Kalapinski

ThursdaySep 1 at 5:34pm
Manage Discussion Entry

Hi Tracie!

I was interested in both of these sites, and how different they are. One would think they're almost geared toward different user groups. The layout and colors are so different. Surprisingly, I preferred the layout and colors of SpringBoard to that of Inquiry By Design. I found Inquiry By Design to be a bit boring, and require too much scrolling (I'm a scrolling snob). For me, I felt like there was too much white space.

It is odd that both had the more valuable information buried, I often see people getting frustrated when the information they want isn't clearly displayed. These sites give some great do's and dont's for our own websites!