IST 611/IDE 601

Electronic Portfolio

Fall 2002

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Project Summaries:

Assignment 1

Assignment 1 was the WebQuest Project. I worked with Colleen Tierney of the MLS program. We created a WebQuest about the Iroquois Nation and Conflict Resolution. I found the concept of a WebQuest to be very appealing and beneficial to students. I enjoyed doing the research on the Iroquois and creating the content of the WebQuest.

At first, Colleen and I struggled with a topic. We were trying to pick something that could be relevant to kids today so that they might retain more information. We chose the Iroquois Nation because it is local to New York State and we figured it was also a popular group with much information to be found on the Internet. Once we actually started do our research, however, we did not find as much information as we thought. We adjusted our Tasks and Procedures accordingly to the information we were able to find on the web. As we progressed, the assignment seemed to fall into place.

Colleen did much of the actual research and finding of web page links. I read through the links that she found and found some others as well. We also researched the WebQuest pages explaining how to create them and examples of existing WebQuests. We decided to use one of the templates that were given for the assignment. I had some limited HTML experience so I tackled the actual design work for the WebQuest. I used Front Page to work with the template and develop our own customized design. I used various pictures that Colleen found on the web links we discovered. I actually had my 10-year-old son critique the WebQuest for us, and he liked it.

Colleen and I worked well together throughout this project. We had a good working relationship and each contributed positively to the final project. We were pleased with the final outcome and were proud to be chosen as one of the top 10 WebQuests in the course.

Assignment 2

Assignment 2 was the Software Evaluation. I worked alone on this project. I chose the software program Alan's Math to evaluate. I had my mother and brother evaluate it along with me. I also had my 10-year-old son and 8-year-old niece use the program though I did not use them in any formal evaluation. Evaluating the program was interesting and I've actually insisted my son and niece use the program to supplement math facts at school.

I downloaded the program to my laptop. It was very easy to install and use. I sent the link to my mother and brother through email and asked them to install and use the program. I also sent them the evaluation form, asking them to fill it out and return it to me via email. It is a very simple program so this did not take long to evaluate. We now have the program loaded on all of the desktops we own so that the kids can use it no matter what computer they happen to be using.

My mother and brother have differing levels of computer literacy, but each was able to easily install and use the program. Overall I think it is a simple but effective program.

Assignment 3

Assignment 3 was the Collaborative Project. I worked together with 3 others from the MLS and IDDE programs: Beth Ehrlich, Marie Pampinella, and Colleen Tierney. We worked at the Franklin School in Syracuse, testing the Earobics software program in Marie's 3rd grade classroom. This assignment was interesting but also frustrating. In the end, I do not think we were able to sufficiently suggest whether or not the program is an effective tool in the classroom.

At first, we all met together with the reading trainers of the district to discuss the objectives of the project. The four of us decided how to proceed in testing the students and starting them on the software program. Each of us was going to come 1 day per week for approximately 3 hours. We would observe the students using the software program. Marie is the teacher in the class so she did not necessarily observe the students but she did maintain the schedule on the days that none of the rest of us was there.

One of the things that frustrated me was the way the class itself was run. This had nothing to do with our assignment, but I found it to be very distracting to the outcome of our project. The reading level of the students was already low and I feel this is a direct result, not only of their environment and home life, but also of the way they are treated at school. I found myself wanting to stand up in the front of the class and actually instruct them or walk around and give each of them some individual attention. It was very difficult to focus only on the task at hand.

I did, however enjoy this project. I actually did most of the data analysis. I enjoyed keeping track of the scores from the testing and checking the data reports on the software program. These reports were actually very useful, and we did not really use them enough for the purposes of this assignment. Again, if I were the teacher, I would appreciate having such a useful tool. Overall, the experience was valuable even if the results were not as I had hoped.

Reflections:

In reflection of the overall course, I realize that gained much more benefit from the assignments then the discussions. Many circumstances contributed to my feeling that the bulletin board was poorly organized and managed, distracting from the content of the discussions. In hindsight, I should've tried harder to overlook this. The discussion topics were actually very interesting, but I found the technical aspects of the other students, or lack there of, to consume the posts.

The projects, on the other hand, allowed me to delve into the content and contribute to my own experience and learning. I enjoyed each of them. The course did provide me with some insight. This was the first course I have taken at the graduate level at Syracuse University. I have a Bachelor's in Psychology with a minor in Education from SU, so

that educational/teaching aspect of the IDDE program and working with kids has appealed to me. I work in the IT department of IST, however, which has also sparked my interest in the more technical aspects of educational technology and technology in general. I am definitely feeling a pull in each of the directions at this point. Finding the right balance of technology and a level of instruction either at the elementary level or higher I think is what I'm looking for. It will be interesting to see where this all takes me. Thanks for the experience.

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