



TO: Dr. Gregory Wickliff
FROM: Anne Cooper Moore
SUBJECT: ENGL 5181 Spring 2022 Final Reflection Memo
DATE: April 30, 2022

Note: I revised the Assessment memos for each project to include a summary of Dr. Wickliff's comments on my project and the changes I made as a result. This document is an overall summary of what I learned, some observations, and the challenges I overcame during the semester.

During the spring 2022 semester in ENGL 5181, I refined my skills with InDesign, learned to create a tutorial in InDesign, learned to write usability test scripts, learned to recruit participants for and conduct usability tests, learned to organize and analyze the results of usability tests, and learned to write and format usability reports in InDesign. I also learned to create a video tutorial on Zoom, edit it in Screen castomatic, write a usability script for a video, conduct usability tests of a video, and then incorporate suggestions into a revised version. I also created a portfolio in Wix that I can use during the job search in 2023.

I spent the bulk of the time this semester on Project Two. While it took a huge amount of time, I feel I gained experience that was comparable to actual work experience because we had a real-world project.

Revelations

1. It takes a lot of work to prepare usability instruments, conduct usability tests, organize and analyze the data, and write a useful tutorial or report.
2. User documents and usability study reports require extensive and repeated editing. The estimated time the textbook suggests to allow for the completion of different types of projects seems to underestimate the time required to do a good job. Perhaps I'm slow because I am inexperienced.
3. The class followed *Chapter 11 Usability Tests* of the Goodman textbook faithfully and it worked. It was revealing that the students (core audience) I recruited for the usability tests in Project Two found the interface more intuitive than the older adults ; however, it was still evident that the designers had not tested the interface on the core audience

as they should have during the early stages of the design process because they did not explain the interface in a way that made sense to the students and did not design it in a way the students found logical. I found it fun to design the usability test to have the participants try to do tasks that I already knew from my own testing wouldn't work. Documenting weaknesses in the actual results made the report stronger. I found it difficult to keep the pre- and post-test interviews to 5 minutes as the Goodman book recommends. But the tasks took less than the 7 minutes recommended per task. The tests with the students were shorter than those with the adults. Perhaps the most important takeaway from the textbook that I observed was that when I had to perform testing alone, it was much more difficult. Goodman suggests having at least one observer and that would have helped me significantly. Juggling the technology, making the documents available to the participant in a useful way, timing, taking notes, asking questions, answering questions, and listening to the participant was very difficult. But I discovered the value of tracking quantitative aspects of the tests such as how long it took participants to complete each task because I used that failure and length of time taken to complete each task as evidence of the weaknesses in the current design.

4. During Project One, I was surprised at the variety of strongly-held opinions amongst the group members and peer reviewers. I tried to convince one group member some design principles I had learned from Dr. Wickliff the previous semester, such as not centering text in a tutorial, but she did not believe me. One of our peer editors offered very personal opinions about the design of our tutorial. After a group discussion, we disregarded most of them. That same reviewer decided to use Canva to prepare her tutorial. The two other members of my group thought we should do that as well. It took quite some persuading to convince them that the assignment required us to use InDesign.
5. During Project Two, I was surprised at how many issues surfaced with the interface we tested.
 - a. Designers work very hard to create a useful interface, but they miss many details, particularly if they do not conduct usability testing before, during, and after the development process.
 - b. People will not start or will stop using an interface if it doesn't work or is frustrating.
6. During Project Three, I learned that it is difficult to coordinate everything you have to set up and remember in recording an effective video. Even with a script, I would forget one line in a segment and need to re-do it.
 - a. I could have spent forever editing the videos to be just right.
 - b. I will learn to edit video in Adobe Premier or another subscription editing program over the summer.
 - c. I plan to make a video of Google Scholar tips over the summer and put it up on my new YouTube channel.

7. For the portfolio, I really struggled to master Wix to create my portfolio last semester, but it was relatively easy this semester. I knew not to use one of their templates, but to create my own page and then turn it into a customized template. I had learned how to set up heading and text styles as well as to align and group elements on the pages. The peer reviewer for my portfolio draft identified four areas for me address before submitting it for grading. She noted that the Home button on the menu was black while the other buttons were the purple I had selected for the template. But the black indicates the page you are currently on and cannot be changed in Wix. She found two MS Word documents that I had neglected to convert to PDFs in Project One. I corrected this problem. Then she suggested I put a brief description of each project on its page. This was a very good idea, so I added very brief text descriptions. Finally, on the Final Reflection page, she thought I should add an image (a screenshot of the first page linked to the document itself) as I had for the other projects. This was another great idea and I added it.

Challenges

1. InDesign is a challenging program to master. If I did not use it every day, I would forget things and have to look them up again. It also takes a lot of computing capacity. My computer would stop working or InDesign would not let me move rectangles around and I would have to close everything down and re-boot to get it to work again. InDesign bases a lot on what you were previously doing and it is sometimes difficult to get it to do something new. There are also many ways to accomplish the same task, which adds to confusion when you look online for a solution to a current problem.
2. During Project One, I was part of a team of three and while we successfully worked together to create a good tutorial on a few basic features of InDesign 17.1, we faced a number of challenges.
 - a. As we passed .indd documents from one person to another, the links to the images broke, left question marks in the document, and presented error messages. I could not get everyone to agree to save their images in a Google folder, so we ended up ignoring the error messages. I kept the master document and replaced pages and they sent me revisions. This solution worked successfully, but was cumbersome.
 - b. Another issue was that each of us had our own conventions in our sections and we had to agree on standardized terminology, styles, and formatting. We needed one person to edit the entire document, which I did.
 - c. The screen captures from one of the group members were of poor quality and we had a lot of difficulty improving them. The quality was so poor that two of us could identify what they were intended to capture, so we couldn't not reproduce them on our computers in higher quality. We had difficulty getting the one member to help us resolve the issue. In the end, I completely recreated the

- section (“Creating a Paragraph Style”) in the version of the tutorial for my portfolio.
- d. Perhaps the biggest frustration and problem from my perspective and that I could not resolve to the end of the semester (submission of the portfolio) was that the other members of my group did not want to use my image for the bullets on lists, so we accepted the discrepancy within in the document. When I tried to go back and add my own bullet images to the sections that were created by the other two group members to submit it for the portfolio, I started with the section discussed in 2c, but that took so long to correct that I just couldn’t take the time to redo the other sections. So the final version of Project One in my portfolio still has some sections with arabic numbers for the steps and some with the bullet images I created.
 - e. We also could only work on the project together during class sessions because of class and work schedules.
 - f. Adobe changed “master” to “parent” pages while I was writing that section, which suddenly necessitated revising the tutorial. Adobe makes updates to InDesign nearly every week, which is annoying. They keep moving things around in the application, which means it takes time to get up to speed at the beginning of each InDesign work session.
3. For Project Two, I chose to work alone because of the challenges of group work we encountered during Project One. I will be working alone when employed, so I need to learn to complete all aspects of the project.
- a. I had problems conducting some of the usability tests because of audio feedback on both computers when the participant and myself were both in the same room. It was easier to do it from a distance.
 - b. The Mac library loaner laptops did not have the permissions for student participants to share their screen during a Zoom session. When a participant and I discovered this problem during a test, I had to scramble to find her an alternate device to use to complete the test.
 - c. I had a lot of data to go through because I conducted seven usability tests of the “Competency Compass.”
 - d. I could not figure out how to link the Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures to the pages in the document inside InDesign. I spent too much time trying to figure this out using videos and online tutorials. I mastered how to link them in the finished Adobe DC document with Dr. Wickliff’s assistance although that feature may not be in the final version.
 - e. I had misinterpreted the instructions and had to re-organize my document to put the script in appendices and the figures after their first mention in the findings, which added two days of work.

- f. This project took days and days of work to complete and re-do, but I gained proficiency in InDesign as well as in organizing a usability test report.
- 4. For Project Three, I decided to create a video tutorial of simple tips to search Google effectively. I had never made a video before.
 - a. While recording the video on Zoom was easy because I do it every day, I did not know how to edit the video. I used Screen castomatic as Dr. Wickliff recommended and it worked to cut out the full related: search, which was one minute in length. I tried to edit out the ums and other brief lapses, but I could not control the sliding bar with enough accuracy to delete them.
 - b. It was difficult to keep the video short and still convey the concepts. I ended up cutting out one of the search techniques to get the video down to 6:30.
 - c. The video was too fast for one of the three participants to absorb the new information in one viewing. The two experienced web searchers did not encounter any issues.
 - d. Most of the feedback I received on the video related to lighting, camera angle, and background color. I tried to address these issues and outlined the problems in the Project Three Assessment Memo.
 - e. My voice got really tired after recording the script numerous times and then I started making mistakes and inserting a bunch of unintentional ums.
- 5. During the creation of the portfolio, I had to call Wix as I had last semester. This time the live site for my portfolio looked really small when I went to it in Chrome. Somehow, I had changed the size to 33% and the helpful customer service agent helped me fix it. I also needed to make this semester's portfolio the website that shows up on my domain (annecmoore.info), which he helped me to accomplish. He was extremely friendly and helpful, so I gave Wix Technical Support an excellent review.
- 6. Another frustration was with Canvas. I worked diligently to submit all my assignments on time, but if we were to upload more than one document for a single assignment and I wanted to upload a new version of one of them, I needed to re-upload all of them. I did not realize this until Dr. Wickliff asked me for documents I had already submitted several times.
- 7. There are several differences between APA and MLA style, of which I need to be cognizant.

I greatly appreciate the diligent and objective input of the participants in my usability tests and my classmates who assessed my products. I also appreciate the time and care Dr. Wickliff invested to point out all the details I should correct to create near-professional quality products. He also was extremely patient with my questions throughout the semester.