

Reflections on a Course

英語・D.R. ボグダン

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:

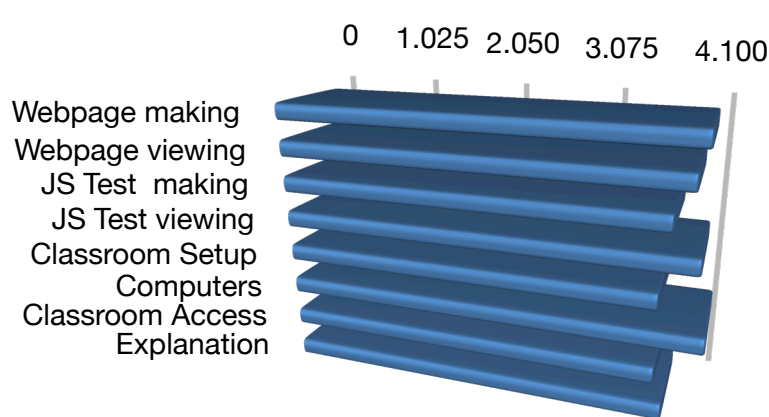
Although this was not, by any means, a programming course, the students needed to learn the fundamentals of scripting. Some concepts they dealt with (and were occasionally daunted by) were: variables, functions, control statements, loops, etc. They had to apply this knowledge to produce interactive web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

Student-based Course Evaluation:

The students were asked to complete a very simple evaluation following the final meeting of the course. The evaluation form was similar to the one employed in 2007. It consisted of two parts: eight items asking for ratings on a five-point Likert scale followed by three open-ended items.

Likert Scale Ratings:

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



The previous year, the students tended to rate the webpage portion of the course somewhat higher than the JavaScript portion. This year, however, the gap closed a bit, but not in a good way; the two webpage ratings dropped slightly, while the JS ones remained nearly the same. The computers received the highest mark; the students tended to be quite complimentary toward the Macs throughout the course.

The two areas with the lowest rating, "Classroom Setup" and "Classroom Access" reflected comments that they had made a various times. They wanted more of the new iMacs, because they had to double- and triple-up on one machine. They also wanted the access hours of the room extended to at least 7 PM to give them more time to access the Macs. Due to financial concerns, the former is a difficult one to remedy, but the extended hours will be implemented in the next academic year.

The students also asked for more "textbook-like" material and that concern can be seen in the rating for "Explanation". Although this is intended to be a hands-on, occasionally "learn as you go" course, more effort into producing materials is needed.

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. The comments often dovetailed with the ratings, and were, for the most part, positive.

Useful:	Needing Change:	Other Comments
Webpage making was hard but it was fun for me and useful. We could learn how to make HP. We enjoyed seeing each others HP. Useful learning various functions. Learned how to make wepages. Good to learn how to make homepages. I had sense of achievement. Knowing how to make webpage was useful. I learned a lot about computer. I could study using Mac. I didn't know JS. Useful! I could master operation of HTML.	Classroom access JS too difficult. Wanted more explanations Classroom access time. Want to learn more various webpages. Increase computers. Extend access time. Brighter screen. Blank. If we had a textbook, we could understand more and more. Blank. Access time. Blank I hope this room will have many more computers.	Thank you Thanks. Love Mac, but have PC at home. Learning how to use the Mac was very useful. Blank. Blank. Blank. Blank. Doing JS was difficult for me. It would be better if we could just do one or the other, HTML or JS. I enjoyed the class. Thank you. Blank. Thank you for your guidance.