Assessment Plan for an

On-line course in Macromedia Flash

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ABSTRACT

This plan discusses the theoretical foundations regarding learning outcomes, course objectives, and assessment protocols for adequately evaluating student performance in an online environment. Further, it provides examples and guidance for their application to COM 1305, an on-line course in Macromedia Flash. The course is part of the Multimedia Concentration offered at Nashville State Community College in Nashville Tennessee. Learning outcomes are proposed along with their accompanying course objectives. Assessment instruments are developed and presented that address both declarative and procedural knowledge types along with arguments for their usage. Lastly, grading criteria and several rubrics are developed and offered. This plan will guide development efforts for the course and also provide curricular information for the NSCC re-accreditation effort underway.

THE SITUATION

Within the newly created Multimedia Concentration in the Visual Communications Program at Nashville State Community College, NSCC, an integral component is a course in beginning Macromedia Flash. This plan is intended as a starting point of reference for assessing student skill and knowledge level in this on-line course. A course text, a collection of tutorials designed to introduce the student to the main parts of the program, has been selected. The goal is to have the student functional in using Flash for a number of simple multimedia applications. They need to understand the interface, as well as the process of embedded different media into a time-line based authoring program, add interface elements such as buttons, and common interactivity. An introduction to linking external data sources to the Flash content will also be included.

The course will be designed around a 13 week semester. Each week will have a corresponding module, much like the structure of classes through Jones International University. NSCC uses the WebCT course management system (CMS) and therefore can make use of the various features that are offered through that software. As a result, the course will have weekly activities, written assignments, projects, and online discussion (forum) participation. To ensure quality of work, clear expectations will be provided (student and teacher), as will be examples of exemplary work and realistic deadlines for completion of assignments and projects. The first course is to be taught beginning in early June 2006.

In addition to this plan's goal of providing guidance for course assessment, it has also acted as a course objectives model for the course. The course objectives were a requirement of re-accreditation with SACS (Commission on Colleges Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). The objectives designed for this plan were successfully given to the Dean of Business and Applied Sciences on April 24, 2006.

THE PROBLEM THIS COURSE IS PROPOSED TO SOLVE

As a result of progressively declining enrollment in the graphic design program, feedback from the Graphic Design Advisory Committee, local industry, faculty research, and the student body indicated that a demand for a concentration in Multimedia design exists and should be pursued. Given the constraints of a 2-year program and the multidisciplinary nature of the multimedia discipline, the challenge has been to determine what courses and resources are critical to fulfill this mission. An analysis of existing industry practices, the lack of an established professional credentialing body and the primary technologies prevalent in the field of multimedia design and production revealed the technology courses needed for this discipline. Industry demand, as reflected in job descriptions of on-line recruitment portals, and the results of on-line survey data, indicate that Macromedia Flash has the greatest market penetration of all of the multimedia players and that content developers using this platform have marketable and sought after skills. Based on investigations by key personnel, it was determined that the multimedia program should concentrate its efforts on providing a curriculum rich in design fundamentals, broad exposure to a cross section of media types, and be centered on the Macromedia Flash multimedia delivery platform. COM 1305 is the course which proposes to address the introduction to Macromedia Flash, and is the focus of this assessment plan

Background

The Graphic Design Program at Nashville State Community College (NSCC) historically has been focused on the print industry. While those skills are still needed, initial surveys and discussions with the advisory committee indicated that the department needed to change its strategy and create additional value by providing focus on digital photography techniques, and

concentrations in multimedia and web authoring. The scope of this proposal is limited to the multimedia concentration. Given the constraints of a 2-year program and the breadth of skills needed to succeed in the multimedia discipline, the challenge has been to determine what courses and resources are critical to fulfill this mission.

Industry Perspective

The application of the term *multimedia* means different things to different people. According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multimedia), multimedia is simply the "use of several different media to convey information (text, audio, graphics, animation, video, and interactivity)." Often, disciplines have an organized professional standardization board which develops and maintains the training, skills, and technology that the profession requires to be successful. The web authoring discipline has Macromedia certification, Microsoft certification, CIW (Certified Internet Webmaster) Certification, Adobe Certification amongst others. Work is currently underway to define Mpeg-21 (http://www.chiariglione.org/mpeg/standards/mpeg-21/mpeg-21.htm#_Toc23297968) which is the beginnings of a multimedia digital delivery system, including definition of file type for transmitting text, graphics, hyperlinks, audio, programmatic, and video information in a single file. However, no standardization exists as to workflow, or toolset that should be used in the creation of multimedia content. Therefore, since no "official" methodology exists, we can look to the market place for some guidance on the skills and toolsets to employ for our program. Figure 2. shows the results of a 2005 survey, conducted by the NPD Group (www.npd.com) for Macromedia, indicating the market penetration of multimedia delivery formats. We can see from this chart that Macromedia Flash has the Lion's share of market penetration.

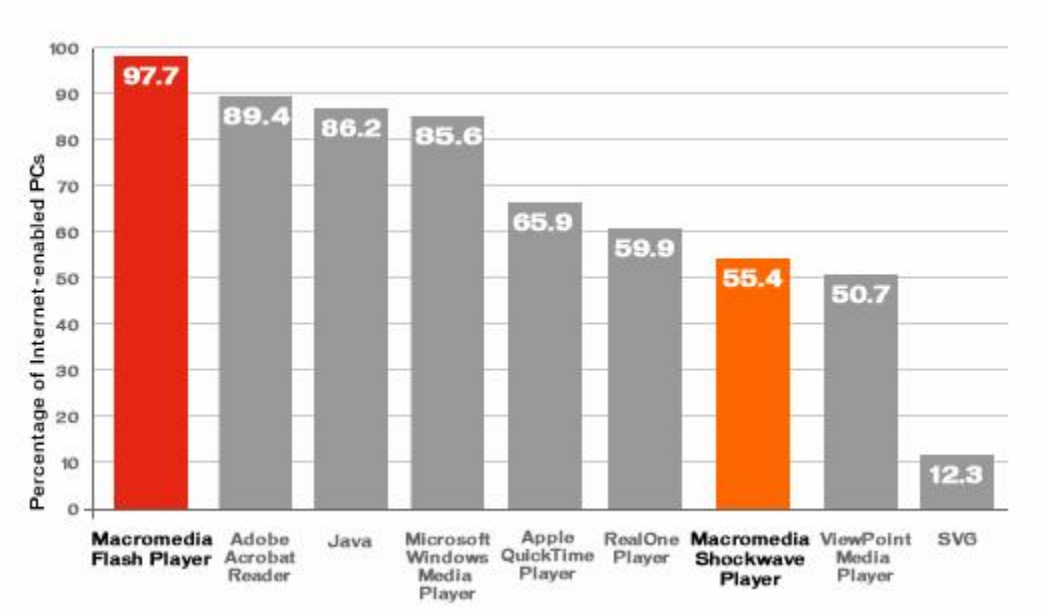

Figure 2. Market Penetration of Multimedia File types (

http://www.macromedia.com/software/player_census/npd/)

Since Macromedia Flash has the largest percentage of penetration in the marketplace, it is a good delivery medium for program concentration, The Flash authoring environment can also provide us with a list media types and corresponding skills for the specific creation of Flash deliverables and multimedia content in general. Another area to research to determine how we should focus the curriculum of our program is to research job titles and their corresponding job descriptions in the industry. In order to determine the types of job titles that a typical multimedia specialist would hold in any given organization, an on-line search was conducted on Careerbuilder.com. The search criteria of "multimedia" provided the following results: Multimedia Developer, Multimedia Production Specialist, Multimedia Design Engineer, Multimedia Editor, Designer-Multimedia Presentations. Each of these titles focused on a different aspect of the production of multimedia presentations. All of them required knowledge of graphic design, storyboarding, proofing, web authoring, video and audio editing, and animation and special effects – some were

2-D and some were 3-D oriented. So while some positions focused on the creation of video, audio, or animation, some focused on design and others on project management, all of them required the applicant to understand how to integrate and edit all of the media types. This broad-stroke approach is consistent with the design workflow of the Flash authoring environment and aids in providing program focus; i.e. to expose the students to fundamental design principles, the creative workflow, and to understand how to integrate all of the diverse media types for output to CD, DVD, and internet delivery mechanisms.

Finally, in our research of industry practices, we move from the macro to the micro perspective, or the local industry in Nashville, TN. To date, two interviews have been conducted to determine the needs of a multimedia professional in the local industry. Others are yet to be scheduled. One interview was conducted with a multimedia developer and web designer for Nashville State Community College. A second interview was conducted with the Director of NewsChannel5.com, the web component of the local ABC affiliate in Nashville, TN. Both interviews gave different perspectives on the skills required for a multimedia producer. The results from both interviews indicated that a multimedia producer/developer is more of a designer and editor, rather than a producer of raw content. According to one interview, video content would come from a video professional; audio from an audio professional. The preferred focus should be on understanding a variety of media formats, understanding storyboarding and scriptwriting, graphic design, video editing, simple 2-D animation and transitions, web authoring, and pulling the desperate elements together into a coherent whole. These skill sets are consistent with the Macromedia Flash workflow and support the need for COM 1305.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Resulting from the needs of the situation described above, the following course level objectives are proposed.

At the end of the course, the student will:

1. Be able to identify, in both written and oral forms, all of the parts of the Macromedia Flash authoring environment and describe their functions.
2. Demonstrate their understanding of the basic features of Flash by successfully embedding graphics, video, audio, text, and interactivity into a finished presentation.
3. Be able to optimize their presentations for different networking environments including dialup, broadband, CD-ROM, and delivery methods such as progressive downloading and streaming media.
4. Make their presentations available for internet delivery by embedding it into a web page, properly setting the appropriate parameters, successfully playing it in a standard browser, and uploading it to a web server for playback by the instructor.
5. Demonstrate how to use Flash content appropriately on a website by defending their design methodology to the instructor and peers.

LINKING OBJECTIVES TO COURSE OUTCOMES

Instructional objectives are the guideposts by which students and teaching faculty satisfy the intended outcomes of a course. Objectives inform the selection of materials and procedures, and allow flexibility for instructor ingenuity. They also help to ensure consistent and measurable

results and guide student cognitive processing (Mager, 1997). A list of the proposed objectives follow and the course outcomes they hope to address.

Objective one: Be able to identify, in both written and oral forms, all of the parts of the Macromedia Flash authoring environment and describe their functions.

In order to successfully complete the tutorials in the text book, as well as their own projects, an important outcome of the course is for the students to be able to have a working knowledge of the primary components of the Macromedia Flash interface. It is through the interface that all of the features of Flash are accessed. There is no substitute for this basic level of understanding of the Flash environment.

The assessment aspect of the of objective, i.e. in both written and oral forms, is to ensure that the student, as well as the teaching faculty, understands that in addition to merely using the interface they will be expected to be able to describe the functions and identify the various tools verbally and in written forms. The written form need not be an essay. It could be interpreted as a written test. What ever mechanism of appraisal is chosen, the student will be able to communicate their understanding through more than one method.

Objective two: Demonstrate their understanding of the basic features of Flash by successfully embedding graphics, video, audio, text, and interactivity into a finished presentation.

When all is said and done, if the student can use Flash to embed various media types into a finished presentation, the course is a success. If this core outcome is met, then the addressed outcome of Objective One has been met. The student will not be able to accomplish Objective

Two unless they also have at least a rudimentary understanding of the Flash interface. Therefore, Objective Two, in addition to providing a mechanism of documenting student comprehension of the main features of the program (an obvious outcome of instruction), it will also support the documentation of success for Objective One.

Objective Two will also enable the teaching faculty, and students, to determine where problems exist if Objective Two is not met during the fulfillment of the assignments; i.e. if the student cannot embed video into a Flash file but they can embed text, then additional help and scaffolding on embedding video will be indicated.

Objective three: Be able to optimize their presentations for different networking environments including dialup, broadband, CD-ROM, and delivery methods such as progressive downloading and streaming media.

Multimedia is bandwidth intensive. As such, multimedia production professionals need to be cognizant of the network and bandwidth constraints of their target audience. If the audience is unable to view the presentation, or if the presentation takes too long to download, then the benefits of the rich media presentation will not be able to be realized. Understanding how to optimize a presentation to suit a target audience is of paramount importance to the student's success in the field and is therefore a course outcome.

Objective four: Make their presentations available for internet delivery by embedding it into a web page, properly setting the appropriate parameters, successfully playing it in a standard browser, and uploading it to a web server for playback by the instructor.

The World Wide Web is the primary delivery platform for new media and Flash is overwhelmingly the preferred authoring system. To enable Flash presentation delivery on the World Wide Web requires embedding the media within a web page. While understanding how to embed media in a webpage should be covered in prerequisite courses, there is no guarantee the student adequately grasped the concept or has had the opportunity to practice the technology – not all students work with web design and the internet on a regular basis. Therefore, it is important that this step be understood and be a course outcome. If the student is unable to embed the media, set the appropriate parameters and upload it to the server, the teaching faculty will be unable to view the student's presentation. The successful viewing of the presentation, over the internet, would constitute at least a rudimentary understanding of the process of embedding and uploading of the Flash media.

Objective five: Demonstrate how to use Flash content appropriately on a website by defending their design methodology to the instructor and peers.

Being able to describe and defend why you do something demands that you understand the process yourself and is an excellent assessment method. It is why dissertations defenses are a primary means by which a Ph.D. is conferred to a doctoral candidate. If a student is able to describe and defend their design choices to peers and to the instructor, there is a strong indication

that they understand the subject matter. Rather than a course outcome, objective five addresses an assessment method that will ensure whether the course outcomes have been successfully met.

PROPOSED ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

The following "questions" are proposed as assessment instruments at both the course and program level to follow up on the course objectives mentioned in the preceding module. Along with each question, the evaluation domain to which it belongs, the placement of the question, and to whom the question is targeted are also listed. This is not an exhaustive list, but merely a guide for further assessment creation.

1. In your own words, describe the primary functions of Flash? (What is it used for?)
   - Evaluation Domain: Learning
   - Target: Student
   - Where in Program: In curriculum. At the end of Lesson one.
2. Explain why Flash has become the web standard for distributing multimedia on the internet.
   - Evaluation Domain: Learning
   - Target: Student
   - Where in Program: In curriculum. At the end of Lesson one.
3. Match the function with the name of each of the following components of the Flash environment.

Flash Component		**Function**
Stage	____	a. A Storage area containing drawing assets, such as images, sound clips, buttons, and movies.
Layer	____	b. The smallest individual division of time in a movie
Library	____	c. The working area of the Flash environment.
Timeline	____	d. A frame that contains either the beginning or ending state of a tween
Frame	____	e. An invisible, stackable drawing plane used to isolate different parts of the presentation for greater control.
Keyframe	____	f. The area of the Flash interface that controls object position and interactivity with respect to time.

- Evaluation Domain: Learning
- Target: Student
- Where in Program: In curriculum. At the end of Lesson one.

4. In the blank following each file extension, describe the type of file it is associated with.

Extension	**Type of file**
.fla	
.flv	
.swf	
.avi	
.mov	
.wav	

- Evaluation Domain: Learning
- Target: Student
- Where in Program: In curriculum. Final exam.

5. To test your movie (presentation), select the _____ command found under the _____ selection on the menu bar.

- Evaluation Domain: Learning
- Target: Student
- Where in Program: In curriculum. At the completion of the module where the student embeds a movie in the document.

6. What does it mean to "Publish" your movie and how do you do it? Explain.

   - Evaluation Domain: Learning
   - Target: Student
   - Where in Program: In curriculum. At the completion of the module where the student publishes a movie..

7. Of all the courses you had in your academic program, which course(s) do you think best prepared you for the type of work you are currently doing? Why do you think so?

   - Evaluation Domain: Behavior Domain
   - Target: Graduate
   - Where in Program: Follow up survey question 6 months to 1 year after student is employed in field following graduation.

8. What essential Flash skills do your designers use on a daily basis?

   - Evaluation Domain: Educational or training process
   - Target: Employer
   - Where in Program: In the beginning and throughout the program design and evaluation. This question could be asked at a meeting of the Program Advisory Committee or during an interview with local industry.

9. On a scale of 1 – 5, how would you rate the program graduate's ability to apply critical thinking to independently solve creative problems? (1 means poorly, 5 means outstanding)

   - Evaluation Domain: Organizational results

- Target: Employer
- Where in Program: Survey question 6 months to 1 year after student is employed in field following graduation.

10. Do you feel your academic program adequately prepared you for your work in the field compared to your coworkers? Please explain.
    - Evaluation Domain: Reaction
    - Target: Graduate
    - Where in Program: Survey question 6 months to 1 year after student is employed in field following graduation.

    Additional note: While this question could be considered a Behavior Domain since it is concerned with how the program has prepared the student for the job, it is being classified as a Reaction Domain question because it is concerned with the students feelings or perceptions which may or may not reflect his/her actual skill level.

11. Do you feel your academic program has adequately prepared you for work in the field? In other words, do you feel confident in your marketability in finding a job in your field? Please explain.
    - Evaluation Domain: Reaction
    - Target: Student

- Where in Program: At exit exam just prior to graduation ceremonies. This time would be after all academic program requirements have been met.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS

In addition to the questions proposed in the preceding section, alternative assessment methods can also provide opportunities for further skill evaluation. On powerful method which lends itself to on-line assessment is the Hands-On Project. In contrast to tutorials, projects are assignments which are roughly defined, but allow more creative flexibility from the student and therefore require more creative thinking and problem solving skills. I propose using a course project as an alternate assessment method to traditional declarative objective testing criteria and believe that it will satisfy both items 1 and 2 of the assignment criteria; i.e. it will satisfy the need for performance criteria and also be considered an alternative assessment method as defined by Achterhof (n.d.). This assessment instrument would be directed towards the student. It would be introduced to the student on the first day of class as a guidepost for the student's learning, time management, and as an incentive for learning. The student would begin working on it approximately three weeks prior to the end of the course.

According to Alsher (2005), the roots of corporate or business training are "… found in the academic model" and have been centered around declarative knowledge or "knowledge about things" (Achterhof). In contrast, contemporary workplace learning stresses a different type of knowledge, "knowledge about how to perform activities", or procedural knowledge; how to use knowledge to get things done. It is widely accepted that assessing performance is a preferred method for evaluating an individual's skill level (Alsher, 2005, Kerka, 1995, Innman and Vernon, 1997, Mager, 1997).

In academia, capstone projects are an effective performance assessment method for evaluating a student's mastery over a subject domain, because they require integration of all of the knowledge that the student has acquired in their course of study, and demand knowledge transfer into a ill-structured problem. This requires deeper levels of knowledge into the student's existing schema structure than assessing the understanding of facts. At the time of this writing, the capstone model adopted by Jones International University embodies a number of alternative approaches. It is part portfolio, part narrative, and goes far beyond simple declarative knowledge assessment techniques like simple questions, multiple choice, and fill in the blanks. It requires the student to keep an archive of their assignment work through their tenure in the program. Then, in order to graduate, they are required to articulate a plan to develop a proposal, develop a web site, a course, or some other product typical of a professional educator. In other words, they have to apply what they have learned to a real-world activity of their choice.

Since the topic of my assessment is at the course level, not at the program level, a capstone project would be too complicated, require more time than available, and would demand skills that the students may not have depending on where they are in the curriculum. The amount of time typically allocated to a capstone project is the length of a full semester (8-weeks for Jones International). Typically, a course project has to be able to be completed within a couple of weeks. Therefore, the complexity should be much less but still embody all of the information and experience accumulated throughout the semester.

What type of project can be realistically expected of students in this class? During the class the students will be exposed to theory about how Macromedia Flash functions, its advantages and disadvantages, why it has become the web standard for multimedia, and a variety of tutorials giving them hands on experience. The tutorials will provide them with experience in embedding

video, audio, graphics, and text. They will create a web banner, buttons, animations, and add interactivity. They will publish their productions and upload them to a web server. The question is, can they use the newly acquired skills to produce a multimedia presentation similar to one they would face in a real-world development situation?

This then is the alternative, performance-based, assignment they would be assigned. They will receive enough design information so that they can focus on the task of building a presentation, not designing a presentation from scratch. They will be provided with the necessary media files, a storyboard, a time-limit, color choices, font suggestions, and other thematic recommendations that would typically come from a designer or client. Their project will be to transfer the skills they have learned from the tutorials to developing a finished presentation that meets all of the design criteria given to them. To deter cheating, each student will add a personal element to the design independent of the given criteria and agreed to by the instructor. The student will also submit a written essay, explaining how they accomplished the design, the problems they encountered, and how they solved the problems. A model assignment will be provided for them illustrating what exemplary work looks like and a rubric will be provided showing them how they will be graded.

ASSESSING PERFORMANCE: A CLOSER LOOK

Let's take a closer look at how creating a project and assessing performance could be accomplished in COM1305. One of the instructional objectives for COM1305 is for learners to be able to "demonstrate their understanding of the basic features of Flash by successfully embedding graphics, video, audio, text, and interactivity into a finished presentation." When we talk about a learner being able to DO something which results in a finished project, we are

talking about performance. We want the learner to perform the stated tasks and our assessment will evaluate how well the performance was achieved. What should this performance look like and how should we go about assessing it to be certain the objective has been met?

As we mentioned in the previous section, throughout COM 1305, learners will be guided through readings and tutorials. They will be exposed to objective quizzes to determine if they have read and understood the fundamentals of Flash. Procedurally, they will complete a variety of tutorials, giving them hands-on experience with the program.

The tutorial files used in the class are embedded in the Flash product itself, as part of the Help environment, and will therefore always be available to the learner. The learner will have accessibility to the tutorials and files on any computer that has the full product loaded. This is a real advantage for post class review of information. As an aid in learning, the manufacturer supplies both the beginning and ending versions of the tutorials. This is advantage for the student as they can see what the file should look like once the tutorial has been successfully completed. This however, creates an assessment problem when the tutorials are used as part of an instructor-led class as COM 1305. How can the instructor be assured that the student doesn't submit the finished file that is already supplied with the program?

One possible solution is to have the student complete the tutorial but with modifications that are supplied by the instructor or are personal to the student. For example, in the first tutorial, the student embeds a video clip of a car driving on a city bridge. The video corresponds to an ad for a sports car. The video simulates the experience of driving the car over a bridge. Rather than having the students use the ad text that is supplied with the tutorial, the lesson could have the student change the information so that it corresponds to the car that they drive. For ad copy, the student could make up content or copy and paste advertisement copy from a car manufacturer

web site. The chances are slim that a student taking the class will have the exact same car as another student, and therefore the assignment content will be unique. Even if two or more students did drive the same model of car, their advertising copy will be different.

Since the class is being offered as an on-line class, another piece of the assessment is making the assignment available to the instructor for evaluation. To accomplish this, the student will have to transfer the file to a web server using FTP (File Transfer Protocol) or a file transfer utility that uses ftp. The IP address or domain name of the web server, directory location, login, and password information will be provided to the learner. Instructions on how to transfer files will be made available to aid those learners not familiar with transferring files over the internet. Once the necessary files have been transferred, the student will email the URL of the uploaded assignment to the instructor and also make it available to peers by posting the URL on the class discussion forum.

Lastly, the student will be required to post a reflection journal entry in the discussion forum. The reflection entry will require the student to summarize the problems encountered, the solutions used and how they were discovered, and lessons learned during the assignment.

SCORING

Just as students and instructors need course and lesson objectives to guide the learning process, they also need to know exactly what is expected during the assessment of the assignments and how they will be graded. A grading rubric is used for this purpose. A rubric guides the behaviors and expectations of the student and provides the structure for the teaching faculty. Students need to know how much, or how little, to perform in order to satisfy the requirements of the assignments. Teaching faculty need guidelines to assess adequate work and how to approach

assigning credit for work done. Borrowing ideas from existing rubrics currently being used at Nashville State Community College, the grading criteria could resemble that listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Assessment Criteria

Assignment Criteria	Maximum Points Awarded (45)
Accurately completing assignment instructions	10
Absence of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors	10
Email correct assignment URL to instructor	10
Reflection journal entry	10
Response to another student's posting	5

Determining criteria is only one component of a rubric. A rubric also requires a ranking scale that provides scoring and feedback for a range of quality performance; usually poor to exceptional performance values and the points that are awarded to those ranges of performance (Stix, 1997).

Building upon the criteria listed above, the grading rubrics for the performance assessments listed in the previous section are listed in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Multiple tables were employed due to the changing requirements of the criteria.

Table 2. Grading Rubric for Hands-On Assignment

The student will complete the "Create a Document" tutorial as supplied in the Flash Help product and the course text with an exception. Instead of the using the ad text supplied with the tutorial, the student will create their own heading and ad text. The text will correspond to the car that they drive. The text will describe no less than three features of the car and will have an appropriate heading.

The student will submit the completed working .fla file to the assignment workspace. They will also transfer the completed .swf file and published .htm file to the class web server using the provided instructions. Once the necessary files have been transferred, the student will email the URL of the uploaded assignment to the instructor and also make it available to peers by posting the URL on the class discussion forum.

Assignment Criteria	**0**	**2**	**6**	**8**	**10**
Accurately completing assignment instructions	Student did not submit an assignment.	Student submitted an assignment but did not follow instructions at all.	Student submitted an assignment and followed some of the instructions	Student submitted an assignment and followed most of the instructions.	Student submitted an assignment, followed all instructions perfectly.
Absence of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors	Student did not submit an assignment	The content was not easily read or	The content could be understood,	The content was easily read and	The content was easily read and

		understandable due to massive spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.	however it was not easily read due to multiple spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.	understood but there were a few spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.	understood with no spelling, grammar, or typographical errors
Email correct assignment URL to instructor	The student did not submit a URL.	The student submitted a broken URL.		The student submitted a working URL but used a method other than the one specified.	The student submitted a working URL using the appropriate method

Table 3. Grading Rubric for Reflection Journal Entry

The reflection entry will require the student to summarize the problems encountered, the solutions used and how they were discovered, and lessons learned during the assignment. The entry will address each of these items and be free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors.

	0	**2**	**6**	**8**	**10**
Reflection journal entry	The student did not post a journal entry	The student posted a journal entry, but contained one or more of the following problems: 1. it did not address the required items, 2. was incoherent or	The student posted a journal entry that addressed some of the required items, was mostly coherent, and organized. It may also have contained one to several spelling,	The student posted a journal entry that addressed each of the required items, was coherent, and organized. However, the posting contained one to several	The student posted a journal entry that addressed each of the required items, was coherent, and organized. In addition the post was free of spelling,

		poorly organized, 3. Had massive spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.	grammar, or typographical errors.	spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.	grammar, or typographical errors.

Table 4. Grading Rubric for Response to another Journal Entry

The student will respond to another student's journal entry and provide thoughtful and relevant feedback that is free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors.

	0	2	3	4	5
Response to another student's posting	The student did not post a response to another posting	The student posted a response that was neither thoughtful, relative, or had massive spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.	The student posted a response to a posting that was thoughtful, but was not relative, or had more than two spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.	The student posted a response to a posting that was thoughtful, relative, but had one or two spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.	The student posted a response to a posting that was thoughtful, relative, and free of spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK FOR STUDENTS

A numerical score does not often convey to a student where the successes and trouble spots are in the students performance and understanding. Therefore, in addition to providing a numerical point grade, the instructor will also provide feedback to the student on the quality of the work, in written prose, privately through email to the student.

LIMITATIONS AND BIASES OF PLAN

While every effort has been made to create course objectives and assessment instruments that are free of bias, limitations, and restrictions to implementation, this plan must be considered in the context of the environment for which it is intended. COM 1305 is being developed as an online course that is part of the Multimedia Curriculum at Nashville State Community College in Nashville Tennessee. The plan is biased toward the student profile common at the college and certain assumptions are being made.

The student is an “adult”, at least in high-school, and more likely in their post-secondary level of education. They have already passed the prerequisite courses required by the course or have the knowledge required by those courses. Specifically, they have had English composition and are comfortable with the English language. They have also had a course in HTML coding and basic web design.

Given that COM 1305 is a web-based offering, a certain level of technology will be assumed as well. The student will have their own computer, a copy of the software, and access to the internet. Existing faculty and resources will be used for the course effort. An infrastructure for WebCT, the course delivery platform, a web server for posting of student assignments, and the necessary support

personnel to maintain the system, are already in place. No further expenditures or resources are required for the effort.

Other than these requirements, prerequisites, assumptions, and given the equalizing benefits of the internet as a delivery medium for course content, this course, its objectives, and assessment instruments are free of biases regarding gender, age, race, sexual orientation, or physical limitations.

CONCLUSION

Any course of study needs solid learning outcomes, course objectives, and assessment protocols for adequately evaluating student performance. This plan has discussed the theoretical foundations of these issues and provided examples and guidance for their application to COM 1305, a beginning course in using the Macromedia Flash software. Learning outcomes were proposed along with their accompanying course objectives. Assessment instruments were developed and presented that addressed both declarative and procedural knowledge types along with arguments for their usage. Lastly, grading criteria and several rubrics were developed and offered as a guide for further course development efforts.

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