Weebly Workshop Needs Analysis

Graduate students in the Masters of English in TESL/TEFL (Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language) at Colorado State University all need to complete a final portfolio in order to graduate from the program. For the past several years they have been required to create their portfolios using Dreamweaver, and then burn it to a disc for their committee to view. Most of the students in the program have been learning Dreamweaver specifically for this purpose and will not need to use the program again. Also, many of them will not need to create another portfolio. CSU offers a class on how to use Dreamweaver, but the class tends to fill up very quickly. This means that a lot of students need to figure out how to use Dreamweaver on their own. It tends to be a complicated program for people to learn, so this portfolio can become a much more daunting task then it needs to be.

During a class session of Program Development, one of the TESL/TEFL graduate students mentioned his need to learn Dreamweaver and why. Through the course of the conversation it was discovered Weebly could provide a much easier avenue to fulfill the requirements of the portfolio than Dreamweaver. Weebly is a web site that allows people to use an easy "drag and drop" method to create a website or web based portfolio. It will also host the portfolio for free so each student can allow public access to it if they want. Some of the key similarities between Dreamweaver and Weebly are that both programs will allow students to embed documents such as Word documents and PDF files, create an easy to navigate interface, and have a secure way to deliver the portfolio to their committee. A Weebly portfolio would not have to be burned to a disc. Instead, students could make it public and give people the web address, or they could give each committee member their user name and password to access the site.

While a Weebly web based portfolio is much easier to create than a portfolio using Dreamweaver, it would still be helpful to have a class in how to use it. I have decided to design a course in how to build a basic portfolio using Weebly for the graduate students in the TESL/TEFL program. I will do this as a series of short web based videos that each student can watch on their own time. As part of the materials for the course, I will also create step-by-step instructions in how to perform the basic tasks they will need to create their portfolio. Some students may not need the videos. However, other learners will get more out being able watch someone go through the processes as they try to do it on their own.

The goal of the class will be to help these students be able to create their portfolio without having to spend a lot of unnecessary time trying to figure out the mechanics of getting it done. Saving time in developing the portfolio is one reason instruction is an appropriate solution to this need. Another reason is that creating a portfolio can be a daunting task. Having a workshop to help get started can streamline the processes, increase participants comfort level with the program, decrease the amount of stress associated with learning a new program, and ultimately help the participants create a better portfolio than if they tried to figure Weebly out on their own.

I asked the student from my Program Design class to find out if other students in his program would be interested in using Weebly for their portfolio instead of Dreamweaver. I gave him the web address to my Weebly portfolio so he could show them an example of what one looks like. He came back to me the next week and said that every student he could talk to in his cohort said they would like to use Weebly. They also said that they would appreciate someone helping them learn how to do it. In addition, I reached out to one of his professors and she also expressed an interest in having her students use Weebly. She said that the only reason she even

had them using Dreamweaver is because her predecessor used it. There were a couple of

concerns that needed to be addressed, but the response was overwhelmingly positive to the

prospect of this course.