Website Review 1

Goals.com

Goals.com sparked my interest because it covers amazing places all over the world and follows explorers of these areas and their experiences. There are many places across the world that I would like to visit and explore for myself, unfortunately, such an endeavor is both timely and costly. However, with goals.com students who have the same interest may learn more about unique locations around the world. Furthermore, it can be used as an educational tool.

Not only is goals.com interesting and informative, but there are descriptive adventures ranging from the Sahara to the Antarctic that have been recorded by different explorers. They have included questions regarding the geography, culture, climate, wildlife, etc ... which can used to assess the student’s knowledge. Each adventure is introduced through a journal written by the explorer that actually traveled to this area. Students can read through these journals that illustrate the adventure experienced as well as factual information that they can later be assessed on. Some adventures, also have visuals that can help portray scenarios or information found in the journals.

This website is a great resource to have that can spark the interest of students in a variety of different geographic regions. Furthermore, for the student adventurer, this website provides stories and experiences that students may dream about experiencing but are unable to at this point in their lives. I have yet to meet a student who is not captivated by near death situations in the wild, especially when it is a true story! A bonus is that this website has the adventures of people of all backgrounds both male and female!
Website Review 2
WWW.Exploratorium.com

After visiting www.exploratorium.com I was instantly attracted to its design and the amount of information available. Furthermore, I enjoyed the fact that there was a section that covers current events. For example, October celebrates Halloween, so the Exploratorium created a Halloween section. However, I think the most useful part of the website would be the educate tab.

This tab provides tools for teachers such as a digital library, a teacher’s newsletter, a place to setup school field trips, a hand-on activity section, even a section on how to replicate an exhibit at the Exploratorium. Because I like hands-on activities so much I decided to research this section a bit more. I discovered that although the majority of the activities and information on this website is geared towards science, there is in fact information that can be used in history.

Within the hands-on activities section I found a section on machines and tools. I then realized that this information can be useful when going over the Industrial Revolution with students. I also, found another section on fault lines that can be used to discuss the cause and effects of major earthquakes throughout history such as the San Francisco earthquake. This site is filled with fun activities that teachers can vary instruction with and supplement instruction.
Since I was a child I have been infatuated with flying, jets, and space. Hence, it is no surprise that I would choose this site to review. I have always known that NASA provided many tools and information for those who are interested; however, I was not expecting the depth of information that I found at this site. Upon reviewing the website I found a multimedia section that had interactive features for kids, interactive ocean hits, interactive from lab to moon, a video section, an image gallery and even a podcast section. As expected there is also an education section.

Within the education section there are categories such as k-12, higher education, minority education, working for NASA, amateur astronaut, informal education and a speakers and events section. Each of these sections have additional resources that can be used. For the k-12 section I discovered a student section that contained things such as podcasts, homework help and resources for teachers. There was also another section filled with activities for kids such as the mars fun zone and stardust. In the student program and activities section students can get involved with NASA projects or compete in NASA sponsored competitions. In the last section for educators, NASA provides classes for teachers to get involved as well as projects they can do with their students to get involved.
Website Review 4
The Smithsonian Institution

Yet another website that has a wealth of knowledge is the Smithsonian Institution website. Instantly you are flooded with information when you log on. From sections that help you plan your visit to exhibitions, from an educators section to museums and zoos, the Smithsonian Institution has information that can be used for any classroom. Within the educators and outreach section I was particularly interested in the cultural programs section.

This section offered programs on different cultures such as the Asian Pacific American Program, the Center for Folk life and Cultural Heritage program and the Latino Center. I was attracted to this part of the website because I have not noticed such a focus on minority groups with other sites and sometimes even run into problems locating specific information on minorities. It is good to see that the Smithsonian is including information on minorities on their website.

I intend on using the Smithsonian Institution website as a reference when researching information on different cultures as well as on field trips to take with the students. I discovered a section titled museum education that contains links to sites that cover topics from aerospace history to African art. I am confident that a resource such as the Smithsonian Institution will benefit my classroom.
Website Review 5
National Parks www.nps.gov

Being someone who respects and finds beauty in the outdoors, I decided to select nps.gov as one of the sites to review. I soon realized that not only did this website cover information on the national parks around the country such as Yosemite or Death Valley, but also parks that contain veterans memorials and historical forts. The website is broken down into sections such as "find a park", "discover history", "explore nature", and more. In the "discover history" section I found out that there is great deal of information available such as the history of a particular place, the people credited for its preservation, etc .. I also found a section for teachers that had a great deal of resources available. From lesson plans based on national curriculum standards to professional development opportunities, the National Park Service provides many tools that can help with instruction.

Additionally, the teacher section contains information on field trips that can be setup to multiple parks, materials that can be loaned out at different park locations, even something called "traveling trunks" that are kits that can be borrowed or purchased to supplement instruction. Some other features are guest speakers and an online gallery. This website provides so much information and resources that it is sure to be beneficial in the class.
Website Review 6
Interactive Geography Website www.lizardpoint.com

www.lizardpoint.com is a wonderful website that contains interactive geography quizzes for the entire world. The table on the site with all the quizzes is broken down into three sections; "new name", "continent", and "quiz topic". Quizzes can range from the whole world testing on continents and oceans and get as detailed as cities of a state or province. Once you click on the type of quiz that you want a blank map of the region will appear. On the right hand side will be the country you are supposed to find. All you have to do is point and click. You have 3 tries for every country/City/continent/ocean that is being asked of you then you must move on to the next question. As you answer the questions the website keeps a running score of what you got right.

When trying this website for myself, I became very addicted and started testing myself on the countries of the different continents. It is a very fun and easy way to review for a test. It can even be used as a geography test and I can come around and record the students' scores after they have completed the quiz. I believe this is a great website and that I can use it both for review and assessment. Furthermore, I believe it is a great way to vary the instruction rather than have the students write on a sheet of paper, they can practice on a computer. The great thing is that the website will tell you, if you have selected wrongly and will then give you the name of the country you did select. This way students are able to learn the location of two countries at the same time.
Looking for a DVD on WWII? Perhaps a map of Europe? Well www.socialstudies.com is the perfect place to go to find the tools you need for your social studies classroom. This extensive website has tools and resources for U.S. History, World History, Geography, Economics, Psychology, the Holocaust, California History as well as Government and Law. Furthermore, it breaks down each subject into respective topics. For example, World History is broken down into General, Ancient and Medieval, Renaissance - Modern and Non-Western History. You can also search by type of media as well as grade level.

Another feature that I have never seen before is the ability to purchase powerpoint presentations on specific topics. Although some may frown upon this and I personally believe they are too expensive considering that teachers should be able to make their own, it is interesting to see this type of resource available. On the website you are allowed to view sample pages from both the teacher's guide as well as the actual powerpoint presentation.
Website Review 8

Constitutional Convention Interactive Game

When visiting the web address www.Quia.comlrr/85512.html, I was impressed to find a very entertaining game modeled after the "Who wants to be Millionaire" game show. This interactive game is modeled directly of the game show. When playing you only have one chance to get the answer right, if you do, then you move on to the next question; however, if you don't, then the game is over. But, you are given 3 hints to help you in making your selection. Again, like the game show; however, once you have used one hint you do not get it back.

Although the game itself was already created and unable to be edited, I truly like the idea of modeling a review game after the game show. I believe it is such a popular game that students will know how to play right from the beginning and they will be entertained as well. I would probably provide some type of hierarchy of rewards that students get so that every student feels like they won something. I would have to re-create the game to fit exactly what it was that I would be teaching at the time. However, it is a great idea that I may replicate in the future.
Website Review 9

Manifest Destiny Website

This website, http://animatedatias.com/movie.html, is awesome! It is a movie with narrative about the expansion of America after the American Revolution. It is complete with visuals, a timeline and sound. You can choose to run through the whole thing or play 3 parts individually. Although the terminology used may not accommodate every classroom, I believe this is a great resource that can supplement instruction of manifest destiny. Even more, it’s free!

I would love to use something like this that is readily available on the internet instead of having to purchase a DVD or Video. Although DVD’S and Video may have many more graphics I believe this is a good alternative for someone who may want a last minute visual or even cant afford to purchase a DVD or Video recording. Of course, I would create a study guide that went along with the video to keep students on task and focused. I will consider using this exact video in the future, but like all things on the internet, I would feel more comfortable if I was the one who had created it or if I knew who it was created by. I believe that if I ever learn to create such a resource as this I will post on the internet for others to use, but until then visuals such as this can be found all over the internet and are great supplements to your lesson.
On the National Geographic website on Abolitionism, students can follow in the footsteps of a runaway slave from the south to Canada and freedom. This website features an interactive game that allows the students to go on a journey similar to what runaway slaves may have gone on. Students have a choice of "yes" going along with the narration or risk being caught by saying "no" and having to start all over. Through their journey they learn about famous people such as Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett, and William Still. Students also learn about things such as safe houses had lanterns on hitching posts and how today some African Americans find them derogatory. Students also learn about Frederick Douglas and *The North Star*. Students continue until they reach Lake Erie and are posed with a decision to try to cross the freezing lake or to stay and risk being caught. Making the right choice takes the students to Canada and freedom.

I think this interactive website is an exceptional tool that can be used in the classroom. In fact, I like it so much that I intend on looking for similar online activities for other topics created by National Geographic. I feel that because it was created by such a well known group of people that it is more creditable and more likely to succeed with students. I have seen similar presentations through powerpoint, however none of those give the choice to the student or involves the student decision making. I believe that is key to getting the student involved and entertained.
I remember using National Geographic magazines as a resource throughout high school and how much I enjoyed reading it. It is a shame to think that this whole time I have not taken advantage of such an extensive, entertaining and informative website as www.nationalgeographic.com. Upon visiting the site you are bombarded with tons of interesting information that makes you want to read every single thing being presented. Furthermore there are so many sections filled with information that one could sit for hours in front of the computer and not become bored. The best part is that it’s all visually appealing!

While visiting the site I discovered sections on history, photography, environment, games, green guide, maps, music, science and space, and much much more. There is even a store online that you can purchase visuals, kits, games, etc ... that can be used in the classroom. It is hard to stay focused on what you are looking for when every bit of information is so appealing. The website is a true treasure and a respected source of information. It is important to teach our students to use these credible tools instead of wikipedia or various web sites online and to take advantage of the information provided there.
I wish I had known about a website that provided such useful information before taking the AP test such as collegeboard.org/ap. This website is filled with resources that students can take advantage of to prepare to take their AP examinations. Students can find information on workshops that will help them prepare for the AP test. They can take practice tests online and even become members of discussion groups. I remember that this time of my life was a very very stressful time and, being the oldest child of my family and having parents that did not go through the educational system we have, I felt alone and ill informed when it came to things such as the AP test. Had I known about this website then, I feel I may have been more prepared and understood the process a bit more.

I think this is a great tool for our students, not so much to teach content but to provide our students with answers they are searching for when it comes to life's general challenges. Teachers are responsible for more than teaching the subject- matter, whether they are credited or not, teachers are role models to students and should be able to correctly guide students in the right direction whenever possible. One of those directions is pursuing higher education. Hence, it is important that teachers are familiar with these kinds of resources and that they inform their students.
Website Review 13

YourHomework.com

Another site that all teachers should be familiar with and inform their students about is yourhomework.com. This website allows teachers post homework in a simple and organized way, provides email accounts for teachers, allows teachers to upload files available for viewing or printing by students, allows teachers to build web pages, calendars, homework help and more. For students it allows them to view homework assignments online, get help with homework, view calendar of events, and visit class web pages. For Parents it allows them to monitor and view homework assignments, stay informed of class projects and participate in their child's education.

Though yourhomework.com does not cover content area material it is a great website that will help teachers, students as well as parents. It is a tool that should definitely be researched. Even more, everything mentioned above is offered under free services. Should you decide to sign up for a membership there are even more features you can use.

The only down side to using this website is having to sign up even for the free services. You must enter some type of information, not payment information, but basic information to be able to use these services. Although it may be annoying to receive spam mail from a website like this, it clearly offers benefits that can be used by all.
The NCSS stands for the National Council for the Social Studies. NCSS engages and supports educators in strengthening and advocating social studies. This website has information on national conferences and meetings that have to do with Social Studies and education, professional development of teachers, publications, social studies advocacy, standards and position statements as well as classroom resources. It is filled with useful information that has to do with social studies and is a great way to get involved in the social studies community and network.

The most useful information I discovered for the class was a section under classroom resources. Within this section were sections on how to teach using documents, lessons, curriculum standards and notable tradebooks for young students. The section that interested me the most was the notable tradebooks for young students. I just recently learned about tradebooks and believe it is a great way to vary instruction or supplement the textbook reading. Since learning about trade books I have been convinced of their importance in the classroom; however, have not been able to locate a list of good tradebooks; until now!
Website Review 15

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

"Never again" is a phrase that we hear from time and time again simply because "again" is happening all over the world. The significance of the Holocaust is not lost on me; however, as years go on future generations begin to feel less associated with such an event. Yet, there is hope when people are still spreading the word through technology such as websites. This website is a great resource when speaking about the Holocaust, human rights, current events, etc ... It contains a wealth of information that is broken up into education, info on the museum, research, history, remembrance and genocide. 

Under the teacher section, the website asks the teacher why they teach in general and why should they teach about the Holocaust and about genocide. These questions illustrate the importance teachers have on future generations. Further, the websites provides resources, lessons, personal stories and id cards, and materials that can be used in teaching this topic.

I believe that teachers play a pivotal role in the future of our existence. That we have a responsibility to teach students the past so our leaders of tomorrow can create a better tomorrow. Something as simple as remembering such a tragic event may prevent future events like this from happening, but these students must learn about it from somewhere. I intend on using a variety of materials when teaching about the Holocaust and have now added another resource I can use.
The History Channel, like National Geographic, is an amazing resource that I take little advantage of. I actually have used the history channel website to research information on more than one account and have found it significantly helpful. It, like National Geographic, is presented in a visually appealing way that makes the reader want to read every bit of information on the page. They do a great job of incorporating videos, pictures, maps, graphs and even interactive animations to teach history.

On the website I located a classroom section that had great resources that can be used in the classroom. There was a section on videos and speeches that can be used to supplement instruction. There was a "this day in history" section that can be used as an introduction or an activity in the beginning of the class period. There was an education store where one could purchase DVDs, Videos, pictures, etc ... However, the thing I liked most was that they provided study guides that go along with their movies/shows. This way if you were to buy a DVD, the History Channel has already created a study guide that you can hand out to your kids to keep them on track and focused on the teachings of the video. The fact that the history channel has created something for me is very appealing and is something I will remember next time I plan on showing a video in class.
Website Review 17

The National Archives of the United States

The title alone should clue you in on how important and useful a site like this can be. After visiting the site and checking out the most requested section one would be able to see that this site gives you information on military records, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and World War II photos and so much more. I can not stress the importance of being able to utilize a site such as this. In writing papers or looking up information for research, students should be taught that primary documents are the best form of research available. Unfortunately, primary documents are not available at the snap of the finger, but at the very least you are able to check the national archives of the United States.

Other information that is often requested included information on African Americans, Native Americans, Genealogy trees and the JFK assassination. This illustrates the amount of information these archives posses. In addition to a few other sites, I believe that this website is easily included in my top 5 resources of information. I will most definitely use this site in researching information, presenting information, as well as asking for information from the students that can be found on this site.
www.historydayla.org is an event that I have never previously heard of but wish I had. It is an experience held every year that allows students from different schools to compete against one another in creating projects that illustrate a significant event in history. There are guidelines presented every year to the participants who must follow certain rules and regulations in their creations. People are encouraged to get involved and become a judge and students are encouraged to participate in the competition. Special awards are handed out to winning presentations.

The great thing about History Day L.A. is that it can be incorporated into the lessons that teachers already teach. Meaning, teachers can require that students create a bulletin board, for example, that secretly meets the guidelines of the contest. Then students can select the best one and enter it into the contest. This way students are covering content standards as well as potentially receiving some kind of recognition or reward. In the end of the day the students are demonstrating their knowledge of the material in a way that can be rewarded outside of class. Additionally, it is project based learning which is the best way to practice what is being taught.

There have been many times in my education where I was required to create a project such as this; however, it was never entered into a contest. I like the idea of motivating students through competition and will perhaps enter students into this contest or make a contest of my own with certain rewards.
Website Review 19
Huntington Library

The Huntington Library contains stunning art pieces, a huge library and beautiful gardens, just to name a few things. As far as the website is concerned it is loaded with information that can be used in the classroom. I discovered an education section that has programs for youth and family, explorers day camp and continuing education. Visits to the Huntington Library are also encouraged and there is even a program setup with the Huntington that allows schools to bring their students to the library and have a guided tour as well as activities for the students.

After my first visit to the Huntington I knew that I would return simply because there was so much to do there and so much to appreciate.
Website Review 20
Skirball Cultural Center

The Skirball Cultural Center is another treasure of Southern California that is not so much hidden, but definitely not taken advantage of. The Skirball is a beautiful place to visit that often times has more than one exhibit running. Best of all, other than parking, it is totally free to visit! Although certain exhibitions may have an admissions fee, most are free to enter making this a great place to visit for any occasion. In regards to education, the exhibits held at the Skirball are amazing and very informative. From the School Outreach Program, providing educational visits for pre-K through Grade 12, to the Learning for Life adult education program, the Skirball's educational offerings address such topics as art and history, immigration and citizenship, language and literature, and more.
I believe it is important that we teach about the heroics of these men and women and that they are remembered. Although not very visually appealing, I can think of few better places to find information on the military in California. The site is broken down into sections such as "current exhibits", "image library", "video library", "Sgt Maj Doris J.Drennan Education and Conference Facility", and "Educational & Outreach Programs". In regards to outreach programs, school visitations can be setup for elementary schools through college level classes.

In regards to a similar facility in southern California where I could take my students, I have found a military museum near Pasadena that offers tours of the different machinery used throughout the history of the US Military. I believe that it is important to vary not only instruction, but the types of extra curricular activities that we conduct. Thus, instead of always taking students to see paintings or architecture, I would like to take them to see engineering projects, science experiments, aviation advancements and military hardware.
Website Review 22

California Historical Landmarks

California Historical Landmarks are buildings, structures, sites, or places that have been determined to have statewide historical significance. For this reason, I wanted to review this website. Part of the Office of Historic Preservation website, the California Historical Landmarks are broken down into the counties that they belong to. Upon clicking on a county, the website displays a list of historic landmarks as well as a brief description and location of these landmarks.

I think that I would reserve some time of the year to teach local history to my students during which this website would become an incredible resource. Students would be able to use this website to find landmarks to do research on, or I can use the website to locate a local landmark that all the students were curious about and then teach them why this landmark was so important in California history. In any case, I believe that students should also learn about local history at some point and this website would greatly assist in that endeavor.
Website Review 23
Museum of Flying

Located in Santa Monica, this museum played a pivotal role in aviation advancement and witnessed a great deal of accomplishments made right here in Southern California. Although the website itself does not offer very much information, the museum itself holds a great deal of information on aviation and is part of aviation history. The museum is currently undergoing remodeling and expansion plans to accommodate more visitors. The website offers a bit of information on the museum and the importance of the Douglas manufacturing company. It also provides a video on the history of the Douglas Aircrafts. Further, it provides video on a few other aircraft. The depth of information, however, is located on site.

Being a huge fan of airplanes and flying, I am very interested in visiting this museum. Additionally, I believe that it is important to vary students' experiences as well as their instruction. For this reason, I would develop a relationship with this museum to illustrate to kids that there are many little treasure chests of knowledge in Southern California.
Website Review 24

Teach With Movies

www.teachwithmovies.com is a wonderful website that offers an amazing amount of information on teaching children through popular movies. Although you need to sign up for their services, this website offers a recommendation on movies you may teach from for all subjects. Additionally, they provide you with a formatted letter to parents gaining permission to watch the movie as well as a "how to" create study guides that follow the movie if you don't already have one. After reviewing some of the movies under the social studies section, it seems that this website does offer good recommendations on movies to use for teaching.

In regards to teaching with movies, I believe students can benefit from clips of Movies, but not by watching a full 2 hour film. For this reason I believe I would not use this website in the future. I feel that I can find similar information online for free and then either look for clips online or check the movie out for free from a local library.
Website Review 25
WWW.MovieSounds.com

www.moviesounds.com is an awesome website that I am so happy to have found. It is a website full of sounds that come from popular movies. Although this may not seem worth much, anyone who has ever tried to create a presentation with sound would argue otherwise. Having experienced it myself while trying to create a powerpoint presentation, finding movie sounds to go along with presentations can be bothersome and difficult. Even more, finding sounds that people can recognize. However, this website provides all of that. Upon visiting the site you are presented with a list of top movies. After clicking on the movie title the website produces a list of sounds form the movie for you to use. Then, simply point and click.

But after finding this website I am sure I will be able to find any sound I need for any presentation.
Selected social studies websites:

-History/Sociology:
National Council for Social Studies (ncss.org/)
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (www.uspto.gov)
American Memory (rs6.loc.gov/amhome.html)
City Net (city.net)
U.S. House of Representatives (house.gov)
European Home Page (s700.uminho.pt/europa.html)
Government Documents (SunSITE)
The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (ushmm.org)
The President's Cabinet (whitehouse.gov/WH/Cabinet/html/cabinet_links.html)
The White House (whitehouse.gov)
Decisions of the Supreme Court (law.cornell.edu/supct/supct.table.html)
Department of Interior Education and Outreach (usgs.gov/ien/doi_edu.html)
American Indian (state.sd.us/state/executive/tourism/indian.html)
UN Information (undp.org/un/index.html)
History Channel (historychannel.com/index2.html)
Computers in Social Studies (cssjournal.com/journal/)
National Archives (nara.gov/)
Organization of National Historians (indiana.edu/-oah/index.html)
American Studies (georgetown.edu/crossroads/asw/)
History on the Web (TheHistoryNet.com/)
World History (cil.andrew.cmu.edu/projects/World History/world.html#sites)
Civil Rights Movement (wmich.edu/politics/mlk/)
Martin Luther King Jr. (www-leland.stanford.edu/group/King/)
National Women’s History Project (www.nwhp.com)

-Economics:
Yahoo! Business and Economy (yahoo.com/Economy)

Social Studies Computer Games
Oregon Trail – You become the head of the 1848 group of American settlers.
Civilizations III – You create you own world civilization.
Simcity - You create your own home made Metropolis.