ISTC 651 – Information Literacy and Access

DATABASE EVALUATION

Abegail Prado

Towson University

**DATABASE NAME:** CultureGrams

**WEBSITE ADDRESS:** http://online.culturegrams.com

**BASIC CRITERIA**

1. Authority
   * This book was published by ProQuest LLC and Brigham Young University
2. History
   * CultureGrams started in 1974, to foster understanding and appreciation of the world's countries and peoples by creating and publishing concise, reliable, and up-to-date cultural content. Today the CultureGrams series is one of the most trusted and widely used cultural reference and curriculum products in the education, government, and non-profit arenas (CultureGrams, 2015).
   * It was acquired by ProQuest LLC in 2004 and made it digital.
3. What is it?
   * The CultureGrams Online Database is a leading reference for concise, reliable, and up-to-date cultural information on countries across the globe (CultureGrams, 2015). It includes four editions:
4. World Edition (7th to 12th Grades)
5. Kids Edition
6. States Edition, and
7. Canadian Provinces Edition (for upper elementary school students).

* CultureGrams is great for school projects about geography, history, culture, and demographics of different countries.

1. Copyright date
   * The copyright date is 2015.
2. Audience interest level/Reading level
   * The reading level is 3rd to 12th grades.
   * The interest level is 5th to 12th grades.
3. Format/Page layout (Caption Placement, arrows, etc.)
   * FONT SIZE.

The font size is readable. The links’ font color is green (kids edition), blue (world edition), orange (states edition), and red (provinces edition) and the body text is black. Titles have bigger font size.

* AMOUNT OF WHITE SPACE.

The page is organized, showing the links on the left and right hand panes and the content in the middle. When you click on a link, the links are can be found only on the left hand pane.

* AMOUNT OF TEXT COMPARED TO GRAPHICS.

There are more texts than graphics in this database. But there is a specific page for photo gallery and downloadable slide shows. There are maps, flags, charts, infographic and national image.

1. Organization/Ease of use
   * CultureGrams is easy to navigate because of the links that are found on the left and right panes. Each topic is organized on a link and then directs you to a new page. There is a read-along or text-to-speech capability that you can turn on or off. Other links like world time and distance from
2. Treatment
   * This database is very informative and supports Social Studies curriculum from 6th to 12th grades. Although, with some adjustments like the level of activities, I think that it can also be used for grades one to five.
   * I like their lifestyle page because students learn the difference of our school system here in America compared to other countries, as well as their food, holidays, games, sports, and life as a kid. It is very **diverse** and explains briefly the lifestyle from different countries around the world. Some local words are used and there is always an explanation next to it.
   * I also like the fun facts and interviews of kids and adults. Fun facts are very informative and help to motivate students about that country. The interviews are shared by locals of the countries and describes their typical day, how they go to school, how they live and work, their home, and family life.
   * There are teacher’s resource (lesson plans, activities and citations), world time and distance from one country to another. CultureGrams meets the following standards:
     1. Common Core State Standards Initiative
     2. United States History Standards (National Center for History in the Schools)
     3. World History Standards for Grades 5–12 (National Center for History in the Schools)
     4. English Language Arts Standards (National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association)
     5. Social Studies Standards for High School (National Council for the Social Studies)
     6. Social Studies Skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills in cooperation with the National Council for the Social Studies)
     7. Standards for the 21st-Century Learner (American Association of School Librarians) (CultureGrams, 2015).
   * What I did not like about it is just a few. One is the captions. In the photo gallery, there are photos with the captions of who took the photos, but I wish there is also a caption describing what is on the picture. Some countries also have a few details, but this database is regularly updating its pages. I also would like to see lesson plans for 1st to 5th grades. Also, I wish there are photos for the food and recipes.

**References**

Esti. (2011, December 11). Community Reviews [Review of the database *CultureGrams*].

CultureGrams. Retrieved from <http://online.culturegrams.com/>

Clark, K. (2015, February 12). CultureGrams: looking back on 2014. ProQuest Blogs. Retrieved

from http://blogs.proquest.com/culturegrams/culturegrams-looking-back-on-2014/

Easyencounter. (n.d.). Is culturegrams legit and safe? [Review of the database *CultureGrams*].

*Easy Encounter Review*. Retrieved from http://review.easycounter.com/culturegrams.com-reviews

Proquest. (2015). *CultureGrams.* Retrieved from <http://online.culturegrams.com>

Verma, A. H. (2012, October 29). Best databases 2012 [Review of the database *CultureGrams*].

*Library Journal*. Retrieved from <http://reviews.libraryjournal.com/2012/10/best-of/database>