Educational Software Evaluation
Instructional Computing in Schools I

Many educators have argued that computers might revolutionize learning and the fundamentals of classroom interaction. We can fit entire libraries on CD ROMS, making a world of information available via the computer. Simulations can allow you to lead a university, build a (virtual) home, or lead a team of pioneers (*grin*). In this assignment, you will evaluate two pieces of software for use in education. Specifically, you will select a piece of instructional software to evaluate and then, in pairs, create a form for evaluating educational software and, using this form, assess the two pieces of software chosen by your dyad and write a joint one-page summary of your findings.

Context

Imagine that you and your partner have been assigned by your department to be their technology specialist. Your department recently received a small award to buy software for their computer lab. Your job is to evaluate two pieces of software that could be used for education and pick the one that you think your department should buy. The two pieces of software that you evaluate should be relatively decent. You may recommend that your department not buy anything, but keep in mind that this is free money, so there is incentive to spend it, as long as you can think of creative uses of it in the classroom. As a part of this task, your department also wants you to develop a general software evaluation form that others may also use in the future.

Process

1. In class, select one piece of instructional software related to your content area or special interests, to evaluate for class. You can pick any software you like, but you have to evaluate it for educational means, according to the framework you will developed (see below).

2. In pairs during class, create an evaluation form for assessing the educational value of a given piece of software. You may use your website evaluations or forms from the web or books as starting points.

3. In pairs, evaluate the two pieces of software you have selected. At the end of this project, you should turn in a “filled out form” for each of the two software programs you selected.

4. Finally, write up a one-page joint recommendation on which software your department should adopt and submit your recommendation to David and Constance.

Assessment

This assignment is worth 20 points. You will be assessed by the quality of the form and thoughtfulness of your evaluation.

DUE DATE: This Educational Software Evaluation project is due at the end of class on March 28.