

Chapter 4

Rewarding Risk: Designing Aspirational Assessment Processes for Digital Writing Projects

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Excerpts from student reflections on the game interface

Detailed the ways in which the project's content and structure reflected the acquisition of transferable writing and design skills

Student 1

"This was perhaps one of the most interesting projects I have been involved in during my college career, and it helped to teach me a lot as far as literacy in writing and design skills. Besides the obvious benefits such as learning to function as a group, setting goals and timelines, and splitting the overall project into sections depending upon each member's strength, I learned skills that will be quite useful in future professional writing endeavors. Though I consider myself somewhat adept at learning software and hardware that I am unfamiliar with on-the-fly, completing this project has only strengthened and reinforced that skill through a new kind of material. Also, my concept of good design principles and implementing both graphics and sound into a complex program has been strengthened."

Student 2

"The final project, the design document and game interface, taught me the basics of a program I had never used before (Macromedia Director) and what a game company is looking for in a proposal.

Aside from aesthetic or technical knowledge, I also gained a lot of insight into video game psychology by completing the ENG 496 course assignments."

Explained what the student might do differently if completing the project again

Student 1

"If there were any part of the project I would change, it would perhaps be (if time allowed) the graphic designs and icons chosen; though I think these worked well considering the time frame of the project, it would be both interesting and exciting to design a game with completely original graphics, especially as far as the interface is concerned."

Student 3

"If we could do the project again, I would label things more clearly in order to organize cast members and sprites more efficiently. I would have liked to explore more complex behavior scripting involving parent sprites, however we didn't have the time to fully understand many of these and other complex scripts."

Evaluated the collaborative efforts of the group

Student 1

“I think our group functioned exceptionally well as a team, and this has perhaps been one of the best groups I have worked with. It definitely helped that we were all genuinely excited about the project and the prospect of learning new software, and motivation was never a problem. Our previous knowledge of and skills in the kinds of technology and learning that the program required were also of great advantage.”

Student 3

“Group communication seemed to be successful. We contacted each other frequently outside of class. We engaged in discussion, each day, as to what each member would like to contribute. For the most part, we all shared in each others’ assigned tasks throughout the project. I felt that group chemistry was positive.”