Climate Change Collection Scorecard

Date: February 17, 2005

Reviewer: Kirsten Butcher

Name of resource: Ocean Surface Topography from Space

Sponsoring Organization: NASA Oceanography

URL: http://topex-www.jpl.nasa.gov/overview/overview.html

Site Homepage: http://topex-www.jpl.nasa.gov/index.html

RESOURCE WITHIN A SITE? Y / N

FOUND THROUGH DLESE? Y / N

IF SO, WHICH COLLECTIONS? DWEL, DLESE Reviewed Collection

RECOMMENDATION   YES   YES WITH RESERVATIONS   NO
STARS 1 2 3 4 5 (LAME TO STELLAR)
NARRATIVE (USE OTHER SIDE IF NEEDED)

- This resource is filled with information and multimedia tools. In the "Overview➔Climate" section, the Quicktime movie explaining seasons makes excellent use of multimedia. Quicktime movies follow multimedia learning conventions by pairing spoken narration with visual media. However, a weakness of the site is that multimedia like this is not well referenced by the text information. Users in some cases must explore these resources on their own and integrate the relevant information from these tools into the main text message.

- In general, there is lots of information that can be used in educational contexts. Some information is for reference and can largely stand alone (e.g., Overview➔Why Study the Ocean) but other information would need educator guidance for learner use (e.g., pages containing the latest satellite images of ocean surface topography).

- The "Education" section lists materials appropriate for different audiences (specified), including interactive exhibits, CDs, PDFs, and classroom activities. Materials include information on their contributors, the type of audience (kids, teachers, general public, grad students, etc.) for whom the materials are appropriate, and a short description of the materials that usually indicate their format (e.g., PDF).

- Multimedia is not always used optimally – for example, some diagrams can be too small to view without linking to a larger view of the diagram that takes the learner away from contextual/verbal information. Graphics aren't always well explained by the text. Movies are useful and well-produced, but could be better integrated into the learning environment.

- Overall, lots of useful information and the potential for good use of components in a classroom or educational environment.

INTENDED USE
_X__ REFERENCE
_X__ COMPUTER ACTIVITY
_X__ NON-COMPUTER ACTIVITY
  EDUCATOR, LEARNER OR BOTH (CIRCLE) IF FOR LEARNER, EVIDENCE ITS BEEN TESTED? Y / N
  BEGINNER OR ADVANCED (CIRCLE)

Easily Printed? Y / N – Many of the components are available in PDF format.

BUGS & TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES (PROBLEMATIC TO ROBUST)
1 2 3 4
COMMENTS – I experienced no technical difficulties or bugs. However, I did have some navigational trouble. Organization was a bit difficult for me to understand and make use of for exploration.

SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY- FACTUAL ERRORS/OMISSIONS (NATIONAL ENQUIRER TO NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC)
1 2 3 4
EVIDENCE IT HAS BEEN REVIEWED FOR ACCURACY? Y / N
COMMENTS – The producer of the site, NASA Oceanography, is a trustworthy source. I do see some nice aspects (e.g., defining climate vs. weather), but cannot verify the complete accuracy of all the science presented.

PEDAGOGICAL INFORMATION
__X__ REFERENCE ONLY
__X__ TEACHER GUIDE
__X__ MATERIALS LIST
____ ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

_____ TIMEFRAME PROVIDED
_____ STANDARDS ALIGNMENT INDICATED

PROMOTES STUDENT LEARNING (WEAK TO STRONG)
1 2 3 4
COMMENTS – With proper support, components of this site could be very useful in promoting student learning. Quicktime movies are well-done and could easily be incorporated into lessons or research activities. Verbal information (text) often explains concepts appropriately. However, the site would probably not be as useful, overall, for stand-alone learning. Explanations, at times, lack logical connectors or coherence that low knowledge learners would need. There are vocabulary links to a glossary, that may help some beginning learners.

APPROPRIATE/EFFECTIVE MULTIMEDIA DESIGN (WEAK TO STRONG)
1 2 3 4
COMMENTS – Very nice inclusion of multimedia that is not always well-supported by the learning environment. Small tweaks could improve learning from the multimedia that is included. However, the quality and quantity of multimedia (diagrams, visual data, movies to explain concepts) is among the best I've seen in online educational websites.

VISUAL APPEAL (WEAK TO STRONG)
1 2 3 4
COMMENTS—Overall, strong visual appeal. Lots of visual information, including diagrams, satellite images, movies, etc. Text is blocked appropriately and the overall appearance is very professional.

TEACHING TIPS: ANNOTATION DESCRIBING HOW SITE COULD BE USED OR ADAPTED FOR CLASSROOM
Quicktime movie on seasons could augment a lesson on this topic and may help counteract existing misconceptions.

RECOMMENDATION: ANNOTATION DESCRIBING HOW THE DEVELOPER COULD IMPROVE THE SITE.
Add verbal information to help learners integrate visual tools (diagrams, movies) into learning process. Consider adding bridging information that will help beginning learners connect relevant information and understand the relevance of individual concepts to the overall domain.
Revised 12/3/04