



CIW Case Study – Niceville High School – May 2007

Situation

For the past 13 years, students attending Niceville High School in Niceville, Florida, have had the opportunity to take various Web-related courses. However, the curricula for these classes were somewhat fragmented until just a few years ago. Classes were taught through a mixture of books and various other learning materials, but the overall structure of the courses lacked cohesiveness throughout its course materials and objectives.

When Niceville High School decided to overhaul its Information Technology (IT) department, it began searching for a basic Web Design curriculum that would cater to its needs. The school desired a well-written, comprehensive Web program that could do everything:

- Cover all aspects related to the Internet
- Complement other courses in its IT department
- Offer a non-duplicative progression of classes

In the 2004-05 academic year, the school was planning a complete overhaul of its IT department and preparing to launch a new program — IT CHOICE Institute — to cater to its students' needs. Niceville High School was the pilot school for the IT CHOICE Institute, and would be closely monitored by school administrators for its success and potential implementation in other schools across Florida.

Solution

The 2004-05 academic year saw the inauguration of the IT CHOICE Institute at Niceville High School. A CIW representative presented CIW and its Web-related curriculum as a solution to support the school's Web Design classes. CIW was then selected as part of the curriculum for the Web Design 2, 3 and 4 classes with the full support of Dean Patti Bonezzi. The IT CHOICE Institute also began offering various classes related to computer networking, programming and PC support alongside Web design. CIW was first used in the classrooms at Niceville High School in the 2005-06 school year.

April Branscome, teacher of Web Design 1 and 2, began using CIW curriculum to teach the Internet Fundamentals and Networking portions of the Web Design class. Ms. Branscome had earned her CIW Associate and CIW Professional certifications from CED Solutions in Atlanta, Georgia, in April 2005. After earning her CIW certifications, Ms. Branscome began delivering the curriculum in her classrooms.

"We felt that the combination of the CIW curriculum with the structure I had already created in the classroom would give the students the best possible instruction available," said Branscome.

Within the IT CHOICE Institute Web Design track, students are eligible to take the CIW Foundations certification exam at the end of the Web Design 2 class, the CIW Site Designer exam at the end of Web Design 3, and the CIW E-Commerce Designer exam after Web Design 4.

Students earn the opportunity to sit for a CIW certification exam if they pass an in-class 150-question mock CIW exam created by Ms. Branscome with a 70 percent or higher score. In addition, students who pass the CIW certification exam are exempt from taking the semester exam and receive a 100-percent score for it.

In the classroom, April Branscome uses a variety of techniques to fuel the students' interest and reinforce the material. Using CIW curriculum as the basis of her questions, she has created in-class games based on game shows such as \$20,000 Pyramid, Jeopardy! and Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?



"I found it useful to come up with these innovative teaching strategies to keep the students excited and help them meet their goals. The CIW curriculum is challenging, and it requires a lot of work and studying to learn the material. It's harder for the students if the teacher stands up and does nothing but lecture," said Branscome.

Results

In the first year that CIW was used in the classroom, Ms. Branscome's Web Design 2 class had a 100-percent pass rate on the CIW Foundations exam. Out of 66 students, all 66 earned their CIW Associate certifications. In the 2006-07 school year, 53 out of 53 students who took the CIW Foundations exam passed it. Every student who has taken the CIW Foundations exam has passed and earned the CIW Associate designation. In total, 119 Niceville High School students have become certified CIW Associates, and six have advanced to become certified CIW Professionals.

"I really was not expecting such outstanding results. That's not to say that I didn't feel confident in my teaching or my students' understanding of the curriculum. I just wasn't sure how much of a desire the kids had to earn their certifications," said Branscome. "As a whole, I noticed that the students who passed the CIW Foundations certification exam had a confidence about them that made them focused to succeed through the entire CIW track."

As an additional reward for passing the CIW Foundations exam, students who pass the exam are invited to join the "CI Dub Club." The students receive an official CI Dub Club lanyard, and their names and photos are posted in the hallways of the IT CHOICE Institute.

Web Design classes at Niceville High School continue to achieve exceptional enrollment levels. On the whole, the IT CHOICE Institute is succeeding in its goal of preparing students for college while also providing the real skills that Florida employers are seeking to fill high-demand and high-wage skilled positions.

Some exceptional students who have taken the Web Design 2 course have also begun to redesign and develop Web sites for local businesses, and others have received Internships and paid positions for the job-role skills they have learned.

"I would like to see all my students become CIW-certified and for our kids to progress to a level that will bring them professional success. I know not all students are going to go on to be Web designers or even work in the field, but I feel that the rigor we give them will prepare them for college and for anything they strive for in life," said Branscome.

Other schools in Niceville's district have begun to implement programs similar to the IT CHOICE Institute based on this success. Additionally, a local college has an articulation agreement with Niceville High School that acknowledges three credits for each CIW certification exam a student passes.

The State of Florida is also considering adopting a statewide articulation agreement that would give students credit toward a post-secondary degree for taking classes that use CIW curriculum.

For more information about Niceville High School and the IT CHOICE Institute, visit www.nicevillehighschool.org and www.choiceinstitutes.com.

For more information about the CIW program, visit www.CIW-certified.com.