

ICT & International Communication 1

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Background:

This is one of two ICT-related courses that the instructor was originally hired to teach and had, in fact, been teaching as adjunct faculty for a number of years prior to that. It was originally designed to be an elective, rather than a requirement, for students in the now defunct Education for International Understanding (EIU) Course in the Faculty of Education. For the last few years, however, it has been offered as an elective course for teaching education majors.

The number of students taking the class had fluctuated a bit over the years, but in its heyday, however, it hovered around 15. Originally, when it started, the student numbers were quite low, which was fortunate because the number of computers in the MacLab (set up mainly for this class) was also quite low. At one point, however, the room was equipped with 22 iMacs, strategically arranged to provide the best environment for the students to work on their projects for the class outside of the regular class time..

The original iMacs had become quite antiquated, and about four years ago, the room saw a refresh of the computers and a reduction in the number of student machines to 15, meaning, naturally, that the number of students also needed to be limited to 15. This posed no major problems, due to the elimination of the aforementioned EIU Course.

The most recent iteration of the class was in the 2019 academic year, and 12 students enrolled in the course. As a computer class depending on heavy use of one-to-one teacher-student interaction, this reduced number allowed the substantial amount of individual instruction needed. A lower number was actually anticipated because of the loss of the original EIU majors, and the fact that this many signed up was actually surprising.

Unavoidable Changes Due to Exigencies:

The pandemic changed things drastically beginning two years ago for everyone, of course, but this course in particular depended on the students being able to attend in person in the MacLab because they needed access to the Mac OS environment to make use the iLife/iWork apps used in the creation and editing of the video content: the core element of the course. They also needed an environment where they could work together on the group projects and use the video creation setup (including green screen and lighting) found in the room.

The other ICT course, on the other hand, covered web design for creation of teaching/learning materials and more readily lent itself to being conducted online, because they could use applications which were not platform-specific. Two years ago, therefore, it was decided to switch the order of the courses to allow for a synchronic online class making use of Zoom and Moodle, with the instructor showing things on his office Mac and the students using the same apps on whatever personal computer they might have.

It had been hoped that things would let up enough in that first year to allow for an in-person class later on. This finally happened for the spring semester of this, the 2021 academic year: however, modifications had to be made to adjust for the ever-changing situation.

First of all, the number of students had to be limited so that they were not sitting right beside each other at their computers, and seven came out as the upper boundary to allow that kind of spacing in the limited area of the MacLab. Also, transparent partitions were put between the machines to further protect the students, (and the instructor).

A further requirement was that the students would have access to a device at home that would allow them use of the iLife/iWork applications on their own. This turned out to be a very for-

tunate decision, because the further outbreak in late fall required that we shift to online again. The students all had iPhones, and were able to continue the work they had begun during the in-person sessions at the beginning of the term.

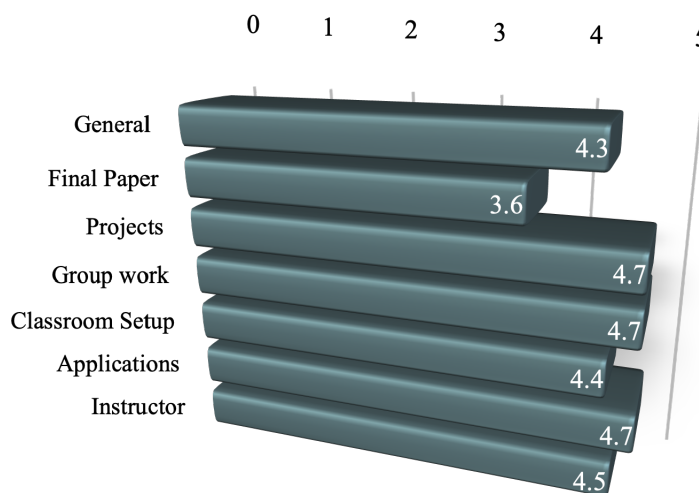
Content:

As in prior iterations, the students were asked to complete three major tasks: during the first half, to create personal video and audio projects; in the second half, to work in groups to produce comprehensive video educational material which can be used for language learning and/or cultural awareness; and, finally at the end of the course, to compose and submit individual essays related to ICT and how it might pertain to their future as educators.

Past Evaluation Data:

The last time the media design version of this class was conducted was in 2019, and, at the end of the term, the instructor asked the students to complete an informal, anonymously submitted evaluation on Moodle. They gave an average of slightly over 4.4 out of 5 on a Likert-scale for the seven items they rated, which was a positive response to the course.

Earlier Evaluation Results



Wrap-up:

There was no official evaluation conducted this time around, but we can look at some of the items rated before and look at some impressions from this time around based on the instructor's perceptions and what students commented on.

The students made some very positive comments during the first couple of sessions in which they were shown how to perform basic general tasks on the iMacs. They were quite complimentary about the hardware and the OS environment. Unfortunately, use of the lab was cut short when in-person classes were terminated, and they had to work on the iPhones. Some growing pains were due to the small screens of the phone, and another issue was the sudden change in environment and a lack of preparation for that change. Apple tries to make the apps on iOS work similarly to the Mac OS versions, but there are some unavoidable differences, and neither the instructor nor the students had much time to make the adjustments.

In the evaluation for the previous class, The final report was rated the lowest. A major reason was probably because it was not a major portion of the course, and the instructor had not satisfactory prepped them for it. This time around, more attention was paid to it, and the quality of the reports themselves benefited from this.