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Resource Review- www.ck12.org

The educational resource of CK-12 provides its users with an extensive, free library of k-12 content material in various forms such as readings, videos, tutorials, simulations, activities, plix, study aides, assessments, and real world applications. Community members may also add their own content in any area. These additions are filed under a “community content” tab allowing users to share their own resources and have access to additional teaching and learning tools. Over the years, the CK-12 website has added a plethora of new resources and enhancements that aid both teachers and students and has developed into an engaging and user-friendly site.

Educators using the site can set up classes under the “classes” tab to follow and track student progress throughout the school year. In this section of the website, teachers can push out assignments to their students, monitor which students have completed the lessons, track student success on assignments, and view trending content. This is not only a useful tool for regular teaching applications but would also be a great resource to provide for students who may be out of school for longer periods of time due to illness or other reasons.

The “browse” tab provides site visitors with twenty-three content areas in primarily the STEM fields. There is also rich content in areas such as history and health. The browse section is an easy-to-use starting point when navigating the website. Upon opening a subject content tab, a user will find the domain, such as Biology, broken down into many smaller, more specific areas of interest such as cell biology, genetics, and ecology. Each of these sub-areas of content are further divided and then provide a large variety of learning tools as previously mentioned.

The CK-12 Cafe is an area of the website that invites users of all ages to post questions, have conversations, answer posts, and to share resources with others. Members can vote on posts to indicate how useful they have found them. There are several places for homework help on this forum as well: math corner, science corner, and the homeschool corner. Here students post questions and other users provide possible answers to the questions. Additionally, there are eight states that have created their own tabs for educators to share content and inquiries as well as collaborate in various ways with one another.

An exciting feature of CK-12 is its PLIX content. PLIX: play, learn, interact, explore are similar to simulations in that the user is able to interact with the content. The PLIX, however, follow up the small amount of user interaction with challenge questions that engage the user and teach the content at the same time. If there is confusion when using a PLIX, there are “Learn More” links with informational text to aid the learner.

A final area of content that is an added bonus is the Flexbook Textbooks available for all ages. There are over 140 textbooks available on topics ranging

from AP Biology to SAT prep! Users can create their own library of materials to save and refer back to as well. A tool for measuring user satisfaction is provided to all site visitors in the "feedback" link. This enables all visitors to comment on the content to provide critical information for the site developers in each area.

Now that I have explored and reviewed this site, I look forward to incorporating it into my lesson plans by showing some of the videos to my classes, assigning readings, simulations, and plix for either in-class collaboration or homework assignments to both introduce a topic and reinforce content. Specific applications for me will be the use of videos during our natural resources unit as well as the simulations and PLIX content for the unit on Forces and Motion that I teach. I had heard about the site in years past but not made the time to fully explore it for all that it offers. I feel there are a few limitations with it in that some content areas don't offer as many varied teaching tools as would be preferred, there are state forums for only sixteen percent of the country, and the content for the younger ages (k-5) is slightly lacking. I don't teach at the lower levels but for those that do, this website would not provide enough Science content. CK-12 is better suited for middle and upper grade levels.