Shifting the Teacher and Student Roles in the Classroom
Blending Web Design and Service Learning for Classroom Change

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Abstract: Students in the process of learning web design are often unable to experience the real-world design process that takes place between a client and the web designer. Interpersonal and group dynamic skills are essential in order for one to be successful in education and business. By linking Web design and service learning, students have an authentic experience to learn and apply these skills while designing web sites for their community. Community organizations are often without time or skill to build their Web sites and students can fill this need. To provide for these student experiences, two main changes need to occur in the classroom dynamic: a paradigm shift from teacher to facilitator and shift from student to team player.

Service learning provides students with skills for teamwork, individual responsibility, and accountability. These skills help students become productive members of their communities by forming a connection with local organizations and community members. Professional Web designers also rely on teamwork, individual responsibility and accountability when developing a Web site. Using Web design skills in service learning accomplishes two main goals. First there is an authentic, real audience and/or client for whom students can build Web sites. Second, students can apply the universal values and skills of service learning to provide them with an authentic Web development experience. Using Web design skills in service learning allows students to become active participants in their communities while applying knowledge and skills from the classroom. Students can make connections in the community, transfer community service concepts to Web design, and practice the professional skills of Web design. To support this type of work, teachers need to be prepared to shift their roles in the classroom and provide students with experiences that will promote teamwork.

Shifting the Teacher Role
Service learning requires building ties in the community. To promote the authentic experience of working with actual organizations, teachers need to expand their classroom roles to build relationships outside the classroom. This action causes teachers to move towards a facilitator role as they forge relationships and set up explicit expectations between the classroom and community organizations. The facilitator role becomes important in preserving outside relationships with the classroom and helps to model professional Web design and development practice when the project begins. The teacher can maintain instructing and helping students accomplish Web development work for the community. A successful example of this type of work is the Hands on the Land project conducted through the Wilderness Technology Alliance (WTA). This project links classrooms with federal lands. Teachers, with the help of the WTA plan the visitation and exploration of the site, build the expectation and relationship, and coordinate student Web site production. This method helps the teacher transition towards the facilitator role.

Shifting the Student Role
Professional Web design requires team participation. To successfully model and engage students into the professional team process, teachers must help student understand the dynamics of team interaction. A possible method to help students understand the importance of teamwork would be to engage students in other activities that involve teamwork. For example, the Wilderness Technology Alliance (WTA) has created a model for
teaching students about teamwork and the important skills that team building provides. During a two-week summer camp teachers will take students on a weeklong hike to collect data on Mt. Rainier and then these student groups will apply their team building skills to creating a Web site to represent the data they collected. These team skills will help students model professional practice and ease their transition into group work for outside clients. Teachers create links between professional practice, classroom practice, and a familiar environment for teamwork such as the wilderness.

Conclusion
When teaching Web design, teachers will need to shift the roles in the classroom to provide an authentic learning experience. As the facilitator of the classroom, teachers will build their role by creating ties in the community and helping students model professional behavior. As exampled by the WTA and its projects, there is much success that stems from building partnerships and helping students learn to be better team players.