

Appendix A

Data gathered to determine a “before” picture from ARP blog at <http://ccassinelli.blogspot.com/index.html>

Monday, December 4, 2006

Observation - Direct Instruction

Today I filmed myself instructing my students in my Computer Applications course. The intent was to get a "before" snapshot of direct instruction.

Lesson objective: Students will understand what is an Excel chart and understand the importance of choosing the best chart to represent the data. Students will learn the 4 steps of the chart wizard. Student will learn how to customize an Excel chart

Text: Learning Microsoft Office 2003, (c) 2004 Pearson Education, Inc. Exercise 17, Pages 397-402.

Procedures: I asked the students to open an Excel assignment that we worked on the day before. This assignment contained data from an in-class survey. I taught the students how to choose adjacent and non-adjacent cells for an Excel chart. I explain they needed to include both labels and values. After selecting the data, the students opened the chart wizard. Step One: Choose the Chart. We discussed the importance of choosing the appropriate chart for the data (ie, data over time might want a line graph, pie graphs are good for comparisons to the whole, etc). Step Two: Select the data series. We discussed ways to change the selected data. Step Three: Chart Options. The chart options correlate to the type of chart. We discussed picking a specific and appropriate chart title, labels for x & y axis, legends, data labels, etc. Step Four: Choose the Chart Location - either as an embedded chart or on its own sheet. I then instructed the students how to change the features (fonts, colors, alignment, etc) of the chart. At the end, each student went around to each other's computers to view the various charts.

Reflection: For most of the students, using the chart wizard was a new procedure. For the most part, students followed the direct instructions and created a successful chart by the end of the class. Here are some specific observations:

1. The students chose appropriate charts (mostly pie, bar & column)
2. 3 students did not understand the initial instructions and I had to assist them in choosing the correct data.
3. Think/Pair/Share: When I asked the students to discuss information with their neighbor, 3 sets of students did not follow the instructions.
4. Most of the students were on task and several asked for clarification on chart options.
5. Dustin seemed familiar with the procedures and worked ahead when we got to the chart wizard.
6. Scott was distracted and several times opened his Internet browser to look at pictures from the school dance.

Overall, I felt the lesson was fine. The class period consisted of me giving lots of instructions and only a little bit of student interaction. The students were on task but not all were actively engaged in the activity. Some students did not follow along with the demonstration and as a result, made mistakes that needed correction. I referred to the book but most of the instruction was oral.

Posted by Colette Cassinelli at [1:42 PM 0 comments](#) _

Labels: [direct instruction](#), [Excel](#), [observation](#)

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Observation - Book Assignment

Tuesday's assignment: Exercise 17 - Creating Charts in Excel pg. 401 1-8 & pg. 406 4-8

Observation: After giving direct instruction on Monday about how to use the chart wizard I wanted to observe students completing an assignment from the textbook.

1. Some students do a good job on book instructions - they like following the "recipe" of what to do next.
2. It feels like their goal is to finish the assignment - not on learning.
3. Several students who did not understand how to complete the tasks automatically asked me for help instead of referring to the procedures page.
4. Other students asked clarification from their classmates on the directions.
5. Most students did not have trouble with the formatting of the charts once they understood some of the vocabulary: Series 1, chart area, value axis, major gridlines.
6. I observed some students taking over the controls of their classmate's computer and doing a procedure for them instead of instructing them how to do it.
7. When two students finished early, they began browsing the Internet.
8. Several students did not complete the assignment during the class period.

Posted by Colette Cassinelli at [5:49 PM 0 comments](#) _

Labels: [Excel](#), [observation](#), [textbook](#)

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Observation - Class Survey Planning

Thursday: Data Collection & Charts - authentic audience

Objective: Students will design a survey to gather information about their classmates. This information will then be graphed and placed on the school Intranet website.

Day 1 Procedures:

1. Students were broken into groups according to grade level. They discussed which information they are interested in gathering.
2. Once they chose a topic, they opened Excel and decided a format for gathering their data.
3. Students printed off data gathering spreadsheets.
4. Students have until Monday to collect data from their classmates (minimum: 30 responses)

Day 1: Observations

1. # of Groups: 2 freshmen, 1 sophomore, 1 junior, 3 senior (2 absent)
2. The students immediately were engaged in the activity.
3. It did not take long for the groups to decided on a topic.
4. Several commented they liked the idea of publishing their results on the Valiant Pride Intranet site.
5. In two of the groups, it seemed like several of the students were engaged and one student wasn't as involved in the planning of the survey.
6. Three groups needed direction in setting up of their data spreadsheets.
7. All students left with data sheets for the surveys by the end of the period.

Posted by Colette Cassinelli at [6:00 PM 0 comments](#) _

Labels: [authentic](#), [Excel](#), [observation](#)

Tuesday, January 2, 2007

Observation - Review Assignments

Activity:

Today students are working on written review questions to prepare for a Unit Test in Excel. Students were given 12 questions to answer and a 3 page Excel Review packet to refer to. Students typed their answers to the questions in Word. Minimal instructions were given.

Observation:

- For the most part, students began on the assignment right away.
- There were two Korean students who needed more encouragement to get started and stay on task (and stop talking).
- There was minimal interaction between students, except for the occasional student who asked their friend for help with the answers. Towards the end of the period there was a few more students seeking assistance from classmates.
- Most of the answers to the questions were located on the review packet and involved basic recall and locating the answer.
- Only two of the questions required synthesis of understanding.

- Only **two students** asked for clarification of questions from the teacher (21 students present today). There was little interaction between students and the teacher.
- The first student finished in 17 minutes.
- When students finished the assignment, several surfed the Internet, some visited with each other, two went to the restroom, and one student worked on homework for another class.
- All but 7 students finished the assignment during the 45 minute period.

Results:

The average class score for the assignment was 91%.

19 out of 21 students turned in the assignment. (The 2 exchange students did not complete the assignment on time and when they eventually did show it to me - it was incomplete and did not show understanding of the concepts)

Posted by Colette Cassinelli at [10:54 AM 0 comments](#) _

Labels: [observation](#), [seat-work](#)

Pre-ARP Survey – January 9, 2007

I surveyed the Computer Applications students about their opinions of the curriculum and class activities.

- 1. What year are you?**
 - a. Freshmen – 6
 - b. Sophomore – 4
 - c. Junior – 3
 - d. Senior – 4
- 2. Do you think the keyboarding practice this term has been helpful?**
 - a. Yes – 12
 - b. Somewhat – 4
 - c. No – 1
- 3. Which WORD assignment was the most beneficial (multiple answers allowed)**
 - a. Poster – 3
 - b. Theme calendar – 4
 - c. Mail Merge thank you letters – 11
 - d. Outlines – 6
 - e. Group Newspaper – 7
 - f. Your individual project – 3
 - g. Other – 2
- 4. Describe your overall impressions of assignment from the Office 2003 textbook**
 - a. It helped me learn and it allowed me to look up things that I had forgotten instead of asking you all of the time ☺
 - b. Very good. You do everything by yourself, but the skills they want you to know.

- c. They are kinda cheesy and boring and it was kinda hard to follow, also it was much easier to look on the overhead.
- d. They were pretty dull, considering I already know how to do practically all of it. I can see how they would be really helpful to someone who didn't know how to do what was being taught, and the way it's set up was good; however for me it was kind of a waste of time.
- e. They are well thought out. They were really easy to do. I wish they were a little challenging to figure out.
- f. Some were helpful.
- g. They were useful, but way to easy to use.
- h. My overall impression of the assignments were fun, I liked how we did stuff out of the book, because then we weren't trying to keep up with you, we were able to work at our own pace.
- i. I thought these were good assignments but not something that a student would be doing in their free time, and so not always very interesting.
- j. I thought they were helpful because we learned how to work Microsoft Word and learned how to write different papers for different assignments.
- k. They were helpful and made the assignments more understandable.
- l. They really weren't that hard to do.
- m. They were fun. I like the fact that you told us to just follow the directions out of the book and then we could go back and make our assignment more catchy or fun by adding our own styles and pictures to it.

5. Describe your overall impressions of group projects.

- a. They were fun and enjoyable. Sometimes people would freak out, but we kept it on track.
- b. Very helpful, should be done more.
- c. Group projects are fun when everyone has their work done on time.
- d. My group was good and the projects were fun.
- e. I like not like the group projects at all. Probably because I'm not a group person, but in nearly every project we did it was nearly all done by one person. This can become especially annoying when the person refuses to be part of the process any longer. It doesn't show personal progress, just the progress of the most learnt person. The others just ride the coattails.
- f. They are good.
- g. Helpful.
- h. Some were fun to do and interesting, others tended to be the opposite. They were okay.
- i. My overall impressions of group projects is that I think it was fun working with peers while also learning new stuff.
- j. I liked the group projects. I think it is fun to interact with other in school for a grade.
- k. I like the group projects, and thought it was a good way to get to know the class when we do not always have time to do so.
- l. I like working in groups because the projects in groups were more exciting with all the things we could pick, which were what we like leisurely.
- m. It is good to have other with you for a project so if you do not know something ... a friend(s) can help you with your problem or question.
- n. It was good, but had a tendency to become disorganized. There were also instances where one or a few students did most of the work.

- o. The group projects were helpful when ou were using something I knew and needed some help here and there from your partners. Personally, I like working by myself.
- p. Kind of boring, but it was nice to not know something and learn a new thing from a different person you were working with.

6. Which EXCEL skills did you find the most beneficial?

- a. Simple formulas – 4
- b. Basic functions – 3
- c. Formatting of the spreadsheet – 1
- d. Charts – 4
- e. Advanced Functions - 5

7. On a scale of 1-5 rate your teacher on the following items:

Evaluation	1=Poor	2 = Just OK	3=Good	4 =Very Good	5 = Excellent
Knowledge of curriculum	0	0	1	5	12
Being prepared for class	0	0	1	2	12
Available for help	2	1	5	3	6
Willingness to assist you when asked	1	1	3	4	7
Feedback given to you about your progress	1	2	3	5	5
Ability to teach new skills	0	0	1	3	12
Friendliness	0	1	3	5	8
Overall impression	0	1	1	7	8

8. What suggestions do you have for the types of lessons for this class in the future?

- a. I would not change much, I don't know should it be changed at all.
- b. Get ideas from the book, but don't use it directly.
- c. I would skip some of the easier stuff and focus more on the harder stuff.
- d. Projects should be individual and less bound by the book, allowing students to show skills not learned officially in class.
- e. Make fewer lessons. Somedays I want to be lazy and not do anything but type.
- f. Advanced programming.
- g. Its good the way it is.
- h. I think it would be fun to do many examples like the PowerPoint Tutorial. It is fun because we get to customize it and add cool things to it while learning about it.
- i. I think that they should teach 2 different courses 1 about Mac computers, because those are the only types of computers I have at home and they are completely different than Dells.
- j. I think that good lessons were ones where you are given all the important information before-hand, so you would simply be corroborating it.
- k. I have no suggestions. This was the funnest class of my semester.
- l. No final, other than that ... I pretty sure the class has filled most of the expectations I thought about this class.
- m. I like that there weren't too many big projects that you had to work on by yourself.
- n. We should maybe do a little experimenting with PAINT or whatever its called and take images and stuff like that and make them a little bit cooler than they already are and apply them to projects once we recreate the picture or image.

9. What recommendations do you have for the teacher of how she could teach this class differently in the future?

- a. Not at all, she knows her job.
- b. Group projects are fun, but work is almost never done on time, keep it more individual, also let the students teach each other as well as themselves, if they can't figure it out, then help.
- c. GO SLOWER!!!
- d. Besides the projects, it's pretty good the way it is.
- e. Help the students more.
- f. More fun.
- g. None
- h. None
- i. Nothing, she does an excellent job.
- j. I think a more individual style would be good, but I really enjoy this class so I think the way you are teaching is great.
- k. None because Mrs. Cassinelli knows what she is doing.
- l. Move the projector screen towards the center front of class ... its just a little too much to the right hand side ...
- m. Make the class deal with more what the students enjoy.
- n. More interactions with the students.
- o. Doing a fine job as it is, so keep it up.

10. Would you recommend this class to another student? Why or why not?

- a. Yes, because out of all the years I have been alive, 16 years, I have never know how to do most of the techniques that had learned this semester.
- b. Yes, because he will use the knowledge from this class a lot for the rest of his life.
- c. Yes, this class has helped me get homework done faster.
- d. Ya it is very helpful, and it makes other classes way easier.
- e. If the other student had no knowledge of computers at all I would recommend the class wholeheartedly, but if the student was already relatively proficient I wouldn't because it becomes tedious and repetitive if you have any computer knowledge.
- f. NO, its to easy. Every knows how to do it.
- g. Yes, because the teacher is nice.
- h. Sure, it helps with keyboarding and learning computer tricks.
- i. Yes, because it helps you understand computer programs.
- j. Yes, I think it is very resourceful.
- k. I would because it teaches you a lot about computers that you can use at home or for other projects.
- l. Yes, I would recommend it to other students because you learn a lot and you get to do fun assignments.
- m. Yes, I would ... if you don't have much knowledge of computers .. this class is good to get a jump start on it.
- n. Yes I think taking a required class is rather important. But that is just my oh so humble opinion.
- o. Yes, because it gives you the basic skills for using Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
- p. Yes because you learn so much about the computer than you normally would.

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

[Gathering Evidence: SurveyMonkey.com](#)

The Problem:

I want to survey the students about their opinions and attitudes about the current Computer Applications course, but I don't want to feel that they can't be honest with their answers if I can tell who wrote what. I was thinking of asking another teacher to help administer a survey or interview specific students.

The Solution:

Wendy suggested using an online survey. She recommended a website called SurveyMonkey.com. I created a free account with SurveyMonkey that allowed me to make a 10 question survey and assess to the results. My questions included:

1. What year are you?
2. Do you think the keyboarding practice this term has been helpful?
3. Which WORD assignment was he most beneficial?
4. Describe your overall impressions of the assignments from the Office 2003 TEXTBOOK.
5. Describe your overall impressions of the group projects.
6. Which EXCEL skills did you find the most beneficial?
7. On a scale of 1-5 rate your teacher on the following items: knowledge of curriculum, being prepared for class, available for help, willingness to assist you when asked, feedback given to you about your progress, ability to teach new skills, friendliness, and overall impression.
8. What suggestions do you have for the types of lessons for this class in the future?
9. What recommendations do you have for the teacher of how she could teach this class differently in the future?
10. Would you recommend this class to another student? Why or why not?

The Results:

The students seem to like the online survey and all 17 students who were present that day answered all the questions.

The general feedback that I received was:

- There was mixed reviews about the assignments from the textbook. Some liked the step by step instructions - others thought they were boring.
- Most students like working in the group projects.
- Students recommended skipping some of the easier skills and focus on the harder skills, more projects - but many were happy with the content of the skills.
- The teacher evaluation revealed that students wanted more feedback on their progress but that the teacher knew her material well.
- Students recommended the class for others to take and the overall rating of the class was good.

I like using SurveyMonkey for the evaluation. I felt like the students were honest (it seemed that only 1 student was unhappy with the class!) but at the same time the survey wasn't too long or

cumbersome for them to fill out. Almost every student wrote a comment when given the opportunity to do so.

Posted by Colette Cassinelli at [11:46 AM 0 comments](#) _

Labels: [assessment](#), [evidence](#)

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Observation - Lecturing vs. Doing

The Problem:

It is getting to the end of the term and I am running out of time. I still have several skills that I want the students to be able to do for their final projects but I haven't had time to cover yet. This quarter is one week shorter than the first and Food Drive and holiday events have cut into my class time. I normally give students an opportunity to practice several PowerPoint skills before they are required to use them on their final projects but I am short on time. What to do?

The Solution:

I am not completely happy with my solution but I have decided to have my students make a PowerPoint presentation about "How to make an effective PowerPoint presentation". This will give me opportunity to "teach" some skills ABOUT PowerPoint and the students will include this information in their projects. They will also get a chance to PRACTICE some of the skills in the project at the same time.

The Result:

At first the students seemed to like the idea that they were making their own tutorial about how to use PowerPoint. They like learning how to make screenshot to show examples of what they were writing about. But after 5 days of repeating the same thing over and over again, I could tell that some of the student were getting bored with the material. I am guilty of trying to cram too many concepts into one lesson. I should have just chosen 2-3 unique skills (ie: varying slide layouts, using the slide master, and features of custom animation) and let the students "discover" many of the other skills on their own.

I fall into the habit too often that if I don't teach it to them - they won't discover the information. I really need to embrace the constructivist point of view and create an environment where my students can discover and explore various elements of technology skills and provide them with guidance and resources to uncover the information. My mantra needs to be "guide on the side" not "sage on the stage".

Posted by Colette Cassinelli at [3:28 PM 0 comments](#) _

Labels: [direct_instruction](#), [lecture](#), [observation](#), [PowerPoint](#)

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Observation - Take this project seriously ...

The Problem:

Whenever I need to tell a student to "take their project seriously - this isn't entertainment" I know that the student IS NOT engaged in an authentic project. Too often I see my students "having fun" with their assignments. To me this means that they are bored with the assignment and as a way to entertain themselves they add silly or humorous aspects to their projects as a way to engage their friends to look at their projects.

The Assignment:

The students could choose between two concepts for their final project in Computer Applications class:

- One was to create an original business and make a business plan and use PowerPoint to describe the various aspects of the business. The technical skills included: Using the slide master to create an original template, integrating Word outlines and PowerPoint, using a variety of layouts to include charts, diagrams, and text, and basic animations. The content focus was to write in a persuasive way to accurately describe the business and engage the reader to explore the various aspects of the business.
- The other project choice was to create a PowerPoint to review course material from another class to help students prepare for their final exams. The technical skills included: Using the slide master to create an original template, integrating Word outlines and PowerPoint, using a variety of layouts to include charts, diagrams, and text, and basic animations. The content focus was on explaining (and/or testing) content material in a clear and accurate manner.

Students were encouraged to make the PowerPoint presentations engaging and interactive by using "action buttons" in the presentation so that the view was actively engaged in moving through the project instead of passively sitting back and watching the presentations.

The Results:

Students who chose the course review project seemed to take the assignment more seriously than the students who "made up" the business plan. Their projects were focused on the content material and their goal was to make a presentation that would actually help a classmate review for the upcoming final exam. Many also included short quizzes that asked the student to choose the correct answer.

Two of the students who made the business plan had to change their original idea because the business they chose wasn't appropriate for the project.

While most of the students liked their business topics and were engaged in their PowerPoint topic, I felt that several students thought the assignment was silly and did not seem engaged in their project. It wasn't until the end of the assignment and students went around to each other's computers to view the projects that some students commented that some projects were better than others because they had a purpose or were well made.

One student in particular engaged many students in his project because of the high-interest topic (a travel business that focused on James Bond movies) and the visual "eye candy" of his presentations (music, video and photos from the movies).

Conclusion:

This outcome of these projects has shown me that students NEED an authentic audience in projects otherwise the students don't see the purpose or value in what they are doing. Even though the assignment was a simulation - it still felt "fake" - and the some of the students were not engaged in the project or they were engaged but the quality of the project was poor.

The challenge is to create open-ended projects that are authentic, but still at the same time meet the technology goals of the class.

Posted by Colette Cassinelli at [8:56 AM](#) [0 comments](#) _

Labels: [authentic](#), [engaged](#), [observation](#), [PowerPoint](#)