

Chapter 4

**Rewarding Risk: Designing Aspirational Assessment Processes for Digital Writing Projects**

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## Reflections on students' Web-based learning modules

Student 1

"Our website features a simple, appropriate design for a learning module; a white background and splashes of color keep distractions to a minimum and creates a professional look. Text sizes, headers and other formatting elements are consistent throughout the website. These good design decisions result from our instruction on designing pages during the magazine article project. Pages are organized effectively to minimize confusion while navigating. Content-wise, our website presents scientific information in an easily comprehensible fashion, using terms that we think the students will understand. This is a skill we gained from our study of how to relay scientific data to the public throughout the semester."

Student 2

"One of the main aspects I took from this was making technical or specific information more appealing to people who may not be personally invested in the topic. With this in mind, I chose images of the Cape Fear River and other local Wilmington bodies of water that would be familiar to the students. Hopefully by correlating the topic of water quality to places they see on a regular basis and recognizing that it may affect them directly, the topic will be of more interest. I learned how to interpret scientific material much more thoroughly through material we read and discussed, which helped me find sources for this project that I would be able to explain in my annotations. We also discussed the various ways to determine a source's credibility in whichever scientific field it relates to; I used these skills to assure that the sources I found were reliable and would actually be helpful to the students using them."

Student 3

"Throughout this semester I have learned a lot that I did not previously know about scientific writing or writing in general. This class has really showed how important it is to know your audience and relate your material to their level of understanding. This project in particular was an excellent example of applying that knowledge to an actual task. When we were first given the assignment I assumed that because we would be working with high school students on a subject that they probably had no previous knowledge of that we would have to simplify our research and put our information into less complicated terms. This assumption goes to show how knowing your audience is key to any form of writing. After meeting with the students we found that their level of understanding was far beyond what we had anticipated and honestly surpassed my own understanding of scientific data. We then had to modify our module to make it more at a college level rather than a high school level. If we had not revised our research and the way it was presented we could have potentially lost the interest and the respect of our audience."