Evaluator: Catherine Hernandez
URL of site evaluated: http://www.k12.com
Author of site evaluated: Webmaster at K12 corp.; exact author could not be identified.

System specifications: Micron Millenia, Pentium II with MMX, 350mhz,
96 mb Ram, 56k modem, soundcard, 17-inch monitor set to 1024x768 with true color.

The operating system is MS Windows 98 and the browser is MS Internet Explorer version 5.0 and Netscape 4.5.

Design:

K12.com is a well-organized site that is devoted to promoting an educational philosophy and to selling a product. Both messages are very clear. Each page is well laid out with clear, uncluttered text, easy to read colors, and simple to navigate links. The site is colorful, but the colors are harmonious and are well chosen. Graphics are used liberally, but not to excess. There never was more that one image graphic per page and "symbol" graphics are chosen well and used appropriately. Further, the number and size of the graphics did not slow access to the site in any noticeable way. In fact, I assert that the graphics are used quite positively in the promotion of the products and services K12.com is selling

Content

The content of this site is clear and well presented. The content is written and arranged in an effective way to accomplish the tasks of: introducing the products and services of K12, to outline the educational philosophy of the company and to enroll students in the program. Program details, features and benefits are well document and arranged so that basic, information is presented within "one-click" and more in-depth details are available with another one or two additional clicks. Thus the content arrangement is conducive to scanning and browsing. There are no broken or inappropriate links and the site is professionally designed.

Credibility

I find that this site is highly credible. It is easy to find the biographical backgrounds on the staff, administration and board members of this organization. Further, many of the people involved have excellent credentials themselves, lending significant credibility to the site. Contacting people at K12 is simple; the link is one deep.

What could be improved?

While I have found this site to be excellent in presentation and content, there are still a few things I would consider improvements to the site:

Text only mode: While the two browsers I used had no problems loading the site, there was no explicit option for text only browsers. This is an option that may be valuable.

Long pages had no "top" link: Throughout the site, the most important information appeared "above the fold" and extended beyond the "fold" by only a small amount in most instances. Generally, there was not much need to scroll. However, the biographical pages were much longer and did require significant scrolling. This, in itself was not problematic, since the content, while relevant, was supplement to the core content of the site. The improvement would be to include "top" link so that returning back to the top of the page would be simpler.

Could not locate pricing table, only price "range" information: Perhaps this was intentional in the design. My view is that when a site is "selling" something, the pricing structure should be clear. I become frustrated when I cannot determine the cost of a product in which I am interested. A more comprehensive pricing table would improve this site.