

Software Evaluation Rubrics

Curriculum Content

Curriculum Alignment

MAKES AN EXCELLENT CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A GOOD CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A MINIMAL CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION
The software matches curriculum content in state and local curriculum frameworks.	The program generally covers the curriculum content in state and local curriculum frameworks.	The program rarely covers the curriculum content in state and local curriculum frameworks.

Instructional Design for Learners

Approach to teaching and learning

MAKES AN EXCELLENT CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A GOOD CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A MINIMAL CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION
<p>Embedded in the program are a variety of sound teaching and learning approaches that supplement/enhance more traditional instructional materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constructive experiences ▪ Cooperative learning groups ▪ Strategies to engage multiple intelligences and a variety of learning styles, e.g., visual, auditor, of kinesthetic ▪ Independent investigations ▪ Open-ended questioning ▪ More than one correct solution method possible ▪ Strategies to stimulate student creativity 	The program includes many of the teaching and learning approaches listed in the first column.	The program uses a traditional instructional design that includes few creative teaching and learning approaches.
<p>Embedded in the program are extensive critical thinking and decision making activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs learners to generalize and draw conclusions or inferences • Encourages learners to apply these to new learning experiences • Engages multiple intelligences for a variety of approaches to meeting program objectives • Encourages learners to analyze problems and generate multiple solutions 	The program includes many of the critical thinking and decision making activities listed in the first column.	The program is limited in the ways it can help students learn to think critically.

Critical thinking

Instructional Design for Learners (continued)

	MAKES AN EXCELLENT CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A GOOD CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A MINIMAL CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION
<i>Accommodations</i>	<p>Embedded in the program are methods for accommodating a wide range of student abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Varying the speed of required response ▪ Varying degrees of difficulty ▪ Sound, read-aloud text, color images, or other devices help the learner to derive maximum meaning from the program ▪ Positive cross-culture interactions are encouraged ▪ Amount of information displayed at one time is appropriate to age and skill level of target learners 	<p>The program includes some sound or other devices help the learner to derive meaning from the program and another feature from the first column</p>	<p>The program is limited in the ways it can accommodate a broad spectrum of abilities</p>
<i>Language Accomodations</i>	<p>Embedded in the program are methods for accommodating a range of languages or barriers to student abilities in language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All materials are presented in one or more languages other than English and the learner can move easily from one language to another ▪ Other accommodations have been made for limited use of language. 	<p>The program may switch to one other language or includes some sound or other devices help the learner to derive meaning from the program. The program may be purchased in other languages.</p>	<p>The program is limited to one language or it's approach to language barriers.</p>

Program Design

	MAKES AN EXCELLENT CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A GOOD CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A MINIMAL CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION
<i>Objectives and pedagogy</i>	Objectives are clearly stated, specific, are adhered to in the software and are obviously relevant to teacher and learner needs. The instructional design is based on strong pedagogy and current research on technology-based instruction.	Objectives are clearly stated and appear to be relevant to teacher and learner needs. The instructional design shows some attention to pedagogy and to current research on technology-based instruction.	Objectives are general and sometimes appropriately linked to teacher and learner needs. Little attention is given to pedagogy and to current research on technology-based instruction.
<i>Effectiveness</i>	<p>The program makes a very effective use of technology to present ideas, concepts, and theories in a manner that promotes a significantly deeper and/or broader understanding than would be possible with more traditional instructional materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Balance of software types (see chart) to allow for development, practice and mastery of skills ▪ Extensive depth and richness in the program extend the content in a variety of ways ▪ Software has a logical progression of topics and activities, with options for increasing complexity ▪ Content promotes inter-disciplinary learning and can support multiple instructional units ▪ When two or more technologies have been combined, the result significantly enhances the learning experience over that attained by the effective use of one technology alone ▪ Content is current and accurate, presenting unbiased and balanced information ▪ Information has sufficient scope to cover the topic adequately for the intended audience 	<p>The program makes effective use of technology to present ideas, concepts, and theories in a manner that builds understanding beyond that possible through the use of more traditional instructional materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is some depth and breadth in the program that can extend the content ▪ Content supports some inter-disciplinary learning ▪ Any combining of two or more technologies generally adds to the learning experience 	<p>The program uses limited technology to present ideas, concepts, and theories in ways similar to those used by more traditional instructional materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program content is readily available in print resources ▪ There is limited or no support for inter-disciplinary learning ▪ Any combining of two or more technologies appears to be confusing

Program Design (continued)

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<i>Interactive strategies</i>	<p>Interactive strategies are very effective and are clearly intuitive so that learners can focus on the instructional concepts rather than being distracted by the mechanics of program operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Icons, navigational commands, maps, or other prompts are relevant, easy to use, consistent, and offer options for subsequent choices at each step; user interface is consistent throughout the program ▪ Learners can begin using the program effectively and independently in a short period of time with limited teacher instruction ▪ Learners can review instruction, content, and correct responses at their will ▪ Presentation branches to harder or easier content and/or alters program in other ways to assess learner response ▪ Feedback, in the form of assistance, suggested solutions, alternative approaches to program content, or other help is provided in response to learner error (learner is not simply redirected to try again) ▪ As appropriate, items answered incorrectly are repeated later in the program and/or additional similar problems are posed ▪ Learners can click on key terms for assistance to hear the pronunciation of a word and/or see a definition when appropriate ▪ Two levels of searching available when appropriate. ▪ Saving, bookmarking, notetaking or highlighting features available when appropriate 	<p>Interactive strategies are effective, straight-forward, and allow learners to focus on the instructional concepts rather than program operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners can navigate easily through the program ▪ Some provisions for review of content and correcting of responses is available ▪ Presentation is varied appropriately based on learner response ▪ Essential assistance and/or additional information is provided in response to learner error ▪ As appropriate, items answered incorrectly generally are repeated later in the program, but few or no additional problems are provided for practice ▪ Some assistance is provided for key terms ▪ Searching is available 	<p>Interactive strategies are somewhat limited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners may experience some difficulty in using the program ▪ No provision for a review of content or correcting responses is available ▪ Presentation is varied somewhat based on learner response ▪ Only limited assistance or explanation is provided in response to learner error ▪ Items answered incorrectly are not repeated later in the program and no additional problems are provided for practice ▪ Little or no assistance is provided to help learners to understand key terms ▪ No searching or way to save is available
<i>Motivation</i>	<p>Program design motivates learners to use the program repeatedly to complete or extend their work. Learners want to share it with others.</p> <p>Student interest is maintained over time by keeping their attention, sustaining relevance, promoting confidence and satisfaction in their increasing skill level.</p>	<p>Learners enjoy using the program and return willingly to complete additional segments or to extend their initial work.</p>	<p>Learners will need encouragement to use the program after an initial experience with it.</p>

Program Design (continued)

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<i>Customizing features</i>	<p>Program content and features can be customized easily by the teacher or learner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program modules allow the selection of concepts and/or the sequencing of the presentation ▪ Multiple levels of difficulty may be selected by the learner or pre-set by the teacher ▪ Instructions can be edited ▪ Features set by the teacher cannot be changed by students 	<p>The teacher or learner can customize program content and features to a limited extent.</p>	<p>The program does not allow for customization.</p>
<i>Skill-building programs</i>	<p>Skill-building programs involve learners in activities substantially beyond traditional drill and practice formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners can formulate strategies and make connections between the skills being developed and the application of these skills to critical thinking ▪ Additional practice with concepts to be mastered is provided through interesting and challenging activities, e.g., at-home activities that involve parents ▪ The program presents opportunities for students to move away from the computer and construct a written or oral presentation of their learning. 	<p>Skill-building programs involve learners in activities beyond traditional drill and practice formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners are encouraged to make connections between the skills being developed and the application of these skills to critical thinking ▪ Practice with concepts to be mastered is varied appropriately 	<p>Skill-building programs provide practice in very traditional formats.</p>
<i>Implementation features</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applicable features are under user control, for ex. sound and narration ▪ Pace is controllable by students, including options for stop/pause/exit ▪ Program is stable on our operating systems ▪ Audio and visuals are high quality, relevant and effectively used 	<p>Some features from the first column are available</p>	<p>No flexibility in licensing Options are limited</p>
<i>Home/family connections</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program provides for flexibility in accessing the program from a variety of locations: computers within a school, public library, home. ▪ Program has licensing that allows staff, students and family members to install and use software at home. 	<p>Program allows staff to use software at home. Software may be available at a discount for others.</p>	<p>No provision for software use outside of licensed school computers is available.</p>

Assessment

	MAKES AN EXCELLENT CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A GOOD CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A MINIMAL CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION
<i>Classroom management</i>	<p>The program has a comprehensive management system that clearly addresses program content and provides such features as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pretest or placement for entry ▪ Identification of students' strengths and weaknesses ▪ Ability to individualize a path of instruction, overriding program diagnostics as needed ▪ Ability for learners to enter a program where they left off - not begin over again each time ▪ Clear feedback to the student regarding right and wrong answers with tutorial remedies/hints/etc. ▪ Branching in response to student performance ▪ A variety of methods to chart student progress, including reports for student, teacher, and/or parents ▪ Ability to view and print student progress reports ▪ Security of student data/teacher only info 	<p>The program has an assessment component and/or classroom management system with many of the features listed in the first column.</p>	<p>The program has a limited or no assessment component and/or classroom management system.</p>
<i>Assessment strategies</i>	<p>Assessment strategies are well-designed, simple to implement, and meet a wide range of instructional reporting needs. Students have the ability to review incorrect responses. Any record-keeping assessment components, e.g., journals, portfolios, or placement tests, are easy to set up and operate, and will accept any number of students and classes.</p>	<p>Assessment strategies are similar to those in the first column but are less comprehensive and/or appear to be somewhat difficult to use.</p>	<p>The program includes few or no assessment strategies.</p>

Instructional Support Materials

	MAKES AN EXCELLENT CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A GOOD CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A MINIMAL CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION
<i>Presentation and organization</i>	Instructional support materials are appropriate to program objectives, very well-written, effectively indexed, and attractive. They can be useful to teachers and learners, and have the potential of saving the teacher a significant amount of preparation time. On-screen tutorial/help available as needed.	Instructional support materials are appropriate and clearly written. They may be useful to teachers and learners.	Instructional support materials are minimal, lacking in effective presentation, or are not included.
<i>Support materials</i>	<p>Instructional support materials are provided, as needed, in print and/or as printable files from disk or online sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific instructional objectives and activities for each grade level and curriculum area for which the program is recommended ▪ Specific correlation to state or district curriculum objectives ▪ Ideas for correlation with other materials ▪ Strategies for use with a diverse student population, with individual or collaborative groups, and with learners of different ability levels ▪ Management strategies for varied settings ▪ Representative screens of program segments ▪ Transparency masters, posters, maps, big books, manipulatives, templates, etc ▪ Clear estimation of time needed ▪ List of any needed prerequisites or skills ▪ URL/e-mail addresses for more resources 	The program's instructional support materials include many of the features listed in the first column.	The program's instructional support materials are very limited or not included.
<i>Staff Development</i>	Initial staff development is included with purchase; ongoing staff development a part of annual maintenance agreement.	No provisions for ongoing support	No staff development included

Technical Support Materials

	MAKES AN EXCELLENT CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A GOOD CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION	MAKES A MINIMAL CASE FOR RECOMMENDATION
<i>Presentation and organization</i>	Technical support materials for installation and operation are very well-written, effectively indexed, and attractive. On-screen tutorial/help available as needed.	Technical support materials are appropriate and clearly written. They may be useful.	Technical support materials are minimal, lacking in effective presentation, or are not included.
<i>Support materials</i>	<p>Technical support materials are provided, as needed, in print and/or as printable files from disk or online sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific technical directions for many operating systems are included ▪ Instructions for search or help features ▪ An on-going maintenance agreement is available. ▪ Maintenance agreement includes onsite assistance at least twice a year. ▪ Technical support/help is free and fast. ▪ List of any needed hardware or resources ▪ URL/e-mail addresses for more resources 	<p>The program's technical support materials include many of the features listed in the first column.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tech help is available for minimal cost in a timely manner. ▪ Maintenance agreements can be negotiated. 	<p>The program's technical support materials are very limited or not included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tech help is costly. ▪ No maintenance agreement is available.

Compiled and extended from Guidelines for the Evaluation of Instructional Technology Resources, California Instructional Technology by Clearinghouse, 1998 and the Technology Math Grant Software Rubrics of Spokane School District, 1999