Educational Website Evaluation: Brainscape and Quizlet

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IDE 641: Techniques in Educational Evaluation

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February 9, 2025

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Educational Website Evaluation: Brainscape and Quizlet

The constant rapid evolution of digital technology, especially in the educational sector, has transformed its instructional curriculum and offered new avenues for learning and teaching to enhance students' needs. As a result, a myriad of new tools of learning are constantly being developed to meet the changing pace of learning. Among the different educational tools available, flashcards remain one of the most effective methods utilized for easy memorization and facilitating active recall (Karpicke & Roediger, 2008). Although traditional paper-based flashcards are useful, these new tools have given way to digital flashcard applications which offer additional functionalities such as gamification, collaborative study modes, and adaptive learning. According to Cepeda et al. (2008), flashcard-based learning allows students to comprehend the material at a faster pace. The emergence of digital flashcards is implemented on many platforms with Brainscape (see appendix, figure 1) and Quizlet (see appendix, figure 2) being the more popular choices for learners.

Brainscape located at the following URL: (Brainscape: The Best Flashcards App | Make Flashcards Online) is a web-based and mobile flashcard platform that is designed to optimize the learner's knowledge retention through its adaptive learning system known as spaced repetition. According to Brainscape (2025), space repetition is a learning technique that focuses on reviewing harder materials more frequently, ensuring continuous reinforcement of weaker areas of knowledge. After evaluating this platform, the primary goal of Brainscape is to accelerate cognitive processing and enhance the learner's retention efficiency. The platform provides ready-made and user-created flashcards covering a multitude of academic and professional topics including test preparation such as GRE, LSAT, and SAT. This platform entices students with the goal of having a more structured approach to learning their material. Additionally, Brainscape

uses a rating scheme for learners to rate their understanding of the material from 1-5 which enables the website algorithm to prioritize their weaker areas of learning. Unlike that of traditional flashcard-based learning, Brainscape continues to optimize the learning process by making it more efficient, purposeful, and personalized. By leveraging its adaptive spaced repetition system, Brainscape conforms to each learner's level of learning and ensures that challenging concepts are reinforced. Compared to that of traditional flashcard methods, Brainscape's approach to flashcard-based learning provides users with a more personalized learning experience that aligns with the learner's learning objective.

Quizlet, which can be accessed at https://quizlet.com/, is a platform that provides digital flashcards and various study modes beyond traditional flashcard methods. This platform appeals to a multitude of learners that are into a collaborative gamified learning experience. Quizlet's platforms include flashcard quizzes, matching games and practice tests which aid the users to maximize their learning experience through these different learning methods. This platform's features include audio and images, in addition to their artificial intelligence (AI) powered study modes that can personalize learning to each student. Additionally, Quizlet's website allows users to share and modify user-generated flashcard sets covering multiple subjects, making this platform a great tool for group study and classroom integration. With these multiple ways of learning on Quizlet's platform, the flashcard transforms learning into a more engaging and competitive experience. The overall goal of this project is to evaluate the websites of Brainscape and Quizlet on their effectiveness of flashcard-based learning, its usability, and educational aspects (Dunlosky et al., 2013).

Modified Educational Evaluation Rubric

The original rubric created by Harmon and Reeves (1998), provided a general evaluation for educational websites, however, after further research our team has modified the rubric as the focus on this evaluation centers around the effectiveness of flashcard-based learning. As a result, we have added the following criteria to the modified evaluation rubric:

- Adaptive Learning Features: As Brainscape uses an adaptive algorithm, it is important to determine whether Quizlet provides the same customization on their platform.

I. Variety of Study Modes: Quizlet offers many game features and quizzes, so it was important to evaluate this feature.

- Collaboration and Sharing: As both platforms have this capability, it was important to include this as part of the evaluation rubric.

Brainscape Flashcard Website Evaluation

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">

Mobile Website Evaluated: Brainscape</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Harmon & Reeves – Copyright 1998</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Directions: This instrument is meant to be used by teachers (preservice or in-service) to evaluate Web sites that they might use for teaching and learning purposes with their students. Read the questions and sub-questions carefully before reviewing a site. After spending time with the site, go back through each question and rate it using the five-point scale. Sub-questions are intended to help in thinking about the major questions.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">1. The information contained within the website is accurate.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the information appear consistent with what you already know about the topic?
b. Does the site provide evidence that it comes from reputable sources?
c. Does the site contain any obvious biases, or is it maintained by an organization likely to have strong biases?
d. Does the site contain advertising that might limit the nature of the content?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Not Applicable
☐
N/A</td><td>Strongly Disagree
☐
-2</td><td>Agree
☐
-1</td><td>Undecided
☐
0</td><td>Agree
☐
1</td><td>Strongly Agree
☒
2</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Additional comments:</td></tr>
</table>

Brainscape's learning is grounded in a proven strategy that aids learners with retention and recall abilities of their given subject.

2. The information on this website is current.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Is the information subject to change or is the content stable?
b. If the subject changes, when was the site last updated? Does the information appear up to date?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Brainscape continues to update their platform and create improvements to the user interface.

3. The information on this site is sufficient in scope.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does this site contain sufficient breadth and depth of information related to your needs?
b. Does this site contain sufficient breadth and depth of information related to the topics it claims to cover?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Although the site provides valuable information, the selection of pre-made flashcard sets is limited.

4. The level of information on this site is appropriate for my learner engagement.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site contain information appropriate for learner engagement with respect to their maturity?
b. Does the site contain information appropriate for learner engagement with respect to their cognitive abilities?
c. Does the site contain information appropriate for learner engagement with respect to their prior knowledge of the topic?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Brainscape's platform provides adaptive learning models to ensure that learners are actively engaged by reinforcing weaker concepts more frequently.

5. The information on this site is presented clearly.
Sib-questions to ask yourself:

a. Is the information arranged in an orderly fashion?
b. Is the information presented clearly?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Learners are presented with clear guidance on how to use the website and how to build flashcards tailored to their needs.

6. Navigation on this site is user-friendly.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. How easy is it to find information on this site?
b. How easy is it to move around on this site without getting lost?
c. Does the site provide multiple ways of accessing the same information (e.g., does the site have a built-in search capability)?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Learners can easily access the user-creating flashcard decks and track their progress.

7. Media is integrated effectively in this site.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site make effective use of graphics? Audio? Animation? Video?
b. Is the media used effectively in conveying the content?
c. Is the information on the site enhanced by the media in it?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Brainscape supports text and images but lacks audio and video integration.

8. This site provides maps that clarify the site contents.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site provide a clear overview of what it does contain?
b. Is it obvious what the site does not contain?
c. Does the site contain a map or table of contents that allows you to see what you have seen and not seen?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:

The platform provides a clear overview of its features and organizes study materials effectively.

9. This site exemplifies good web design.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Is it obvious how to interact with this site?
b. If needed, does the site contain a useful help section?
c. Are all the possible interactions on a page obvious?
d. Is the page aesthetically appealing?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Brainscape provides a sleek and minimalistic platform that ensures learners are free from distractions.

10. This site is a reliable source of information.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. How often is the site down when you try to access it?
b. How long does it take for the pages of the site to come up at the time of day you will use it?
c. Is the site likely to remain on the Web?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Brainscape websites are consistently accessible with minimal performance issues or downtime.

11. The constraints of this site do not outweigh its value.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site require extensions that must be downloaded and may present difficulties?
b. Does the site require one specific browser (e.g., Netscape Communicator or Internet Explorer)?
c. Does the site require hardware features that you may not have (e.g., sound card)?
d. Does the site contain features that require specific systems software (e.g., Windows '95)?
e. Are there any fees associated with using the site?
f. If costs are involved, can site licenses be obtained?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:

Although Brainscape has a free platform, it requires a premium subscription for full functionality.

12. This site protects the confidentiality of the user.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site require you to submit information about yourself or your school before granting access? If so, what does it do with this information?
b. Does the site require "cookies" or other information about your system?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Brainscape does not require any unnecessary personal information and has strong privacy policies.

13. This site has adaptive learning features.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the platform personalize study sessions based on user performance?
b. Does the system track progress and adjust learning paths accordingly?
c. How effective is the adaptive algorithm in reinforcing difficult concepts?
d. Is there a confidence-based or spaced repetition approach?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Brainscape has a spaced repetition strategy that is highly effective for its learners.

14. This site provides a variety of study modes.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. What different study modes does the platform offer beyond flashcards?
b. Are interactive learning elements, such as games and quizzes, included?
c. Can users switch between different study formats to match their learning preferences?
d. How effectively do these modes reinforce learning and retention?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Brainscape focuses on spaced repetition with limited alternative study modes.

15. This site provides collaboration and sharing?
Sub-questions to ask yourself:

a. Can users create and share study sets with others?
b. Does the platform support real-time collaboration or group study sessions?
c. Are there teacher-friendly features, such as assignment tracking and progress monitoring?
d. How accessible and user-friendly are the collaboration tools?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Users can share decks, but it has fewer collaborative tools than Quizlet.

Total Brainscape Score: 25/30

Quizlet Flashcard Website Evaluation

Quizlet

Mobile Website Evaluated: **Quizlet**

Harmon & Reeves – Copyright 1998

Directions: This instrument is meant to be used by teachers (preservice or in-service) to evaluate Web sites that they might use for teaching and learning purposes with their students. Read the questions and sub-questions carefully before reviewing a site. After spending time with the site, go back through each question and rate it uses the five-point scale. Sub-questions are intended to help in thinking about the major questions.

1. The information contained within the website is accurate.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the information appear consistent with what you already know about the topic?
b. Does the site provide evidence that it comes from reputable sources?
c. Does the site contain any obvious biases, or is it maintained by an organization likely to have strong biases?
d. Does the site contain advertising that might limit the nature of the content?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Quizlet includes both expert created and user generated content. Although most of the content is accurate, there is potential for users to provide misinformation when creating user-generated flashcards. Learners will need to verify the information of user-generated flashcards due to a lack of content verification.

2. The information on this website is current.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Is the information subject to change or is the content stable?
b. If the subject changes, when was the site last updated? Does the information appear up to date?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Quizlet is frequently updated and user-generated flashcard decks appear constantly ensuring relevance and up to date information.

3. The information on this site is sufficient in scope.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does this site contain sufficient breadth and depth of information related to your needs?
b. Does this site contain sufficient breadth and depth of information related to the topics it claims to cover?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:

Quizlet contains a vast range of flashcards that covers numerous subjects. As it provides a larger learner platform, its users contribute to a growing flashcard created sets of study materials.

4. The level of information on this site is appropriate for my learner engagement.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site contain information appropriate for learner engagement with respect to their maturity?
b. Does the site contain information appropriate for learner engagement with respect to their cognitive abilities?
c. Does the site contain information appropriate for learner engagement with respect to their prior knowledge of the topic?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
The multitude of study modes are clearly structured to include interactive games, quizzes and ensure that the learn continuously remains engaged.

5. The information on this site is presented clearly.

Sib-questions to ask yourself:
a. Is the information arranged in an orderly fashion?
b. Is the information presented clearly?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree		Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Flashcards and the overall study modes are arranged in a well-structured manner, with clear explanations and easy tutorials to build the necessary flashcard deck.

6. Navigation on this site is user-friendly.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. How easy is it to find information on this site?
b. How easy is it to move around on this site without getting lost?
c. Does the site provide multiple ways of accessing the same information (e.g., does the site have a built-in search capability)?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree		Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
There are multiple effortless ways to search, create and design flashcard sets efficiently.

7. Media is integrated effectively in this site.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site make effective use of graphics? Audio? Animation? Video?
b. Is the media used effectively in conveying the content?
c. Is the information on the site enhanced by the media in it?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree		Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Quizlet supports the uses of text, images, and audio making it a more enjoyable and engaging study tool compared to that of Brainscape's platform.

8. This site provides maps that clarify the site contents.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site provide a clear overview of what it does contain?
b. Is it obvious what the site does not contain?
c. Does the site contain a map or table of contents that allows you to see what you have seen and not seen?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree		Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Although this site provides a plethora of materials, including that of the user-generated flashcard sets, it will take a long time to find a set that will work for the learner's preference.

9. This site exemplifies good web design.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Is it obvious how to interact with this site?
b. If needed, does the site contain a useful help section?
c. Are all the possible interactions on a page obvious?
d. Is the page aesthetically appealing?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Quizlet provides a modern interface that enhances usability and engagement.

10. This site is a reliable source of information.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. How often is the site down when you try to access it?
b. How long does it take for the pages of the site to come up at the time of day you will use it?
c. Is the site likely to remain on the Web?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Quizlet is highly dependable with minimal platform downtime.

11. The constraints of this site do not outweigh its value.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site require extensions that must be downloaded and may present difficulties?
b. Does the site require one specific browser (e.g., Netscape Communicator or Internet Explorer)?
c. Does the site require hardware features that you may not have (e.g., sound card)?
d. Does the site contain features that require specific systems software (e.g., Windows '95)?
e. Are there any fees associated with using the site?
f. If costs are involved, can site licenses be obtained?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Quizlet's free version offers a multiple array of different content, advanced tools such as AI capability require the user to have a premium subscription to receive more information.

12. This site protects the confidentiality of the user.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the site require you to submit information about yourself or your school before granting access? If so, what does it do with this information?
b. Does the site require "cookies" or other information about your system?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Quizlet has a privacy setting that enables one to access the site without the need to provide information about oneself or school. The site does not require cookies from the user's system.

13. This site has adaptive learning features.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Does the platform personalize study sessions based on user performance?
b. Does the system track progress and adjust learning paths accordingly?
c. How effective is the adaptive algorithm in reinforcing difficult concepts?
d. Is there a confidence-based or spaced repetition approach?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Although Quizlet has a spaced repetition algorithm, unfortunately, it is not as advanced as Brainscape's personalized approach learning strategy.

14. This site provides a variety of study modes.
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. What different study modes does the platform offer beyond flashcards?
b. Are interactive learning elements, such as games and quizzes, included?
c. Can users switch between different study formats to match their learning preferences?
d. How effectively do these modes reinforce learning and retention?

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2

Additional comments:
Quizlets excels in offering multiple study mode methods which include quizzes, practice tests and interactive games.

15. This site provides collaboration and sharing?
Sub-questions to ask yourself:
a. Can users create and share study sets with others?
b. Does the platform support real-time collaboration or group study sessions?

c. Are there teacher-friendly features, such as assignment tracking and progress monitoring? d. How accessible and user-friendly are the collaboration tools?					
Not Applicable ☐ **N/A**	**Strongly Disagree** ☐ **-2**	**Agree** ☐ **-1**	**Undecided** ☐ **0**	**Agree** ☐ **1**	**Strongly Agree** ☒ **2**
Additional comments: This platform allows students and educators to collaborate in real-time, create shared study flashcard sets and engage in a classroom-based learning experience. Quizlet has more collaboration features than that of Brainscape.					

Total Quizlet Score: 26/30

Evaluation Assessment Overview

After completing the evaluation for both Brainscape and Quizlet, it was interesting to see that both platforms excel in distinct aspects of digital flashcard-based learning. Quizlet emerged as the overall stronger platform due to the diverse study modes coupled with the collaborative study features and multimedia integration. When looking at Brainscape, this platform excels in the adaptive learning features that offer a more structured and tailored personal approach to learning. Brainscape scored 25 out of 30 which emphasized its strengths in adaptative learning and its structure to overall learning. Quizlet received a higher score of 26 out of 30, due to its low cost, audio and video abilities, and gamified learning experiences. A crucial factor in Brainscape's loss to Quizlet is due to its lack of extensive study modes and higher cost for a premium subscription, thus making Quizlet's platform a more appealing option for learners that seek continuous affordability, diverse learning activities, and gamified study mode experiences. The decision between the two platforms depends on the user's preferences to enhance their learning needs but our group understands why Quizlet is the overall pick for learners.

Compare and Contrast

After evaluating Brainscape and Quizlet's website, these two websites share a common goal of facilitating efficient flashcard-based learning, but their approach to learning these methods differs vastly when considering critical factors such as adaptive learning, cost, gamification, and overall user experience.

Adaptive Learning Features

One of the most noticeable differences between the two platforms is the adaptive learning features. To maximize retention and efficiency, Brainscape offers a tailored approach to this concept, ensuring that the learner continues to spend more time reinforcing weaker topics and less time on the topics they have already mastered. In contrast, Quizlet offers a range of interactive study modes and games but does not employ the same level of algorithm adaptation to optimize learning efficiency, thus forcing users to become self-reliant and create their own study patterns.

Cost Comparison

Cost was another crucial consideration when comparing these two platforms. As both platforms require a premium subscription for full access, Quizlet offers a more budget-friendly option at $35.99 per year making it a more attractive option for students and casual learners. In contrast, Brainscape's Pro plan is priced a bit higher at $96.00 per year to reflect its focus on adaptive learning. Although Brainscape's additional cost can be justified for its top-tier features, budget conscious learners may find Quizlet's pricing more affordable.

Gamification and Engagement

Gamification and engagement are another critical area of discussion. Quizlet's gamified way of learning allows users to increase their motivation and overall retention thus making it more appealing to younger audiences and a classroom setting (Hamari et al., 2014). In contrast,

Brainscape focuses on minimalism that caters to learners that prefer a more distraction-free and individualized structured approach to learning.

Findings and Recommendations

Understanding the strengths and limitations of these platforms is crucial for educators and learners to select the most appropriate flashcard-based study tool that will enable them to achieve their goals. With the rapid rise of online learning, these two platforms provide valuable opportunities for learners to reap the benefits of digital learning that aims to enhance one's ability to retain and recall information efficiently. The comparison within this study provided insights into which platform is more effective for flashcard-based learning through a thorough evaluation rubric that is considered crucial factors.

As these digital learning tools continue to evolve, flashcard-based learning platforms such as Brainscape and Quizlet have revolutionized the way students approach retention and memorization. The choice between Brainscape and Quizlet depends on a learner's study habits. Brainscape uses a data-driven approach to reinforce challenging concepts and suits those who thrive on structure and repetition. Its spaced repetition system focuses on weak areas, making it particularly useful for long-term retention and exam preparation. Quizlet, on the other hand, offers greater flexibility and engagement. With multiple study modes, interactive features, and collaborative tools, it appeals to students who prefer variety in their study methods. Whether for self-paced review, group study, or classroom activities, Quizlet provides more opportunities for interaction than Brainscape. Ultimately, the right choice depends on whether a student values a structured, personalized approach (Brainscape) or a more interactive, social experience (Quizlet).

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Appendix

Figure 1

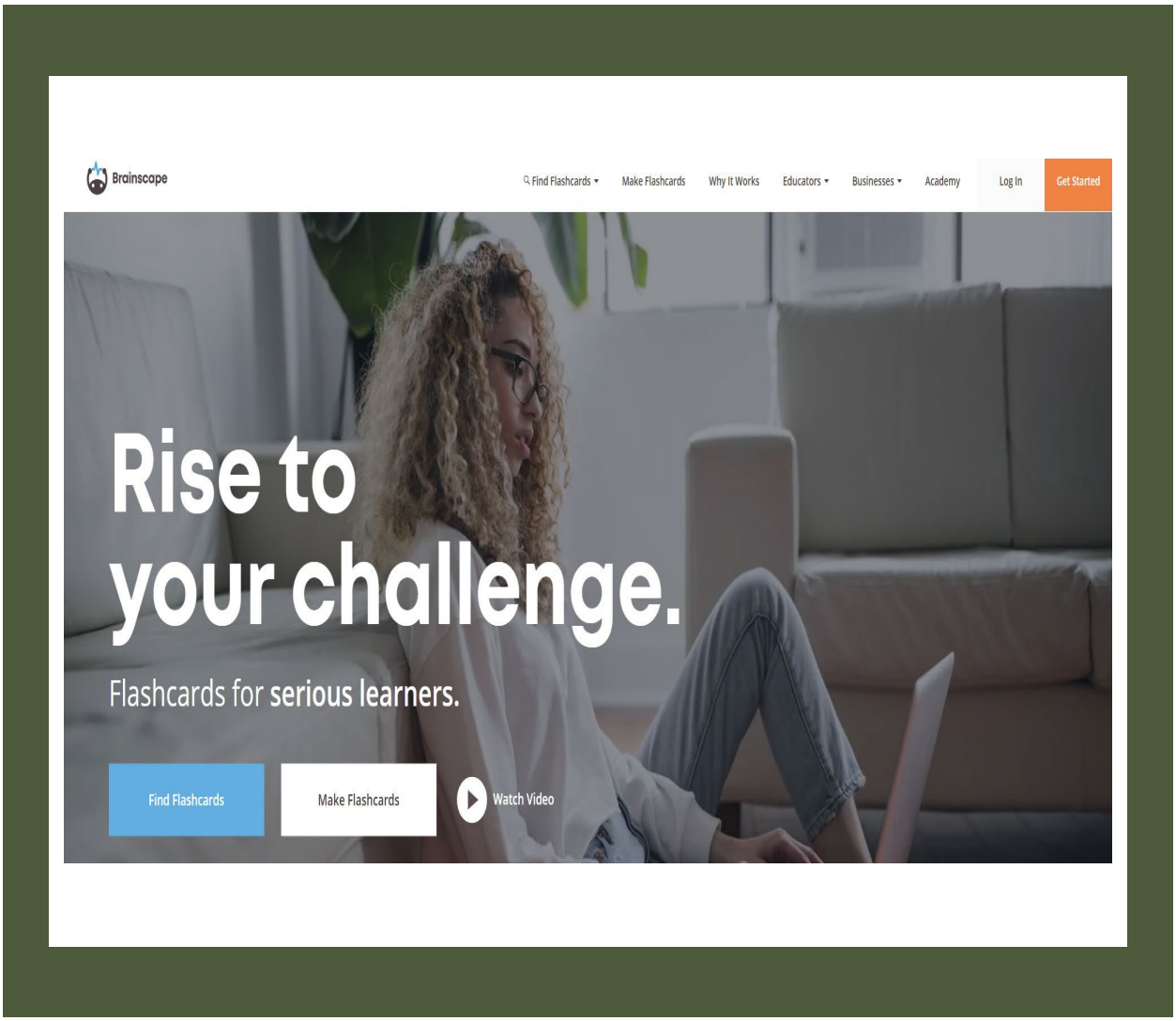
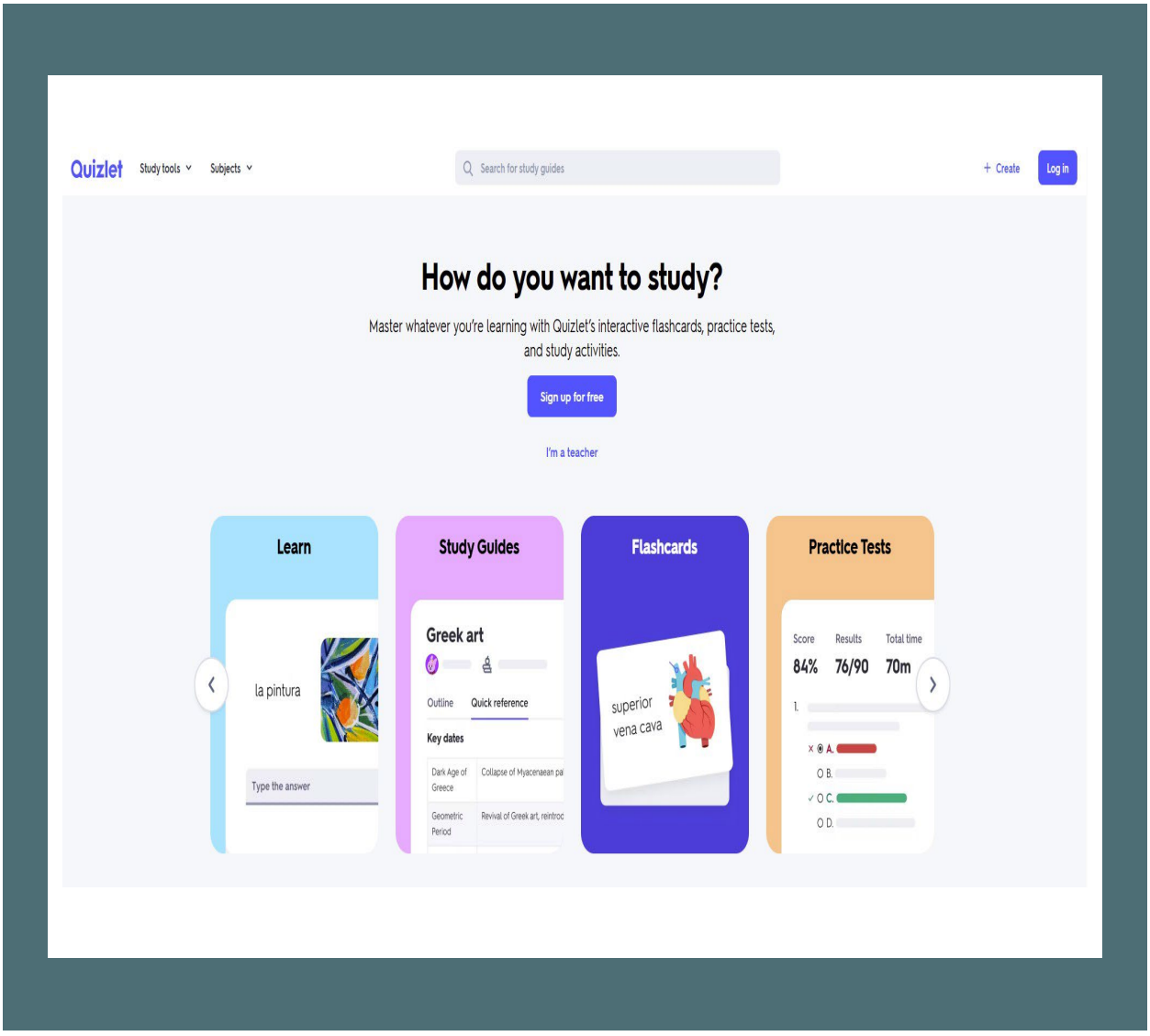


Figure 2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D.