

Welcome to my Developers Notebook!



Picture from <http://reformimmigrationforamerica.org/>

Entry 1

Grade Level

The grade level that I am designing this course for is third grade. Specifically, I am designing this unit to be used with third grade students who are in the State of Michigan.

Subject

The subject of this course will be two of the major economic contributors, and the resources that are available in Michigan that allow those industries to succeed in our state.

Particular Curricular Unit you are thinking of developing

I am thinking about developing an online unit that would have the students exploring the different economic contributors to Michigan's economy. I would have the students investigate the main contributors, and end up becoming experts in the various industries. The students would learn about the reasons that those industries settled and became prolific in Michigan, as well as about the resources that are unique to Michigan that allow the state to best serve the needs of the businesses.

What do you want your course to look like?

I will break my course up into lessons on the two major industries in Michigan that I am focusing on. (Agriculture, and Manufacturing.) I think that there will be a unit for each of the industries, as well as a unit on the economy of Michigan. In each section, the students will learn about the major groups that make up each industry and the major reasons they operate in Michigan. The students will end up choosing a subsection of one of the main areas, i.e. automobile manufacturing, to become an expert on for their final presentation.

What your ideas/thoughts/dreams for class interaction for both teacher and students?

I would like the students to maintain a blog about their learning during each week of the course to show what they have grasped during that weeks instruction. Additionally, I would challenge the students to find examples of the different industries in their everyday life to share with the rest of the class. I believe this sharing would open up the eyes of all of the students to the amount that they interact with each industry daily. At the end of the process, I would like the students to create a product to show their expert knowledge of the area they chose. Some examples for end products could include screencasts, a Blabber from the perspective of a major industry figure, a Powerpoint slideshow, a paper slide show recorded on a video camera, or an in person sharing of the knowledge that they gained. Perhaps I could arrange for a few industry experts to have a webinar with the class.

How do you think you will assess students?

I will assess the students on their participation with the blogs, and their interactions with classmates. Additionally, the students will be evaluated on their knowledge of their industry, and the impact it has on Michigan's economy.

What are some of the social, ethical, legal, and human issues surrounding the participation in your online course?

One of the major issues with the course will be the blogging aspect. There is a privacy concern that is amongst parents regarding students posting information online. I think that the need for this collaborative portion of the product outweighs the risks inherent to this model. Blogs can be carefully moderated and "norms" can be established for safe communication while still allowing for peer-to-peer sharing. Additionally, the work that the students do will absolutely need to be published online. If the overarching goal is to publish something for the betterment of others, I believe the students will engage better in the process. Again, the publishing of this content could make some leery, but within boundaries, this process is safe. The collaborative nature of this course is what will make it a unique learning experience for the students.

Entry #2

[Results of CMS](#)
[Evaluator](#)

Make a Decision

- Step 1
Select Products
- Step 2
Custom Products
- Step 3
Choose Features
- Step 4
Custom Features
- Step 5
Apply Weights
- Step 6
Assign Scores
- Step 7
View Results

Decision Results:

		JoomlaLMS	Moodle 1.9	bigAce 2.7.2	DrupalEd 5.6
WEIGHT	FEATURE	PRODUCTS			
<input type="text" value="3"/>	Discussion Forum	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="7"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Discussion Management	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="7"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	File Exchange	<input type="text" value="6"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Bookmarks	<input type="text" value="7"/>	<input type="text" value="7"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Groupwork	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>
<input type="text" value="2"/>	Online Gradebook	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Course Management	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="7"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Customized Look and Feel	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>
<input type="text" value="4"/>	Calendar Support	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>
RESULTS					
		5.56	11.78	3	5.44

[Recalculate Results](#)

You top result is Moodle 1.9 with a score of 11.78

What surprised you?

After evaluating the different CMS systems, I was surprised that Moodle ended up being the course management system that I preferred for my class. Additionally, I was surprised by the many different formats that CMS/LMS systems can take. Things like a customizable website could be found in bigACE, but a more task based system was found in Moodle. It was

interesting to see two very different takes on a similar concept.

What didn't surprise you?

It didn't surprise me that all of the systems had places for you to put links. Also, I wasn't surprised by th

Which CMS are you going to use for this course? why?

After much consideration, I am going to use the Moodle CMS system for this course. I am choosing Moodle for two reasons. One, it is the only CMS that our district has endorsed to be used with our students, and if I am going to develop a course, I want to be sure I could implement it with my students. Second, I like the versatility of Moodle. The ease of setting up student blogs and discussion areas drew me towards this system. The flow of the system seems logical and easy for the students to understand.

Why is this CMS a good match for your course and curriculum?

Moodle is a good match for my course and curriculum because it will allow me to set up the student blogs that I want to use for interaction and idea sharing. Additionally, it will allow me to set up discussion groups for students working in the same subsection of the major areas of economic interest in Michigan so that they can share ideas. I also appreciate the ability for the students to easily share files on Moodle.

What additional tools/functionality might you need beyond the features available in the CMS you have chosen?

I am not sure if I need any other tools or resources when developing this course. I may add a Google Calendar to the site so that the students can add it to their own Google accounts to track due dates, but Moodle offers an assignment tracker so I am not sure if this will be necessary.

What support do you need to be successful with this endeavor?

When evaluating the support I will need to complete this course, I realized that I will need help embedding objects into the Moodle site. I know that most embedding objects are HTML-based, but I am unsure of the logistics specifically related to embedding in Moodle.

Entry #3

Learning goals for unit

The main goal for my unit on the four major industries of Michigan is for the students to understand the impact that industry has on the operations of the State of Michigan, and the resources that we have in our state. My goal is to help the students understand how industry impacts our everyday lives.

Learning outcomes for unit

At the end of my unit on the important industries of Michigan, the students will be able to express the influence of industry on how Michigan operates. The students will also have become experts in one of the industries that is a contributor in Michigan, and will have knowledge of how that industry began in our state, and how it continues to impact our state.

Potential methods of assessment

As I have been developing this course, I have been keeping the assessment piece on my mind the entire time. As one teacher once shared with me, "It is hard to know where you are going when you don't have a destination in mind." As I have thought about this I have realized that I will know when the unit is successful when I am seeing growth in my students. I realize that is a general statement, but through observation of their weekly blogs, and their responses to questions being posted in the forums, I will be able to observe who is understanding the information, and who still needs support. I will score their blog and forum entries on the rubric that I developed for that aspect of the course. As noted in the rubric, I will be looking for relevant content in their postings as a means of assessment.

Additionally, the students will be given a final project which will require them to synthesize the information that they acquired in the course into a form that shows what they have learned. This could include a PowerPoint presentation, or even a Blabber from the perspective of a person who works in their industry. They will incorporate the knowledge gained through the lessons, as well as information that they will gather, to put together a presentation that can be shared with their classmates. This presentation will be evaluated on content, and demonstration of their learning.

Course Communication Policy:

It is an expectation in my course that all participants, including myself, will maintain an active line of communication throughout the duration of the course. If I send you an e-mail, it is expected that you will reply within 24-48 hours of receiving it. When you send me e-mails, I will respond within 24 hours. Additionally, in an emergency, you can contact me via Skype.

Each week of the course, you will be expected to create a blog posting. This

In this course, we will also be using a forum. You will be expected to post to the

posting will be
forums on a we

Entry #4

Blog and Posting Rubric

Considerations when Developing the Rubric

As I was thinking about the assessments that I wanted to include in my course, one of the major things that came to mind was a rubric that would be helpful to the students, and let them know the progress that they have made. My goal for the rubric was to create a constructive piece that would provide the students with feedback on how they were fulfilling the requirements of the tasks being assigned. I also made sure to include a comments section so that the students were able to receive specific feedback from me related to their work.

Problems/Concerns with the Rubric

When reviewing my rubric, I don't feel as though there will be any problems with the requirements that I laid out in the rubric. I may have to use the comments section to be more specific, but I believe I have covered the requirements that I am expecting for the blog posting, and forum assignments from each student. To make the forums and blogs easier for the students to respond to, guiding questions will be given to make the content easier to focus on.

The Rubric and Student Learning

As I review each blog posting, and score it with the rubric, I will be able to identify how the students are progressing with the course content. The section that talks about relevancy will be extremely important because it will show either that the students understands the content and is able to come up with a constructive response, or they don't. The results of the blog postings will help me to make changes, if necessary, to future content to ensure that everyone understands the ideas being presented. Additionally, the rubric will allow me to know if I need to send additional resources to specific students, or if I need to reach out to them to offer additional support.

Student Involvement in the Assessment Process

Students will be involved in the assessment and evaluation process by sharing their viewpoints on their work. I will ask them to fill out a rubric for themselves at least twice in the course to see how they think they are doing in the course. Additionally, I will offer the students the chance to ask questions about their grades in order to help them learn where they need to improve.

The standards for the assignments in this course will be laid out in the beginning of the course in the introduction section, as well as in the rubrics that I will supply to the students so that they can see what is expected of them. By laying out the expectations in advance, I am allowing the students to read through what I will be looking for before they start a task.

Thought and Important Ideas that I Focused on for the Rubric

As I developed the blog rubric, I focused on the content of the posting, the focus of the posting, and the grammar and spelling component. My idea behind emphasizing relevancy was to ensure that the students stayed focused with their thoughts, and were thinking about the question being asked. A well thought out and planned posting was emphasized due to the nature of the online medium. If a reader has to try to decipher your meaning, then you may lose that reader. I included the grammar and spelling section for the same reason. Readers want to be able to read your work without having to stumble over misspelled words and unreadable grammar.

Items of Consideration and Focus During the Development of the Course

When developing this online course, I focused on two areas of the rubrics provided. The first area was learning objectives. In order for this course to be something that I am able to use in my classroom, I have to ensure that it fits the local, state, and national expectations for learning. Our district has been focusing on intentional use of the GLCE's as a driving force behind the content that we teach. By intentionally thinking about the learning objectives, I have been able to ensure that the content of each section of the course fits what is expected of the students. Additionally, by sharing the objectives with the students, I will be sure that they understand what I am expecting them to be able to accomplish when they complete each unit in the course. By including the "road map" idea on each unit, I anticipate that the students will be able to get a clear understanding of the objective(s) for that week.

The second area that I focused on was learner engagement. When working with 3rd graders, it is vital to keep them interested in the content that you are presenting in order

for them to learn. With this in mind, I brought in the concepts of the blogs and the forums. Additionally, I intentionally included activities that could be labeled as fun to enhance the learning occurring in the units. I am a big supporter of the use of simulations and games in the classroom to enhance learning, and have brought that belief to this course. The beauty of the online medium is the breadth of resources that can be shared to enhance learning, and the interactions that can occur that enhance learning.

Final Thoughts on Course Development

Developing this course was a great tool for critically thinking about the methods that I use to instruct my classes. Locating all of the resources that link the topic to relevant ideas for the students was a challenge, but in the end, it was rewarding. I believe that students who go through this course will gain a better understanding of the manufacturing and agriculture industries in Michigan, as well as the economy. The many options that I presented to expand their learning should prove valuable when they are constructing their final project.

I hope all of you enjoyed following my thoughts regarding developing this course. Let me know if you have any questions.