

Debra Lowe: Internship Journal 2

Second Quarter Journal: August 4, 2009 – August 31, 2009

104 hours 2 minutes

Total hours on Internship: 203:59

Note: Sorry for the delay in this log. I became both swamped with course construction for Fall Semester, and a little sick in September, and this took a backseat. The third journal is on its way as well.

8/04-8/07 Hours 20:25

On August 4th, I finished the Pediatric Audiology course COMD 7340 and submitted it. I know that it was suggested I spend more of my journal on instructional design problems, but as with any job, most of it has become pretty routine. A lot of what is done in FACT is very routine, although it is very specialized. The course had to have a lot of CSS alignment, and when this was finally completed, I turned it in.

The next course I was assigned was Beginning Newswriting JCOM 1130. This course was nothing more than a blog written by the instructor, and it needed to be converted into a Blackboard course. There needed to be links to the original blog, but maintain the formatting and readability we have come to expect in our courses.

Although I can't really say it makes complete sense, I couldn't start building the course until I had created a banner. I needed to define the look and feel of the course to put it together. I began looking through the course to determine the "angle" from which the instructor was teaching. I looked through the materials and began gathering pictures which seemed to exemplify the course. At FACT we have access to clip art, and obtained a handful of pictures I thought appropriate. I was able to use some of these to create a banner.



The border used in Blackboard is brown like the lettering instead of black. Alas. Once I had created the banner, the rest of the course came together easily. I mentioned this to other Instructional Designers, and nearly all of them had to create the course visually before building the content. I know this is not a major epiphany, but it is something that strikes me as a curiosity, and perhaps a way to help other instructors build courses better.

On Friday the 7th, I finished building the JCOM 1130 course. I've noticed that when I have a specific task, I can complete it very quickly by FACT standards, but when the instructions are less specific, I spend much more time trying to feel out the parameters. Because this was specific, I was able to build the course quickly. The instructor had already organized the materials into weeks, so I kept with

the same structure, but gleaned the most essential parts from the blog. Most weeks I could get away with a simple link. It was very easy, so I added a picture or two to spice things up.

8/10-8/14 **Hours 28:01** **Subtotal 48:26 hours**

I had a unique opportunity this week. I was able to help with a course that will change much about the Blackboard interface. ASL II, also known as COMD 3910, had been constructed for ASL immersion. Instead of words, the buttons on the home page are very brief, imbedded clips showing the instructor signing the button. He produces the signs for syllabus, course content and home page, and other buttons as well.

Anyway, it was my assignment to create quizzes for this course. The quizzes were “receptive” meaning that the student would receive a sign and have to translate it. Each sentence, word or phrase were recorded and organized. They were then uploaded into Blackboard. The quiz is designed to randomly pull from the hundreds of clips and select twenty at random. This way, each student would receive a different quiz. So, this week I needed to upload, organize and assign the clips to the quizzes. I made it through question #204 on quiz number nine. Oh, did I mention the vocabulary overkill? There are hundreds of questions per quiz. Well, someone has to do it.

8/17-8/21 **Hours 26:26** **Subtotal 74:52 hours**

I’m still looking for distinct ways I help solve instructional design problems or questions. In actuality, I suppose I do help with some. Everything here is based on the notion of helping students learn more effectively, but the questions don’t appear difficult, so I really don’t consider them. Mostly, I approach a course asking how I can make it most manageable from the student’s perspective while respecting the pedagogy of the instructor. I do take liberties of reorganization, adding links and accessibility wherever possible, and work within the streamlining process used throughout FACT.

So, I finished the exams for COMD 3910, which was a relief because of the tedious nature of the task. There were several total to complete, but it was done, and that was a relief. I was also asked to help troubleshoot the COMD 3910 class for errors, typos and random bugs. That was easy and relaxing, but took a bit of time.

8/24-8/27 **Hours 20:15** **Subtotal 95:07 hours**

This week I was given the assignment to write up a learning guide for a program called Seesmic. Seesmic is an online video blog tool. With a simple webcam, Seesmic (seismic.tv) processes and encodes video for easy posting, and allows for video response to posted videos. It is a tool we’re integrating into the COMD 3910 course. Students need to be able to give signed answers to written prompts, and we decided that this video processor would be most convenient.

With any new program, instructions need to be created. While most applications are fairly intuitive, students have vastly different levels of computer savvy. Instructions are essential to keep students on a more level playing field. I needed to create material that could either be printed or on the computer, and this material needed to be brief and have graphics. The challenge was I had never used Seesmic before, and didn't know what it was. This was new to me. So, I spent a few hours getting to know the materials.



The hosting site was pretty straightforward. I had to sign up for an account, and have access to a webcam. The account was free, and a webcam was housed in our sound/media room. I started playing. I have learned that one of the differences between those who are comfortable working with computers and those who aren't is the freedom to play. Most people who don't like technology are afraid of damaging a computer or doing something wrong, but those who are proficient do not seem to have those fears. This is why children learn computers quickly, in my opinion. They are never afraid of breaking the system. There is a key to learning there: no fear.

So, knowing I couldn't break the Seesmic site very easily, I started to play. I learned how this tool is used, and why it was a good match for the Sign Language course. There isn't much to learn. You hook up the webcam, press a button, and it records. It is possible to delete videos, or to respond to others' videos. Clips must be short, but otherwise, everything is housed off-site and is much more private and selective than YouTube or similar hosting pages. I made a few posts, responded via a separate account I made, posted clips on other sites. Once I had a good feel for Seesmic, I did several screen captures then started making the instructions. The printed version of the product is attached as an appendix. Earlier versions were actually longer, but it was pared down to the essentials. It's simple, yet it does the trick.

8/31 **Hours 8:47** **Subtotal 103:54 hours**

With COMD 3910 completed, at least for now, I took up a few random jobs for other professors. The next item on the list is editing a video for COMD 3100. This course is "Anatomy of the Speech Mechanism" or essentially the physiology of speech. Editing videos is a low-impact but high-annoyance activity. It involves watching the educational videos created by professors and editing those videos. I have to remove long pauses, "ums" and do-over slides. It's easy, but for some courses, it's painful. Once I edited an hour and a half-long video which consisted of a professor reading legal documents. Thankfully, the COMD 3100 wasn't that bad, but the instructor had a lot of slides she redid, so I took out the incorrect parts of the video. For an hour long video, it takes about an hour and a half to edit, but once the instructor's patterns are familiar, it's possible to see speech patterns in the audio section of the video. Fortunately, I got an instructor who makes long pauses after she makes mistakes. I was able to complete all three of her videos in one day. It took me a little longer than I'd hoped, but at least it was done.

Conclusion: Second quarter of internship.

I'm afraid this journal may seem a bit dull. Well, that's work, I suppose. I really would love to have more moments of teaching, or really doing groundbreaking work with instructors, but that's not how things go. I'll continue to seek out more opportunities to help individual instructors. The end of August and the beginning of September were very busy times around the FACT office though, as all of the courses needed to be updated with Fall 2009 information. There were countless tiny tasks, and so countless tiny decisions and problems to be solved, but nothing groundbreaking. Either it has become second nature to me, or it's just not that challenging.

Oh, the FACT center will still be called FACT. The decision was made not to change the name to IT-IS after all, which is somewhat annoying because we had already started to change our site and some of our materials. I suppose that I shouldn't feel too bad about the lost work; it's job security. It seems though that administrative decisions, even temporary ones, may have lasting consequences. I'll have to remember that if ever I get to make the decisions.

And finally, I'm sorry that this journal has taken so long. The end of August and start of September were the busy times at FACT, and with my other classes starting, this kept getting placed further down the list than I wanted. The third quarter journal should be following quickly behind this one. Feel free to contact me with questions.

Attached: Seismic instructions.

Creating a Seesmic Video for a Threaded Discussion

<http://seesmic.tv/>

GET READY

To register with Seesmic at the seesmic.tv website,

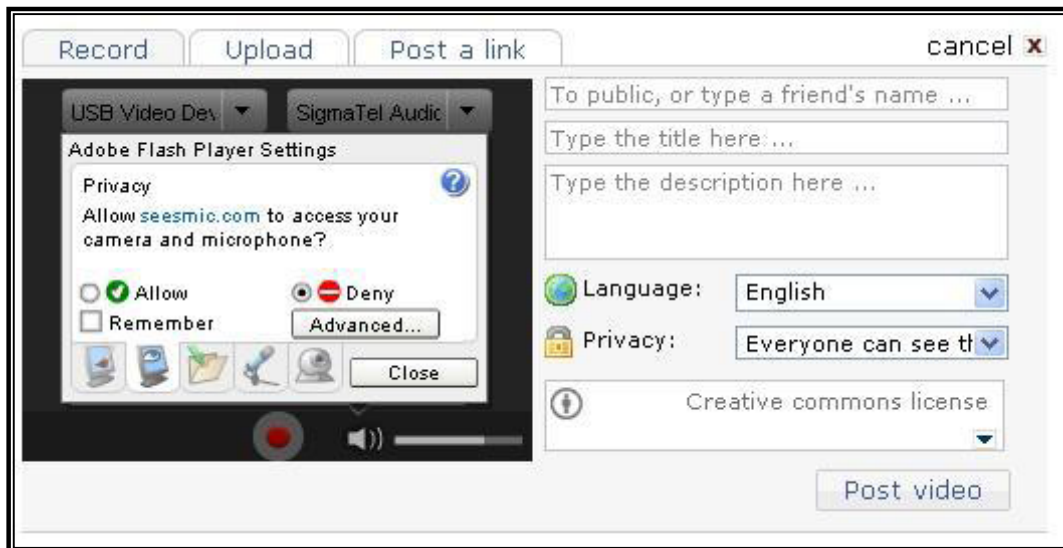
1. Go to Seesmic.tv /signup
2. Select a user name, enter your email, and create a password. Agree to “Terms of Service” and click the “Sign Up” button.
3. Check your email for your activation link. (Make sure that you do not have auto-delete set on your email filters.) Click on that link.
4. You should receive a page noting your success. Click to log in.

A screenshot of the Seesmic registration form. It is titled "Join Seesmic". It contains fields for Username, E-Mail Address, Password, and Confirm Password. There are instructions for each field: Username must be at least 3 characters long; E-Mail Address is where the account-activation message is sent; Password must be at least 4 characters long; Confirm Password is to re-enter the password. At the bottom, there is a checkbox for "I agree to the Terms of Service" and a "Sign Up" button.

To register with Seesmic at the Blackboard website, click “reply” to another’s message and register there. If another’s link is not available, follow the link to Seesmic and follow the directions above.

START RECORDING

1. Make sure your camera is properly set up and ready
2. If you are the first to record a response, click on “start a new conversation”
3. Give Seesmic access to your camera, then close dialogue box

A screenshot of the Seesmic video recording interface. It has tabs for "Record", "Upload", and "Post a link". The "Record" tab is active. On the left, there is a "USB Video Dev" dropdown set to "SigmaTel Audio" and an "Adobe Flash Player Settings" dialog box. The dialog box asks for permission to allow seesmic.com to access the camera and microphone, with "Allow" selected. On the right, there are text boxes for "To public, or type a friend's name ...", "Type the title here ...", and "Type the description here ...". Below these are dropdown menus for "Language" (set to English) and "Privacy" (set to "Everyone can see th"). At the bottom right is a "Post video" button.

4. Properly title your post.
5. Click the red “record” button and record your response.
6. After you are done recording your response, stop recording. (Five-second minimum)
7. If desired, you can record over your message. When satisfied, click “Post video.”

AFTER

1. If you desire to delete this recording after it has been posted, go to the Seismic home page and sign in. In the menu on the left, click on the “my profile” link.
2. To delete an entry, click on the trash icon by the video.

