Title:

Providing Effective "Customer"

(Students & Parents) Service using:

- An Instructional Website
- Online Grading Reports
- Online Student Assessment

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Information Technology and Internet access are changing the ways teachers prepare and present information to students. A custom designed instructional website allows a teacher to store information, assignments and provide for better communication with parents and students. The Internet also allows for teachers to meet the accountability challenge by providing grade information through a secure site, assess student performance through a secure site and provide better service to education customers.

Online Student Assessment is another essential tool for meeting the needs of your customers. Paperwork tasks are automated and tamed using Adobe's Acrobat. This means more time for class instruction and information available to your customers just in time for their needs. Customers (Students and Parents) want to receive up to date class performance data and this is supplied through Edline and GradeQuick by Jackson Software.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Students, parents and the community are our customers in education. Reach out to them and provide timely information about your classes over the Internet. Information will be presented about how to design a Website for easy navigation. Find out what items should be on a class Website and what shouldn't.

Explore the beginnings of an idea for better student and parent communication through three revisions into a tool for dynamic "customer" service. Learn about the research and design criteria used to determine what would make an effective teaching tool. Design considerations including themes, color scheme, navigation, site layout and graphical elements are discussed.

Tools to make your job easier include access to an online testing service. Online testing provides timely assessment for your students without the chore of scoring tests. Tests delivered over the Internet allow for students to make up a test when absent without disrupting other class activities. Students can complete tests at their own pace and a time frame that is convenient for their schedule.

The biggest tool for parent and student communication is providing secure student grading reports. Jackson software created Edline to use with their GradeQuick grading program. Students get one 12 digit alpha/numeric code to activate their account. Parents get a different access code to view student grades and class information. Grades are posted as easily as printing a document. Edline can even be used as a primary website because it features a student calendar and student assignment section.

Managing information is a task of utmost importance for today's teachers. Providing effective "customer" service for your parents and students is a requirement for the growing accountability trend in today's society. Information technology delivered over the Internet provides an answer to reducing paperwork, improving communication and facilitating learning in your classroom.

www.pdragons.com (Pendragon Productions) is a hit with customers (parents and students).

"Educators today are in the Customer Service business. Their customers are parents and students eager for information concerning their education. The Internet provides a method of delivering that information to these "customers" just in time to fulfill their needs.

Products such as GradeQuick and Edline by Jackson software make it easy for the teacher to report grades to their customers in a timely manner. Adobe Acrobat makes the distribution of documents to customers simple and saves valuable time for teachers and their customers.
www.jacksonsoftware.com   www.edline.net   www.adobe.com

Pendragon Productions online at www.pdgraons.com

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👉 An award-winning teacher, Michael Perry teaches business education in high school and business at the University level.

The End User

Michael Perry, 43, is a full-time business education teacher at Chapel Hill High School in Douglasville, Georgia in suburban Atlanta. He also teaches business at the Coles College of Business at Kennesaw State University. In 1999, Perry received one of three state-wide Honor Teacher awards in the middle-school category sponsored by the Atlanta Journal Constitution newspaper. Later that year, he was recognized as Innovative Teacher of the Year by the Phi Delta Kappa Education Fraternity of the State University of West Georgia.   In 2001, he was again recognized by Phi Delta Kappa Education Fraternity of the State University of West Georgia as their Teacher of the Year.

👉 He was looking for a better method of communicating with parents and students.

The Challenge

It is imperative to provide better communication with parents and students in this time of increased educational accountability. Students and parents need access to information ranging from grades to class documents to a schedule of class activities that is current and readily accessible.

👉 Creating a custom web-site for better customer service quickly emerged as the solution to the problem.

The Solution

Creating a custom web-site for better customer service quickly emerged as the solution to the problem. This solution emerged in a discussion of the impact of e-commerce on our business economy with two students. The application of web based customer service sites featuring documents, software patches and device drivers led to the question of how to apply this to education.

The first step in the process was to develop an initial website featuring information from this discussion. This site was done in Microsoft Front Page and featured a little class information and a space to download a limited number of lecture notes. The site was primarily aimed at students from the University.

Designing a Website

The logical next step was to conduct research with customers (parent and students) to answer the following questions:

1. Do you believe that an instructional website would be useful for you?
2. What features would you want in a website?

Research from both parents and students indicated that they would use an instructional website to access class information. The survey results indicated that these were the most important features in an instructional website:

1. Ability to check grades online
2. Ability to download class notes
3. Ability to download class assignments
4. Ability to check class assignments using a calendar
5. Ability to keep up with current class information
6. Ability to contact instructor

Using a Website

Perry introduced his first website PendragonProductions.com in September 2000. With the launching of the first site, more possibilities quickly evolved. Changes were made to the site based on the research from parents and students. In December, Jackson Software began to offer grade reporting online. Perry became one of the first individual US teachers to pilot this service.

Using online grade reporting was an immediate hit with students and parents. Students no longer had to ask this question, "What am I making in this class?" They were empowered to locate that information on their own. Since Jackson's GradeQuick made uploading grades easy, reporting current grades became an easy task. Edline features a secure site and separate codes for parents and students to access only their grades.

Edline also provides teachers with a calendar and ability to create a website for their class. This makes it easy for any teacher to get online and provide better parent, student and teacher communication. Jackson Software has made grade distribution easier than printing grade reports.

Online grades were incorporated in a total site overhaul that went live in the spring of 2001. The revised site featured a unified theme with custom logo and uniform page design. Menus were used to logically organize the site and make it easier for users to locate and retrieve information.

The second key piece of the puzzle was distributing documents in a universal format. Adobe Acrobat has been a pioneer in this field and was chosen because of its ease of use and universal acceptance. Acrobat makes document distribution easy. It also eliminates time spent copying and storing class documents. Adobe Acrobat has provided a common format to distribute reports, assignments and other documents to all parents and students. What format to use to post a document to the web is no longer a concern.

Learning Outcomes

It takes less time handling routine matters than in years past. The posting of an assignment online takes just a few minutes. Students then go to the website and print out the assignment requirements. This saves time in preparing the

handouts for the students and in distributing these handouts. More of the instructor's time can be devoted to working with students and teaching.

Edline makes students more aware of the importance of each grade and more knowledgeable about their progress in mastering course material. Parents no longer have to wait for report cards to find out about class grades. Both parents and students can spot trends in grades over time with much greater ease rather than over to 4, 6 or 9 week regular grade reporting time.

Acrobat is a real time saver and provides an easy solution that helps tame the paperwork tiger faced by classroom teachers. Teachers no longer have to worry if enough copies were made or what to do with the extra copies. The last benefit is that no time is spent hanging out in the copy room or facing the burden of filing handouts

Using a Website

Using a website became integrated in my high school teaching with the addition of daily quotations. Students were trained to go to the website as their primary resource for their class. This was accomplished through the use of a daily quotation that they would reflect on in written journal. The animated dragons were designed to appeal to the high school audience.

A calendar of class events was introduced this fall.   This keeps classes organized and helps students track coming assignments and learn to budget their time.

A form was developed to allow students to submit work online that would name the work with the student's lastname, assignment # and thank the student personally for submitting the assignment. Finally an email confirmation is sent to the teacher and to the student.   This allows for easy collection of documents and forces the document to be named correctly to avoid it being lost or overwritten.

Future Website Developments

Email is a critical component of an effective web-based communication plan. Forms are being developed to automate email and provide a common checklist for email responses. A database will be included with this email form to make it easier to search for parent/student contact. It will also make it easier to reply to students/parents using a standard reply form. An email list makes communication with large groups of students or parents an easy task.

Conclusions

Creating a custom class website requires a large initial investment in planning and time. This investment is recovered in the time saved by using the site to plan lessons, communicate with parents, report grades, make assignments, store and distribute documents. A website reaches students by communicating to them in a familiar method. It provides efficient communication of information for all of an educator's customers both parents and students. Finally a class website is an ongoing process that is refined over time delivering better customer service as new features are incorporated into the instructional site.