

While I believe I have subconsciously evaluated websites that I have used many times, this was the first time I went to a website to thoroughly analyze it. For this evaluation, I examined Ms. Alspach's middle school math classroom website (www.alspachmath.com ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)) and Sara Zhang's high school math teacher website (<https://sites.google.com/site/sarazhangteacherwebsite/> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)).

Compare and Contrast

As both websites come from secondary math teachers, I had expected to find that much of the content on each site would be the same if not similar. Both sites had welcoming homepages that clearly listed who their authors were (along with contact information), where they taught (school website links included), and the purpose of the site.

The main differences though occurred when I turned my attention to the multimedia attached. Ms. Zhang's website tended to use more pictures, videos, and uploaded rubrics/instructional pages to provide examples of work and instruction for her readers: parents, students, and other teachers. Ms. Alspach's site tended to use more external links to website such as Kahoot, Follett Site (books), Khan Academy, or other games to practice math or reading with. Zhang also has her main tool bar down the left-hand side of the screen, whereas Alspach has hers across the top. While both websites are prepared in an orderly fashion, I feel that Zhang's is slightly easier to read and follow as well. Alspach's Homeroom tab could have a title that is harder to read for some as it has a small portion of its gray title that crosses a gray border; as well as so many different fonts and sizes on the "Math Section" tab.

Strengths and Weaknesses

After reviewing both websites, I noticed that Ms. Zhang's site had more strengths than weaknesses in my mind. Her site is very well organized, giving specific thought to who she would have visiting her site. There are pages and links specifically for students, parents, then other teachers. As you click through the provided links you see that the site is slightly cluttered, however, it is *almost* a good clutter if you will. While there is quite a bit of words on each page for the users to read, everything that Ms. Zhang has put on her site is useful and beneficial to the reader. There are concept maps, instructional videos, examples of assessment questions, and more all thoroughly explained and available to the student reader; a classroom calendar and newsletter uploaded for parents and guardians, as well as technology ideas and activities for the teacher readers. Everything on this site—down to how to use Skype—has its purpose in her classroom and/or the education world explained. The only real downfall that I can see is that the site unfortunately hasn't been updated since September of 2016.

While Ms. Alspach's website isn't quite as public friendly as Ms. Zhang's, it appears rather student friendly. In terms of design, the site in general is nicely organized into five sections (Home, Homeroom, Math Section, Advisement, and Math Blog)—allowing for easy navigation. However, as an "outsider" clicking on the links, the last two (Advisement and Math Blog) appear purely for student use. My assumption is that the school has an "advisory" period and during that period student know they have activities to complete on the Advisement tab of Ms. Alspach's website. While the Math Blog tab appears unused now, it could also be purely for student use and they just haven't started it yet. Again though, none of this is explained on the site. There is no direction for student, parent, or public to read so I could be wrong with my

assumption. The site also appears credible and up to date as it states that there will be an integer assessment on September 27, 2017 and the news articles in the Blog section reference Hurricane Harvey.

Use Cases

1. If I were a student in Ms. Zhang's Calculus class—since it appears she uses quite a bit of technology—I would frequently reference the “student projects” link on her site to see examples of what prior students have done for certain assignments, such as the Educreations Productions Task. I would use those examples along with her posted rubrics or guidelines to ensure that I successfully complete the assignment. This is something I would want to try to incorporate in my future classroom site at some point.
2. If I were a parent of a student in Ms. Alspach's middle school classroom, I would use her “Homeroom” tab probably more than anything else! This would be the perfect site for me to go as a parent to help my child gain access to book titles to check out from a local library or to read on an e-reader. Her list of links to “Tumble Books,” “Follett Shelf,” and “AEA Online” would greatly aid in me helping to teach my child to read and continue to read throughout the junior high years if not longer.

Classmate comments:

Alyssa Wachsmann

After spending a few minutes exploring your first link to Ms. Alspach's website, I read your review of her site. My initial thoughts echoed some of yours including her use of outside technology resources (Kahoot, Khan Academy, etc.) and the last two tabs (Advisement and Math Blog) that are very confusing to an outsider using the website. Regarding the design and layout of her site, I agree with you that the writing on the "homeroom" tab is slightly challenging for someone to read due to the design choice of writing on top of a picture with similar background colors. Overall, I do not appreciate the layout and design choices that Ms. Alspach chose in designing her website. First, although pictures add a nice touch, it seems that she chose some generic stock images that don't really provide much information for the user, especially the stock image under the "Math Blog" page. Second, each of the pages seem to have a random layout without much purpose - there is a wealth of information and links that, to me, appear to be scattered everywhere without much thought placed into where these links are placed. As evidence of this, the information on the "Homeroom" tab was in two different columns that come very close to each other in the middle of the page and there are many links that are provided below. Each column has information that is written in sentences and each sentence has to wrap around the column which is distracting to the viewer as your brain naturally wants to continue reading left to right which gets confusing as there is not a clear distinguishing line between the two columns.

Regarding Ms. Zhang's site, I initially liked the design choices for the homepage as I appreciated the clearly laid out directions for links intended for each user as you scroll

on the homepage. This was until I realized that the columns with directions of links for each user directly echoed the hierarchy in the links for the different pages on the left hand side of the webpage. After realizing this, I think this information was actually a bit redundant although I did appreciate the description of the purpose of each page that was provided on the homepage. Although this may seem like a small detail, I appreciate when significant effort is put into designing a consistent layout each page. It bothered me on the "About Me" page that some of her paragraphs of information were indented when others were not - this makes me feel as though the website may have been created quickly without careful attention to detail. Plus, I have used Google Sites before and I know that content editing through this platform is very easy as it does not involve any coding - for this reason, I feel that this attention to detail should have been made. Finally, I found the layout of certain pages to be slightly overwhelming as there was a wealth of information on each page that involved a significant amount of scrolling - I think it would have been beneficial to have a quick links section for each page along the top so that the user could quickly navigate to the section of interest without having to scroll through information that may not be relevant to them at this time.