

I. Table of Contents

I.	Table of Contents	1
II.	Introduction to the Portfolio	1
A.	Contact Information.....	1
B.	Background and Interests	1
III.	Objectives of Peer Review Course Portfolio	2
IV.	Description of the Course.....	2
A.	Course Goals	3
B.	The Students.....	3
C.	The course and broader curriculum	3
D.	Course content	3
V.	Teaching Methods and Course Activities	4
VI.	Analysis of Student Learning	5
VII.	Student Feedback	5
VIII.	Planned Course Changes	6
IX.	Summary and Overall Assessment.....	7
X.	Appendices	7
	Appendix A – Web 2 Syllabus	8
	Appendix B – WestStar Energy Job Announcement	12
	Appendix C – Student Work Examples	13
	Appendix D – Evaluation Rubrics	17
	Appendix E – Course Feedback	18

II. Introduction to the Portfolio

A. Contact Information

Bill Genereux
Assistant Professor
Computer Systems Technology
Kansas State University – Salina
2310 Centennial Road
Salina, KS 67401
billgx@ksu.edu

B. Background and Interests

I have recently completed my second year of teaching Computer Systems courses at K-State Salina and I feel I still have much to learn. Before I came to K-State, I taught computer classes for three years at Cloud County Community College, so I have a total of five years of college teaching experience. This past semester, the spring of 2006 was the first semester in five years of teaching that did not include a completely new course for me to prepare for. I am hopeful that the fall 2006 semester will be my best semester

of teaching yet, now that I have had the opportunity to repeat and refine my courses and reflect on the outcomes.

Before I began teaching computer courses, I worked for sixteen years in various industry positions as a network administrator, graphics designer, software developer and hardware repair technician. My primary interests are in the area of written and visual communications using digital media.

III. Objectives of Peer Review Course Portfolio

My primary goal for creating a portfolio on this particular course is to improve the course. In my opinion this course is the most difficult to categorize course in the web development curriculum, because the possibilities of what could be covered are endless. I have not yet found an excellent textbook that addresses the topics I wish to cover. Most of the books address a particular technology, or specialize in one particular topic such as website usability.

I wanted to obtain some specific feedback that will help me make this a better course in the future. I hope to develop an action plan for the course that helps to delineate specific topics to address in a logical, cohesive manner. By putting thoughts on paper, I hope to improve my teaching as well as demonstrate scholarship of teaching for the promotion & tenure process.

IV. Description of the Course

The Web 2 course is the second course in the web design curriculum following the prerequisite introductory Web 1 course that covers HTML. After a semester of hand-coding web pages in essentially a cookbook approach to learning in Web 1, the Web 2 students are introduced to professional web development tools and topics. Web 2 students are expected to begin thinking about issues pertaining to web development in ways that professionals would think.

The web development curriculum consists primarily of programming and systems development topics, except for the Web 2 and Web Design courses. Web Design covers computer graphics and design concepts, leaving the Web 2 course to address all of the remaining web development topics. These topics may include writing for the web, e-commerce, development tools, style sheets, web site usability, web site planning, information literacy, diversity, netiquette, information ethics, intellectual property and copyright issues.

Web 2 is really the catch-all course for covering all of the things about the World Wide Web that will not be covered elsewhere in the curriculum. The goals and objectives for the course have been developed over time using feedback from the computer systems technology advisory committee as well as personal observation of the needs of the industry.

The syllabus found in Appendix A addresses the goals for computer systems technology and how this course fits within those goals. Students who complete the Web 2 course along with the other web development degree program courses should find themselves well on the way to being prepared for jobs such as that described in the WestStar Energy employment announcement found in Appendix B. It is interesting that the WestStar announcement provides strong support for the course goals that were already in place because it was released at the end of the semester this portfolio covers.

It will be a useful tool in future semesters for explaining to students exactly why we cover the concepts and materials that we cover.

A. Course Goals

My goals for the course include:

- Know how to plan and construct user-centered websites
- Have a basic level of competence for using the various software tools
- Be aware of current issues (both technological & human) related to designing websites
- Reinforce good verbal, written and visual communication skills
- Provide opportunities for addressing interdisciplinary studies, diversity issues, and a lifelong learning approach to education.
- Emphasize problem solving through self-education.

B. The Students

The typical student enrolled in Web 2 is either a freshman or sophomore majoring in the web development degree program, but any undergraduate can take the course. It is possible to save Web 2 for the end of the curriculum, because it does not serve as a prerequisite for any other course. Non-majors do not typically take the Web 2 course.

C. The course and broader curriculum

Web 2 is a unique course in the curriculum because it is a requirement for Associate of Web Development Technology students only. It is not required of students who wish to earn the Baccalaureate degree in Computer Systems Technology and is simply bypassed as an elective by many students. However, the course does cover many topics that are not covered elsewhere in the curriculum.

I feel that web development courses offer a tremendous opportunity to springboard into many topics that other technology courses cannot. After all, web pages have to be *about* something, why not make them about cross-curricular topics that meet broader institutional goals, such as diversity, problem solving, general education, etc?

D. Course content

The content of the course comes from a variety of formats.

1. Texts

- *Don't make me think* by Steve Krug
- *Web wizard's guide to web design* by James G. Lengel
- *Designing with web standards* by Jeffrey Zeldman
- *Adobe Photoshop CS classroom in a book* by Adobe Press

2. Articles

- *Be Succinct! (Writing for the Web)* by Jakob Nielsen
<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9703b.html>
- *Inverted Pyramids in Cyberspace* by Jakob Nielsen
<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9606.html>

3. Podcast

- *Pillars of Professional Web Design* by Stefan Mischook
<http://www.killersites.com/blog/2006/podcast-test/>

V. Teaching Methods and Course Activities

The methods used to teach the Web 2 course are quite diverse. I utilize classroom discussions, small group projects, lectures and demonstrations, reading assignments, writing assignments, guest speakers, classroom critiques of existing websites, computer based tutorials, self-study, and interdisciplinary projects.

I like to do real-world projects in this course, but have thus far had mixed results. In the past, we have sold a car on eBay, developed a website for a local leather goods company, and worked on a site for a company that makes homemade cookie mixes for diabetic diets. The students do not respond as positively to these experiences as I would like. The clients become frustrated that the students fail to take their project seriously and are frequently disappointed with their efforts. As a result, I struggle with making these projects engaging and meaningful to the students.

This semester we worked on a project with the Chemistry department with similarly disappointing results. I believe the experience of working with a client is invaluable and somehow I need to sell this idea to the students. I think that better planning and better communication of expectations with both the students and the client will help with this type of assignment.

One method of dealing with the wide array of topics to cover in this course was through the assignment of a self-study module. The students were to identify a web development topic they wanted to gain proficiency in and spend two weeks self-studying the topic. Students kept a project journal of their daily activities to provide references for the resources used as well as an accounting of the time spent. In addition, at the end of the two weeks, the students presented to the class a project that required the new knowledge to complete.

Like all humans, students seem to respond well when given a certain amount of autonomy and control over their work. I try to address this need with a rubric building exercise in class. The students review several sample website evaluation tools gleaned from the Internet. Then we discuss all of the elements of good website design and attempt to categorize them into a rubric for our own class. Once we develop a set of standard criteria for rating websites, we spend some time looking at popular sites on the web and rate them. From this point on, all of the web pages developed for the course including the final project are rated with the student-developed rubric.

“Don’t Make Me Think” by Steve Krug is becoming a classic book in the field of website design and usability. It is brief, approximately 120 pages, and written in a lighthearted, easy to digest style. I have used this book in my web development courses for several years. At first it was merely suggested supplemental reading, but I have reached the point that I now use it as a foundation for the entire semester. Reading this book is mandatory, and several written homework assignments are given to ensure that each student reads and comprehends the text.

This semester (Spring 2006), when I introduced the text a student I will call “Student 1” joked that it was a great title and inquired if we wouldn’t be doing any thinking in this course! I remarked that it is an ironic book title since building websites

that don't make the user think requires the designer to do all of the planning and thinking ahead of time!

The final project was a comprehensive website dealing with any topic of interest to the student. The student was free to use their own research from other courses, or research a new topic to present in web format using the skills and ideas covered throughout the semester.

VI. Analysis of Student Learning

As mentioned earlier, a foundation of the course involves reading the book, "Don't Make Me Think." Reading assignments were coupled with written assignments to ensure the reading was happening and being understood. Early in the semester the students typically put forth minimal effort on the written assignments to answer questions about the reading. (See Appendix C Question 1)

I was searching for a way to improve both the quality of written homework assignments as well as improve in-class discussions. I found that both of these areas improved with the formal introduction of intellectual standards as they pertain to critical thinking. I developed a Web 2 Writing Rubric (Appendix C Figure 1) for assessing writing assignments using the intellectual standards of clarity, accuracy, relevance and depth and we spent a day discussing the meaning of these standards.

After discussing the rubric and standards the students were asked to use the writing rubric as a guide when composing future writing assignments. Then in the next class period the students were asked to exchange their homework assignments and rate each other using the writing rubric.

Change was not immediate, and the tendency for many was to simply score each other the highest possible score no matter what was actually submitted. But between my challenging them to be intellectually honest and the leadership of a select few students, signs of improvement began to appear. (See Appendix C Question 2)

But the change was not without challenges. I resolved to raise the level of expectations and require that each student have the written homework completed in order to participate in each class session. My rationale was that if the student had not completed the assigned reading and related questions, they were not in a position to contribute or fully participate in the class. I once dismissed a student to the library to go complete the assignment. It was a difficult task for me and it was embarrassing for the student, but thereafter everyone came to class with at least something that resembled a homework assignment.

When looking at the final projects, there is a noticeable difference in the quality of the content and design. (Appendix C Final Project) Some of this can be addressed in the Fundamentals of Web Design course, but I believe adding more small web development projects to the Web 2 course will improve student abilities.

VII. Student Feedback

I learned a great deal from student feedback for the course provided through an end of semester survey (Appendix E). The students were provided the opportunity to rate the usefulness of several of the semester assignments as well as choose which assignment was the least and which was the most effective with assisting in their learning.

The highest rated assignment was the final project with an average score of 4.43 out of a possible 5. Interestingly, the writing for the web assignment was ranked third in overall appeal scoring 4.0 out of a possible 5. The writing assignment provided the content for the final project and the students were permitted to write about and design a final project website over any topic that they found interesting. Perhaps this flexibility in subject matter added to the appeal of these assignments.

An important assignment that was fairly well received was the Self Study project, which received an average 3.86 out of 5. Seventy-one percent of the class rated this project a 4 or a 5.

One component of the course that surprised me by receiving 3.71 out of 5 possible points was the introduction of the concept of intellectual standards. I somewhat expected that the students would be less receptive to this discussion since it dealt more with critical thinking than with the subject of the World Wide Web.

The lowest rated assignment was collaborating with the General Chemistry class through virtual teams. It was a frustrating experience for most Web 2 students and was rated a low 2.14 out of a possible 5.

Some of the comments provided by students seem to indicate that they want better communication of expectations and better organization of the material so that it seems more connected. I agree that improvements in these areas will make Web 2 a better course.

VIII. Planned Course Changes

The biggest change to this course will be in the communication of expectations. I want to introduce the concept of intellectual standards earlier in the semester and involve the students in the process of setting the standards by which they will be evaluated. I also want to implement a pre and post testing instrument to better measure student learning over the course of a semester.

I plan to continue working with interdisciplinary projects such as the Chemistry project, but I will continue to refine these projects with better defined outcomes and expectations.

Fundamentals of Web Design CMST 137 will be made a prerequisite to the Web 2 course in the future. It has been a challenge having disparate levels of design knowledge in the class. Some students have completed or are concurrently enrolled in Fundamentals of Web Design, while others have not yet taken the course. Making the Web Design course a prerequisite should help with this challenge.

Another change will be to offer the Web 2 course once a year rather than twice a year due to small enrollments. This change will hopefully increase the class size and improve classroom dynamics.

I plan to assign several more, but smaller hands-on web page development projects in the future. Another change will be requiring all assignments to be submitted online in a standard web page format. Students have been submitting written homework in MS Word format to the course web site. Since it is a web development course, and the homework is submitted and viewed online, it makes sense to require homework to be submitted as properly formatted web pages. This will serve a dual purpose of both doing the particular homework assignment and providing more experience creating and uploading web pages to the World Wide Web.

A topic that I would like to expand in future versions of this course is web accessibility and standards based design. I think a focus on accessibility for web users with special needs could lead into a nice discussion on diversity. Considering the entire audience, not just a subset of the most common users is the direction that the field of web development is heading.

One interesting possibility I have discovered is that of creating a customized textbook with chapters from several sources. SafariU.com offers this ability for a wide array of technology and computer titles. I believe I can create a hybrid text that will do a better job of covering the topics that need addressed. I will work to logically connect the different topics of the course and to better communicate expectations from early on in the semester.

IX. Summary and Overall Assessment

After examining the Web 2 course through peer review and reflection, I feel that the potential exists for creating a very powerful learning experience in the education of web development students. I am pushing my students to use critical thinking skills and communication skills to solve problems. The course provides a platform for interdisciplinary studies because the essence of website design is communication. This communication can happen in virtually any subject area; this semester we happened to focus on communicating information about Chemistry.

But I also realize that continued work is needed in making this material and work relevant and important to the students. They struggle with concepts that do not seem to directly relate to the subject of website design. Somehow I need to sell the idea that there is a difference between mastering skills and getting a well-rounded college education.

I am optimistic that continued course development and developing a customized text will make the Web 2 course one that is memorable and formative in the lives and careers of the students who pass my way. After all, I have only taught this course for two years and the field we are studying is less than two decades old! There is only one direction to move and that is up!

X. Appendices

Appendix A – Web 2 Syllabus

**Kansas State University – Salina
CMST 155, Web Page Development 2
Spring, 2006**

Department:	Department of Engineering Technology
Section:	Computer Systems Technology
Curriculum:	Web Development Technology
Course:	CMST 155
Title:	Web Page Development 2
Prerequisites:	C or better in CMST 135
Lecture:	MWF 9:30-10:20, STC 167
Credit Hours:	3
Instructor:	Bill Genereux
Office:	STC 161
Voice:	785-826-2927
E-mail:	billgx@ksu.edu
Office Hours:	As posted outside office door; or by appointment
Required Text:	Web Wizard's Guide to Web Design by Lengel, ISBN 0-201-74562-3 Don't Make Me Think by Krug ISBN, 0-7897-2310-7
Web Page:	http://www.sal.ksu.edu/faculty/billgx/
Last Day to Drop:	Monday, March 20, 2006
Final:	Thursday, May 11, 2006 11:50 AM
Catalog Description:	Extends the concepts covered in Web Page Development I to refine design techniques and include greater use of graphics and animation. Web page development tools are introduced and compared for ease of use and productivity. Topics include interacting with the user, gathering and sending information, and querying information from a database. Web page laboratory assignments will often be completed outside of class time.
Required Materials:	USB Jump/flash drive. (recommended 64 – 128 MB) You will want a jump drive to store your project files. You, and you alone are responsible for the safekeeping of your projects. Also, students are required to maintain an active e-mail account for the duration of the course.
Software:	Macromedia Studio MX, Adobe Photoshop
Attendance:	The course is designed to build upon knowledge gained in previous sections. Attendance is crucial to be successful in the course. Your participation in class is expected and is a part of your final grade (see grading scale). If you are late or absent from class, it is <i>your responsibility</i> to obtain any notes, assignments, etc.

Grading and Assignments: Assignments are to be completed by the beginning of class on the due date. *Late work will be accepted within one week of the due date with an automatic 50% reduction of credit. Assignments received after one week beyond the due date will receive zero credit.*

	% of Final Grade	Grading Scale
Class Participation and Discussion	10%	A = 90% and above
Homework & Labs	10%	C = 70% and above
Exams & Quizzes	25%	D = 60% and above
Content Writing Project	10%	F = 59% and below
Graphics Design Project	10%	
Final Project and Presentation	35%	

This is very much a *hands-on* course. A full 35% of the grade is based upon the final project. Toss in the writing project and the graphics project, and over half of the grade is accounted for. This means if you do everything perfectly and are a no-show for the final project presentation, the best you can earn is a "D" for the course. We are striving for a depth of knowledge that is evident in the work you produce. Since this is an advanced web development course, your final project should make your audience say "Wow!"

Only 25% of your grade will be based on examinations, so if you are a poor exam taker but a hard worker, you can still succeed in this course. Three quarters of your grade will be based on "doing" rather than test-taking.

Exams: Exams will be given periodically during regular class hours. Check the class schedule provided for dates. If you will be absent on an exam day, you must make prior arrangements with the instructor to have the exam given at a different time. *Late make-up exams will not be offered after an exam has been administered* unless you can demonstrate you had an emergency situation arise.

Writing Project A web designer can be an organization's last defense against public embarrassment from poor grammar and typos on the website. Your writing project will deal with a professional or academic topic that interests you personally, and will serve as content for your final website development project.

Graphics Project A web designer should have an eye for that which is both aesthetically pleasing as well as functional. Your graphics project will involve developing a website theme, and designing graphics around the theme including original logos, buttons, backgrounds, etc. The set of graphics you design will be used as a part of your final project.

Final Project

Your final project will demonstrate the concepts learned throughout the course. You should be thinking of and preparing your project topic early in the semester.

Incompletes

In extreme circumstances, a grade of "Incomplete" can be given if the student is unable to finish the required coursework by the end of the semester. Incompletes are a courtesy extended by the instructor to students who, *through no fault of their own*, are unable to finish the course due to an emergency or other hardship. It is expected that the student will have already satisfactorily completed a significant portion of the course before requesting a grade of "Incomplete."

Conduct

Mature behavior is expected and required. Please respect others in the class by turning off pagers, cell phones and other disruptive gadgets. For most students, a primary purpose of attending college is to eventually secure gainful employment. It is with that end in mind that this course has been developed. Your work ethic in this course should resemble what it will be in your future career. Thoughtful discourse is the theme of this class. You are highly encouraged to participate in the classroom discussions (see grading scale). If you are having academic or other difficulties of any kind with this class, do not hesitate to contact the instructor to discuss them.

Academic Honesty

"Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on the exam, paper or project; failure in the course; and/or expulsion from the university."

"A prominent part of the Honor System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by undergraduate students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: 'On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work.'" For more information see <http://www.ksu.edu/honor/>

Disabilities

Any student with a physical or learning disability requiring special accommodations should meet with the instructor immediately to make special arrangements.

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Graduates of the Computer Systems Technology option will demonstrate:

A. Technical Skills and Knowledge.

1. Knowledge of computer hardware, architecture and digital logic.
2. Knowledge of operating systems and programming language processing.
3. Knowledge of current computer programming tools, techniques and languages.
4. Knowledge of current tools and techniques of database systems, Web technology, and computer networking.
5. Ability to apply current tools and techniques in the design of database systems, stand alone applications, web technology and computer networking
6. Ability to build, operate and maintain a complex database system, Internet web site, stand alone application or local area network.

B. Creative Design, Application and Lifelong Learning.

1. Ability to analyze, design, implement, test, and document stand alone computer programs.
2. Ability to creatively solve problems by analyzing, designing, and implementing computer information systems
3. Ability to apply project management techniques to the development of a computer system.
4. Application of mathematics to computer systems at or above the level of algebra and trigonometry.
5. A commitment to life-long learning.
6. A commitment to quality and continuous improvement.

C. Communication.

1. Write clear and effective technical documents and reports.
2. Verbally communicate technical information to a variety of audiences.

D. Professional Behavior in a Diverse World.

1. A respect and understanding of diversity in the workplace.
2. An ability to work effectively on teams.

E. Professional Development.

1. Knowledge of professional ethics and social responsibility.
2. Awareness of the impact of technology on society.

After completing this course, the student should be able to do the following:

1. Produce quality planning documentation, including requirements specification, design documents, and user interface.
2. Select and apply appropriate design techniques to moderately complex problems.
3. Demonstrate the use of web development tools such as Macromedia Studio MX to create and manage web sites.
4. Demonstrate the use of Macromedia Fireworks MX and Macromedia Flash MX as development tools for graphics design.
5. Describe the advanced features of Macromedia Studio MX.
6. Explain the principles of e-commerce.
7. Describe the professional, ethical, and social responsibilities of a web designer.
8. Summarize current issues related to online privacy and intellectual property.
9. Develop and publish a web site and perform basic site administration following good web design principles.

Program Outcome	A						B						C		D		E	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	1	2	1	2
Rating Scale	1	0	0	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	1	2	3	2	2	1	1	1

Rating Scale:

3: Outcome highly addressed in this course. Topics are fully introduced, developed, and reinforced throughout the course in lectures, labs, homework assignments, and/or exams to develop an "applications knowledge" of the topic. Extensive activities with data collection, feedback, and improvement.

2: Outcome moderately addressed in this course. Topics are often introduced, developed, and reinforced in several lectures, labs, homework assignments, and/or exams to develop a "working knowledge" of the topic. Limited activities, data collection, feedback, and improvement.

1: Outcome slightly addressed in this course. Topics are occasionally introduced in lectures, labs, homework assignments, and/or exams to develop an "awareness" of the topic. Minimal activities, data collection, feedback, and improvement.

0: Outcome not addressed in this course.

Appendix B – WestStar Energy Job Announcement

TO: EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT SOURCES

FROM: WESTAR ENERGY HUMAN RESOURCES EMPLOYMENT SECTION

DATE: MAY 8, 2006

SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SUMMARY OF JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

JOB TITLE: Web Content Analyst

REQUISITION: 43542

DEPARTMENT: Corporate Communications, Public Affairs

LOCATION: Topeka General Office, Topeka, KS

PAY GRADE: H - I

PAY RANGE: I - \$36,000 - \$45,000

H - \$42,600 - \$53,300

Scheduled Work Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Other hours as required)

Summary of Primary Duties and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate development, research, write/edit and maintain company Website and intranet.
- Manage Web content and design.
- Ensure the Website is available to the desired audience with appropriate links and security.
- Develop, assess and communicate Website usage and security policies and procedures.
- Coordinate with IT and outside vendors on Web page layout, graphics, color schemes and infrastructure to maintain a cohesive Website based on the organization's communications strategies and goals.
- Coordinate with IT and outside vendors in developing video streaming for Web site.
- Assist IT department in researching and evaluating new related technologies.
- Perform miscellaneous job-related duties as assigned.

Education and Experience Requirements:

Pay Grade I Requires a Bachelor's degree in Communications or related field or a high school diploma or equivalent and six years of related graphic design, Web management and multimedia experience.

Pay Grade H Requires a Bachelor's degree in Communications or related field and three years of related Web management and multimedia experience, or a high school diploma or equivalent and eight years of related graphic design, Web management and multimedia experience.

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities Required:

- Excellent writing skills with an understanding of the challenges of writing for the Web.
- Strong creative and technical skills.
- Great communication skills and the ability to juggle several tasks/deadlines.
- Ability to effectively manage time and schedules.
- Ability to work both independently and as a member of a team.
- Ability to evaluate new and evolving Website technologies.
- Knowledge and understanding of Internet operations and functionality and of a wide range of Internet programming and design tools.
- Computer graphics, including an understanding of optimizing graphics for the web, and layout experience as well as experience with interactive media using Flash.
- Knowledge and understanding of current authoring languages, editing and authoring tools and related Website technologies.
- Experience with Lotus Notes, Windows, Dreamweaver, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Java and HTML.
- Ability to supplement basic job skills with creative problem solving.

Licenses, Certifications, Bonding, and/or Testing Required:

Valid driver's license required.

Working Conditions:

Normal office working conditions. Ability to meet strict deadlines and work well under pressure required. Must have a satisfactory work record including good attendance.

Appendix C – Student Work Examples

Here is an example of a homework question from early in the semester:

Homework Question 1:

Read and summarize "Don't Make Me Think" chapters 1& 2. Don't write a novel, just jot down the key ideas that struck you as interesting or important. Perhaps it is something you want to remember for the future when you have a boss that just doesn't understand web design.

Select one of the three facts of life from chapter 2 and give a recent personal example of something you did that supports that particular fact. For example, recently I downloaded an open source audio program. I didn't read any directions on how it works. I just started clicking until I got the thing to work. I'm still not sure how to do some things, but I know I'll stumble across them soon enough. In your example, tell me what you did and what rule it supports.

Student 1 Question 1 Answer:

Chapter 1 The way things are worded may require more thought time then other things. Keeping things simple as possible allows for less thought time as well as easier site usage.

Chapter 2 The way pages are put together affect what is seen and what isn't seen. Pages are scanned, not actually read. If something is difficult or complicated we use trial and error to figure out how to get it to do what we want.

Fact of Life 1: I didn't actually read the agreement that I signed for the chemistry/webpage agreement. Instead I scanned over it.

Student 1 has taken my recommendation of brevity to heart! I think this student may have read the chapters, or at least scanned over them, but the answer does not demonstrate that much thinking or contemplation has occurred. Student 2 is a bit more sophisticated and is much closer to what I hoped for in this assignment.

Student 2 Question 1 Answer:

Chapter 1 explains the title of the book, "Don't make me think!". All people have mind chatter while doing everything in life. Steve Krug breaks down typical mind chatter of someone who may be searching the website you created. He gives a few pointers on how to change the items of a website that make us think and how doing this will make the site user-friendly for the common surfer. All of this will make the surfer happier and bring him back to your website again in the future.

Chapter 2 describes that users view web pages like they do a roadside billboard, not a book, newspaper, product brochure, etc. Since we design websites for a person reading literature, we have to change the way we present the site. The life facts below explain why a web page for reading doesn't work. Successfully building a great billboard will bring the customer/user back to your site.

Life Fact #1. People don't read most web pages but scan them looking for a word or phrase.

Life Fact #2. We will consider all the available options and choose the best one.

Life Fact #3. We don't figure out how things work, we muddle through them.

Personally I know I don't follow life fact #2. When I'm shopping I will impulsively pick up an item for the price, color, quantity etc. instead of thinking if this store would sale the product the cheapest or give the biggest selection of what I'm looking for. In the end, because I wanted that item right then and there I may have sacrificed something else. Usually, I'll find that the product is on sale at another store or considerably overpriced at the store I purchased it at.

Here is an example of a compare/contrast homework question from later in the semester after implementing the Intellectual Standards Rubric (Appendix D Figure 1):

Homework Question 2:

How is the idea of using personas to develop a usable website similar to the strategy Spangles Restaurants has used to develop a business model that works?

Student 1 Question 2 Answer:

The idea of persona is to find out what the customer wants and how they want it. Once this information is achieved, the company, in this case Spangles, puts together all the ideas and gives their product to the customer the way they want it. The Staples paper put it rather well when they described their website as being built by the customer. This is the same thing that Spangles did. They let the customers choose what they wanted in a restaurant and then they gave it to them.

At last Student 1 is beginning to spend some time thinking about the question at hand and developing some original ideas rather than simply going through the motions of answering questions. It is still imperfect, but there is much more clarity, depth and relevance to what is being said than in previous assignments.

Student 2 Question 2 Answer:

The use of personas allows the web developer to develop a product that will satisfy the needs of many users. A specific profile about a typical customer to include a name, social history, and goals of that person can be used to define the needs of many users that also visit the website and have similar goals.

Spangles spent many years putting themselves in the shoes of their customers. First Spangles realized that Coney Island, the previous name of their first restaurants wasn't a universal name to spark interest of customers who wanted to eat more than a hotdog. So Coney Island became Spangles. The name change brought more customers through their doors.

Using this approach, Spangles changed the style of their stores to a unique 50's feel with loud music and lots of pop figures of that timeframe. They also limited their menu to fit into the style of the foods available in the 1950's and removing items from the menu that didn't fit, like egg rolls.

Although the owners of Spangles didn't use the practice of personas specifically, they redefined themselves by asking the question, "Who are we?" which is very similar to personas because they were still looking through the eyes of the customer.

Student 2's work has also improved thanks to clarity of expectations through the intellectual standards that have been outlined.

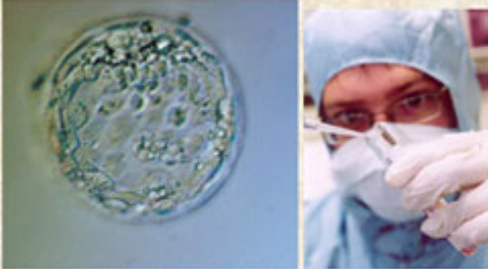
Final Project:

The final project was a website developed over the second half of the semester. The students were allowed to choose any topic of interest to them to research and develop a multi-page website about. They were to implement skills studied throughout the course, including writing for the web and website usability. Assessment of student work was accomplished using the student generated Website Evaluation Rubric (Appendix D Figure 2)

Student 1 Final Project

This student's final project demonstrates some understanding of some but not all key concepts covered throughout the semester. For example, I rated the "information" category above average since it tends to follow the writing for the web guidelines covered in the course and because it seems to be well researched with sources cited. "Navigation" for this project was rated a high average because it meets most although not all of the recommended guidelines. "Layout" was scored below average to average because it is clear that little consideration was given to the visual appearance. Browser default typefaces & color schemes were used rather than trying to develop something original. Also, the type directly upon a patterned background limits legibility.

Stem Cell Research



[Home Page](#)
[Sources](#)
[Origins](#)
[The Debate](#)
[Extraction](#)
[Justification](#)
[Government Involvement](#)
[Should they be used?](#)

Stem-cell research, while believed to be immoral by many people, is actually an extraordinary scientific breakthrough that could save the lives of millions of diseased and dying people around the world. This research could help diabetics, spinal cord injuries, Parkinson's disease, and even Alzheimer's patients. The director of the National Institute of Health, Harold Varmus, told Adriel Bettelheim of the Congressional Quarterly Researcher, "These findings... bring medical research to the edge of a new frontier that is extraordinarily promising" (Bettelheim 1067). This topic is highly controversial among many Christians and anti-abortionists because they believe that lives are taken in the process. These Christians and anti-abortionists are holding back the world from possibly the greatest scientific breakthrough of all time. Without this research, many of Americans; men, women, and children, will continue to suffer because they have no cure for their disease. If the people of the United States all support and contribute to this extraordinary research, then they are bettering the United States and the world (Bettelheim 1067).

Student 2 Final Project

This student's project exhibits a mastery of the key concepts of the course. The writing is exceptional, the layout is clean and nicely done and everything works. This is a useful website that is pleasing to view and to use. The project was rated above average in all categories using the website evaluation rubric (Figure 2 Appendix D).



Law School Timeline

Planning Ahead

Admittance to Law School Timeline/Checklist

These are the objectives to complete as an undergraduate or pre-law student to ensure acceptance into law school. This checklist can be used by anyone thinking about law school as it covers a timeline for the following:

- Which Law School is Right for Me
- Preparing for the LSAT Test
- When to register for LSAT/LSDAS
- Preparation Steps for Recommendation Letters
- Write Personal Statement/Essay
- When to mail application

[\[Home \]](#) [\[Freshman Year \]](#) [\[Sophomore Year \]](#) [\[Junior Year \]](#) [\[Senior Year \]](#)

Appendix D – Evaluation Rubrics

Figure 1 - Web 2 Intellectual Standards Rubric

	1 – 2	3 – 4	5
Clarity	Vague and unclear	Somewhat clear with some questions remaining	Absolutely clear
Accuracy & Relevance	Unrelated to the question or supplied inaccurate details	Mostly relevant and accurate with one or two inaccuracies or irrelevancies	Relevant to the issue and details were accurate
Depth	Superficial, lacking depth	Beyond superficial but still lacking some depth	Depth sufficient to ensure understanding
Structure	Unacceptable for college level work	Some minor grammatical issues	Excellent college level work

Figure 2 - Web 2 Website Evaluation Rubric

Layout	Below Av.	Average	Best
Color scheme	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Typography	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Web-ready Graphics	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Organization	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Navigation			
Intuitive and user centered	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Consistent	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Streetsigns and breadcrumbs	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Links functional and color coded	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Information			
Written specifically for the web	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Structure and grammar	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Accuracy, Relevance, Clarity, etc.	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Credibility established	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Technology			
Correctly and appropriately used	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Accessible	1 - 2	3 - 4	5
Modern Methodologies	1 - 2	3 - 4	5

Appendix E – Course Feedback

Assignment ratings

The following assignments were rated using a 1 – 5 scale with 1 being the least useful and 5 being the most useful to student learning by the seven students who took CMST 155 in the spring semester of 2006.

Rank	Assignment	Ave. Rating
1.	Final Project	4.43
2.	Optimizing Photos for Web	4.28
3.	Writing for the Web	4
3.	Defining audience with Personas	4
4.	Self-Study project	3.86
5.	“Don’t Make Me Think” book	3.71
5.	Intellectual Standards (Clarity, Accuracy, etc.)	3.71
6.	Standards based web design	3.43
7.	Web Wizard book	3
8.	Pillars of Web Design podcast	2.86
9.	Chemistry collaboration project	2.14

Some student comments about the course

"I didn't understand what was expected of me"

"We needed a clear cut line of assignments."

"This class was poorly organized in terms of content."

"You only have 3 classes to teach us everything we need to know about the web."

"We need to do more actual web page projects."

"I believe you did very well teaching the class and also think that you were always able to help outside of class."