

Grant recipient: Nancy Dickinson
 Grant period: 1st year (Course taught during Fall, 2003)
 Course: GENL 116 Becoming a Master Student

Background: This grant will involve Integrating a WebCT course pack that correlates with the course text to provide online access to external links and tools for GENL 116. The course has been taught with a WebCT component in the past, but is was “homegrown”. It is hoped utilization of the publisher-designed course pack will result in students having greater access to supplemental online materials.

Expected Outcomes	Evaluation Strategies
Students will determine their personal study style, note-taking and time-management skills.	Students will complete the initial “Discovery Wheel” (a tool for determining personal study styles, note-taking and time management strategies) online. They will complete the follow-up “Discovery Wheel” at the end of the course. The instructor will summarize a comparison of the results.
Students will be engaged enough with the material to visit other links beyond those assigned.	Students will visit other external links from within the course beyond those assigned. This will be evaluated through a question on the course evaluation.
Students will communicate with each other about topics in the course. This communication will be more than simply posting a discussion comment in order to fulfill the posting requirement.	Discussions will involve students responding to each other as well as to the instructor.
Students will continue enrollment at Augustana beyond the semester enrolled in GENL 116.*	Enrollment records will reflect whether students have continued at Augie beyond the semester subsequent to their taking GENL 116. (The instructor has longitudinal data to enable comparing this class to previous years’ classes.)

Summary:

Outcome 1. Nine of ten students completed the initial discovery wheel to determine where they wanted to focus their efforts during the class. Eight of ten students completed the follow-up discovery wheel at the end of the class. As might

be expected, most of the students felt that their wheels had “Improved” or “become rounder” , indicating that they were now applying the study strategies they had determined to focus on. We discussed how they felt their habits reflected by the wheel exercise had changed specifically. Most cited “a new awareness” and “more self-confidence” as being as important as having learned new strategies they had not been previously using.

Outcome 2. Only two of ten students indicated that they visited any external web links that were not assigned. Those two students indicated that they were just seeing what other source material was available online. Those who did not visit any sites beyond assigned ones noted that the links and sites were not required and that they felt they didn’t have time to do more activities than were required.

Outcome 3. All ten students met the requirement to post their thoughts on the discussion board for the various topics. However, from the chronological order in which I could view the postings it became evident that the students were not responding to each other’s postings; they were simply posting to meet the requirement. Their responses were all addressed to me, the instructor, not to each other or to further any sense of an online conversation.

Outcome 4. To be determined by April 04.

General remarks. The publisher-designed course pack for web ct will continue to be used as a component for the study skills class. I will modify the expectations for discussion board postings to require responses to one another, thus attempting to foster true communication, not just posting and never reading what anyone else said. The web component will continue to occupy about one-third of the course requirements. Several exercises were very successful online: the time readings and the test-taking strategies review and sample tests, for example. I will retain these exercises as web-required and delete some that can just as easily be done in the work text: the discovery wheels for example.

Furthermore, I have discovered that the web course pack is designed for the tenth edition regular edition, not the tenth edition concise version, which is the edition used in the course. Thus there exists some misalignment among exercises and chapters. These issues will be addressed in the next semester’s list of assignments.

The final report will offer a comparison of retention for the subsequent semester for the Fall 03 students to previous semesters -- both with and without a web-component requirement. That report will be available after midterm of spring term 2004.