

## Reflections on a Course

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### **Course Objectives:**

If the course title were to be translated into English, it might be "The Computer and International Communication". The 15 students registered for the course were all majors in the Education for International Understanding Course.

The course required that the students accomplish two major tasks; creating personal web pages in both English and Japanese, and producing JavaScript-based interactive educational material whose purpose was to promote international, or intercultural, communication. This interactive teaching/learning material dealt with language learning and/or cultural awareness.

### **Course Materials:**

There were no textbooks for this course. Materials were either produced by the instructor or selected from sources on the Internet itself for the students to read and understand prior to the particular class meeting for which they were pertinent.

### **Basic Introduction:**

Because they had only limited knowledge of the Mac OS X operating system, the students were given a crash course in basic operations, keyboard shortcuts, file sharing methods, etc. They were quick learners, and this training only lasted through the beginning of the second meeting.

### **Web Page Authoring:**

Although there are many programs that will automatically, or nearly automatically, mark up documents for viewing by a browser, this course required that the students learn rudimentary HTML so that they would get a better understanding of the mechanics of how web pages come into being and also to prepare them for the latter portion of the course, during which they would have to apply this knowledge when incorporating JS scripts into HTML documents in order to produce dynamic web pages.

### **JavaScript:**

Although this was not, by any means, a programming course, the students needed to learn the fundamentals of scripting. Some concepts they dealt with (and were occasionally daunted by) were: variables, functions, control statements, loops, etc. They had to apply this knowledge to produce interactive web pages.

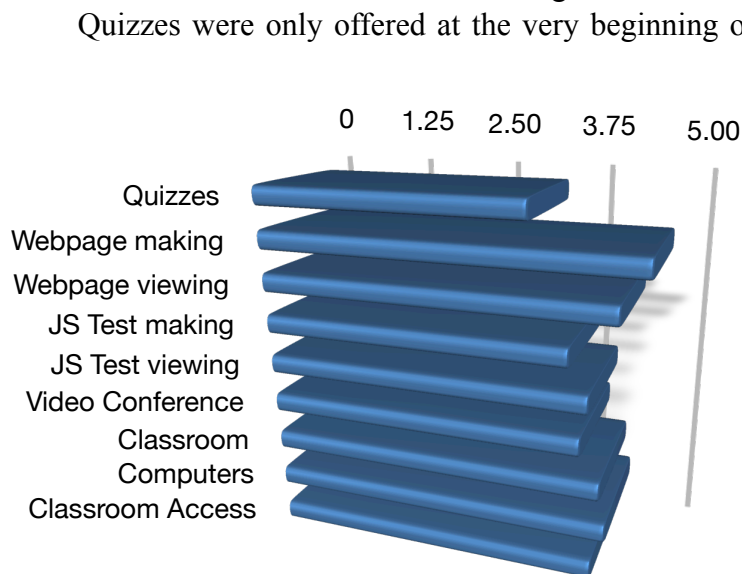
### **Student-based Course Evaluation:**

There was no time during the course itself, so the students were asked to complete a very simple evaluation following the final meeting of another class which they all happened be attending. The evaluation form consisted of two parts: nine items asking for ratings on a five-point Likert scale followed by three open-ended items.

### **Likert Scale Ratings:**

The nine areas the students were asked to rate were: Quizzes, Webpage making, Webpage viewing, JS Test making, JS Test viewing, Video Conference, Classroom, Computers, and

Classroom Access. The final three questions were included mainly because the classroom itself had undergone a major overhaul (still ongoing) thanks to the efforts and/or support of the dean, Professors Kotobuki, Fukuda, and Yazawa, Mr. Tetsuo Seo from Somuka, and the instructor and students themselves. The results of the ratings are shown in the graph below.



Quizzes were only offered at the very beginning of the course, so it is perhaps only to be expected that their usefulness would be rated rather low. The students tended to rate the web page portion of the course higher than the JavaScript part. On reflection, more time was needed on the latter because the concepts were much harder to grasp. The final four categories received reasonable ratings for usefulness. These rating might have been higher had the classroom overhaul taken place before the course began rather than as it progressed.

### Open-ended Questions:

The students were given the opportunities to provide comments (suggestions) about the course in three major areas: what they found useful, what they would like to see changed, and general comments. Below are the comments given, translated into English where necessary. Many of the comments dovetailed with the ratings. Some of the suggestions for change were actually realized through the classroom overhaul, but that was late in the term.

Useful:	Needing Change:	Other Comments
Java Learning how to use the Mac Being able to make a webpage The MacLab got a whole lot nicer Making webpages is fun but JS was really hard. A lot of interesting content Learning how to make webpages Useful in information age Increase in number of Macs Happy that the room got nicer Being able to see explanations on the screen Enjoyable webpage viewing	JavaScript Explanation Make it a little easier Would have liked the larger screen earlier Long explanation Wanted to make a website for EIU The room was cold Better to use the screen	Spent more time in the MacLab than any other EIU class Want more time spent on webpage design than on JavaScript I think it was difficult. Thank you. I depended on my classmates Java was too difficult This class was very difficult, but I was interest! The MacLab and the Macs got a whole lot nicer