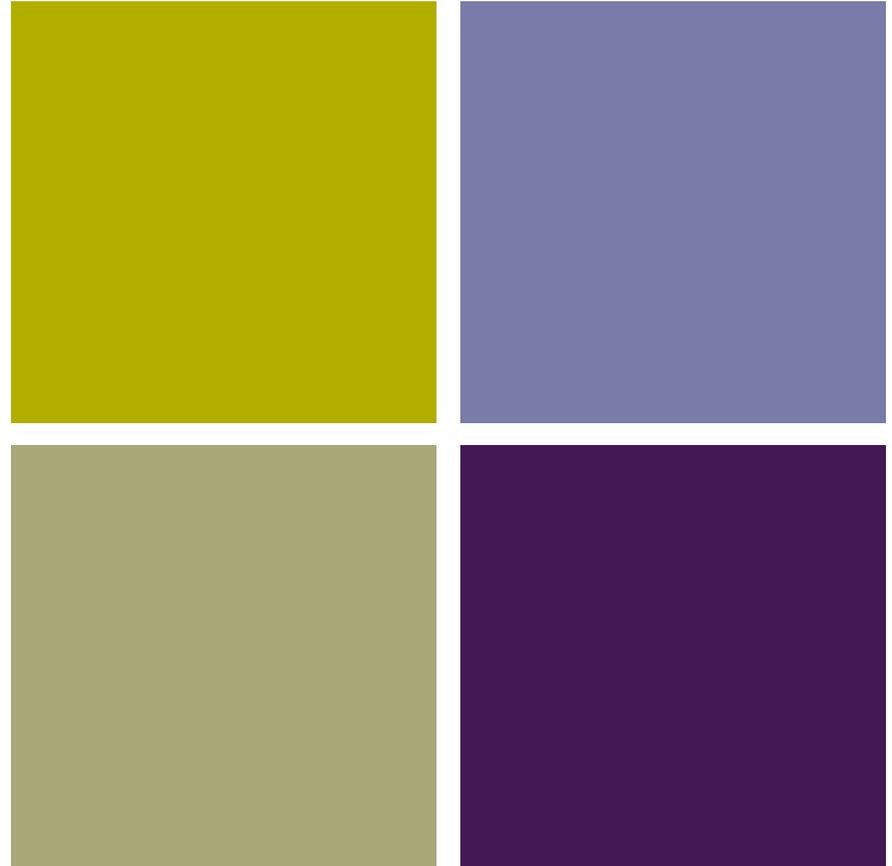




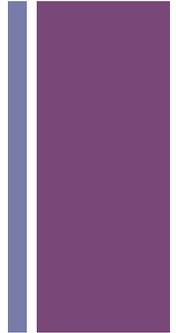
Graphic Design and Multi-media Programs



**Reducing the impact of
subjectivity in the assessment
of creative projects.**

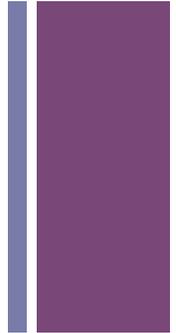
+ Today's outcomes...

- *Learn strategies to reduce the impact of subjectivity in the assessment of creative projects including:*
 - *Recognizing personal bias/preference and adjusting for it*
 - *Judging work for both technical skills and creative impact*
 - *Strategies for creating individual project objectives*
 - *Utilizing customized rubrics to assess objective outcomes*
 - *Standardizing rubrics within a program*



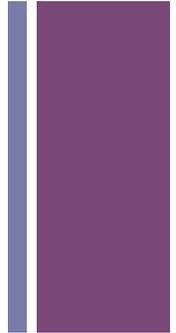
+ Overview

- One of the most difficult aspects of assessing outcomes for creative projects is how to quantify a subjective result.
- Several factors can have a significant influence on the resulting outcome including:
 - personal bias/preferences
 - definition of project objectives
 - project audience
 - assessment of technical skills utilized.



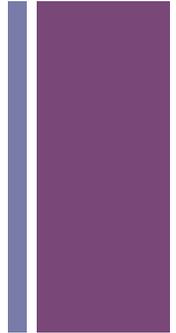
+ The right answer is...

- Blue? Red? Modern? Asymmetrical? Garamond?
- Ok, so let's admit that any type of creative project can be a difficult thing to assess. After all what is the right answer? In math you have a problem, you solve it and get an answer. It's either correct or incorrect. With design, whether it is graphic design, web design, multi-media etc., the final product "the answer" is not as easy to prove whether it is correct or not.
 - Part of the problem is that unlike math, design is not always clearly defined as to what is correct and what is not correct.
 - Design principles are a great start but there's a lot more to it.
 - In the design world correct is really "appropriate" or "on target"



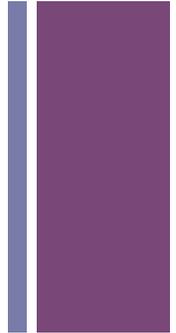
+ A bad outcome

- What we don't want to happen is to have a student perplexed as to how they earned the grade and what is expected of them to improve on.
- This leads to:
 - frustration on part of both the student and instructor
 - arguing with instructor
 - future failure on other projects



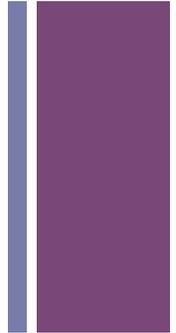
+ Personal Bias and Preferences

- We all have preferences and that's okay but...
 - We have to recognize our preferences
 - Assess our preferences and how “inline” they are with the target audience
 - Announce our preferences
 - Adjust for our preferences but not over adjust



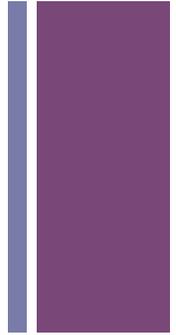
+ Defining Project Objectives

- This the most critical step in assessing outcomes.
- Start with the technical skills the student needs to learn based on the course's outcomes
 - What software skills does the student need to demonstrate and how will he/she demonstrate it with this project?
- What design skills need to be showcased in this project?
 - Is there a specific design principle you are looking for?
 - Make sure the student can identify the principle he/she used.
- Give a deadline and the penalties for missing it.
- Who is the audience for this project?



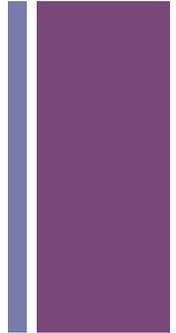
+ Assessing technical skills

- Students must be able to identify and explain what software tools were used to produce the project.
- For a recent project in a Computer Illustration class I asked the students to photograph a bowl of fruit and then draw a realistic illustration from the photo. The students were not allowed to use “Auto Trace” a feature of Adobe Illustrator that automatically traces the photograph into an illustration. Along with the finished Adobe Illustrator file I asked each student to include a brief description of the tools he/she used to complete the project.



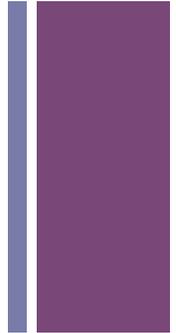
+ Technical skills continued...

- For a web site project, I asked the students to design a site in Photoshop and then using HTML and CSS to create a working web page. I analyzed the HTML and CSS to see how closely each student followed my instructions and numerous examples given in class. Several students ignored my instructions and simply sliced up the layout from Photoshop and placed in Dreamweaver. The result was a great looking page but since the point of the assignment was to demonstrate HTML and CSS page layout and styling techniques it did not matter how great the designs of the “slicing” method produced. The technical skills were not evident even though the design skills were. This is why technical skills and design skills need to be broken down separately and assessed.



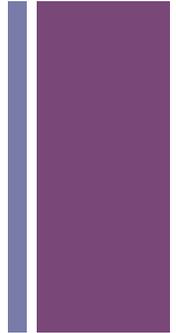
+ Technical skills versus design

- While it is true that we often focus on design skills in the areas of graphic design, web design, and multi-media, we still need to teach, assess, and focus on technical skills.
- The design skills are most evident in a portfolio and may get the student a job however it is the technical skills that help the student keep the job and progress forward in a career.
- All design projects need to be assessed for both design principles and for technical skills.



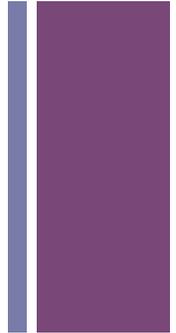
+ Considering project audience

- Perhaps the most important aspect of success of a project is the intended target audience for the project. It must be clearly defined to what group the project is intended to reach and what response is anticipated. For example, designing an information package for a Florida Active Adult Golf community will look different than designing a CD cover for a punk rock band. Different target groups equal different project objectives and therefore different assessments results.
- By clearly defining the target group and the objective, the design of a project will be able to be judged objectively for either meeting the goals or not.





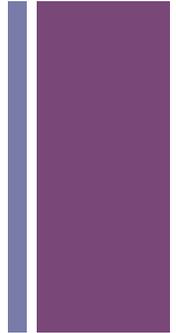
Assessing outside your realm



- So what do you do when you realize you are not in the target audience for the assigned project? How do you judge the project fairly?
- Let's take our punk rock CD design for example. I am not in the intended audience so I need to work even harder to set aside my preferences and biases and look towards the target audience for help.
- Get to know every target audience as much as possible to make your assessments better. Research, interview, study, and most important...explore.
- Talk to everyone you know from every background, profession, etc. and search the internet for the millions of wonderful examples of good design for each audience.

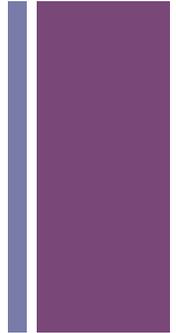
+ Brainstorming

- Perhaps the most important thing that I do when I assign a project to a class is to make them focus on the project's objectives and audience by writing down adjectives that they feel will meet the objective.
- Let's say we have a new product. It's an energy drink made from all natural ingredients and no artificial additives at all.
- Now before you even start to think about the design of this product and all the marketing materials, stop and consider the audience, define it and now you're ready to brainstorm.
- Write down as many adjectives including colors and imagery as you can that fit the product and the audience. What did you come up with?



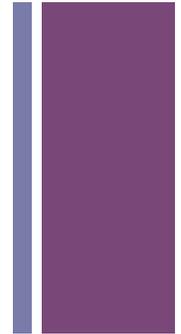
+ Now assess...

- Provide the project description, the target audience (or allow the student to provide this), the physical parameters if printed and the technical specs if online (size, pixels, resolution etc.), and detail what is expected technically as in what programs and what tools need to be used to create the project.
- Provide a detailed rubric with technical and design expectations. Give as much detail as possible and customize it for each project.



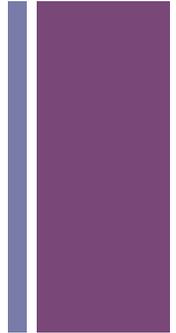
+ The examples...

- Let's look at some real world examples of two projects and what was learned by doing assessments.



+ Assessment: Web Design

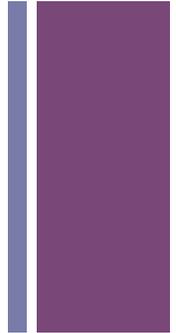
- **Objective 1:** Write and identify basic HTML code. Write Cascading Style Sheets (CSS).
- **Objective 2:** Demonstrate proficiency in the use of Dreamweaver to create Web pages.
- The course objectives above were the basis for the assessment. Both of these objectives were analyzed for the following project.



+ Assessment: Web Design

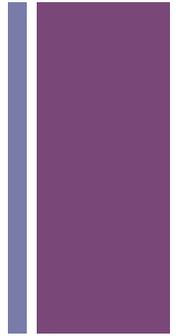
■ **The Individual Assessments Used:**

- Students were given a list of items and had to match the HTML code in the left column to the corresponding item in the right column.
- Final Exam — The exam tested Dreamweaver concepts and tools, HTML, CSS, and web page design. As part of the final exam students were presented with a home page and asked to recreate it using HTML and CSS.
- Students had to design and create from scratch a working site based on HTML and CSS.





Assessment: Web Design



	A	B	C	D	F
Software Skills	Student shows a mastery of software skills learned in class. Student uses a variety of tools and techniques to accomplish the project objectives. Student completes work on time.	Student shows a solid understanding of the tools and techniques learned in class. Several different tools and solutions used. Student completes work on time.	Some software skills are shown but others need to be learned. The project lacks a variety of tools and solutions used.	Software skills are not evident. The project is not finished and does not meet the objectives.	Software skills not evident. Project is not done.
Presentation	Work is neat, organized and labeled clearly. Student is able to explain project in detail.	Work is fairly neat, files mostly organized and all files included. Student is able to explain project in detail.	Work is fairly neat but files are not organized and/or some support files are missing. Student is able to explain the project in detail.	Work is sloppy and numerous files are missing and not organized. Student struggles or is not able to explain the project in detail.	No work completed.
Creativity	Student shows creativity in solutions to the project objective.	Student shows basic creativity in solutions to the project objective.	Student completes the work but the project lacks creativity.	Project is incomplete and lacks creativity.	No work completed.

+ Assessment: Web Design

■ Exceed Expectations:

- Student shows a mastery of software skills (Adobe Dreamweaver CS5) learned in class. Student uses a variety of tools and techniques to accomplish the project objectives. Student demonstrates a deep understanding of HTML and CSS and utilizes both to successfully complete projects.

■ Meets Expectations:

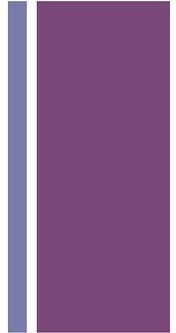
- Student shows a solid understanding of the tools (Adobe Dreamweaver CS5) and techniques learned in class. Student uses several different tools and solutions. Student utilizes HTML and CSS successfully in projects.

■ Does Not Meet Expectations:

- Student's work does not show an understanding of the tools and techniques learned in the class. Student fails to utilize HTML and CSS successfully in the projects.

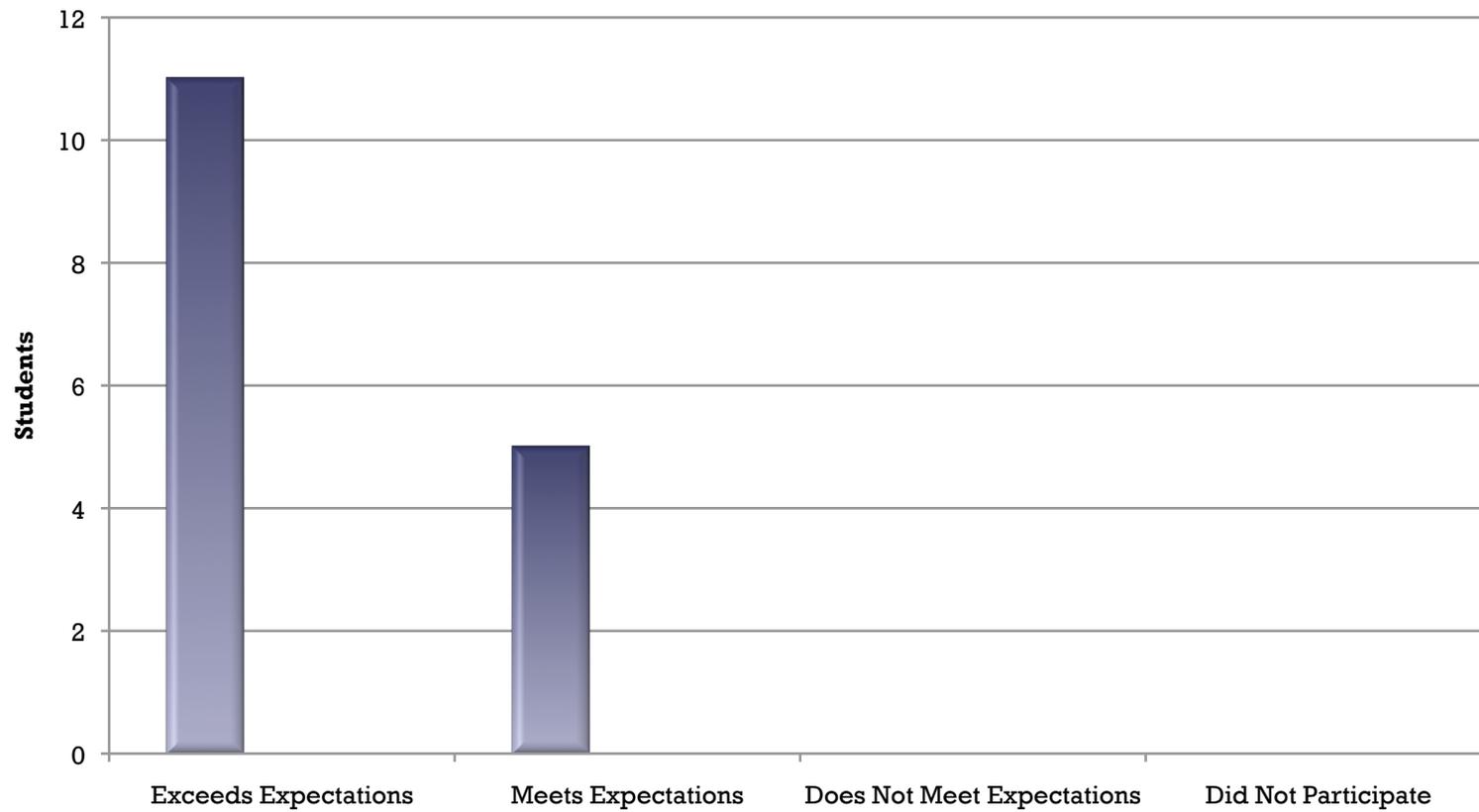
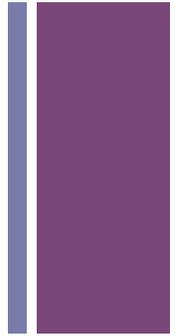
+ Assessment: Web Design

- **Assessment Test 1: matching HTML tag to standard default formatted content**
 - Type: Test
 - Exceeds Expectations: 11 students
 - Meets Expectations: 5 students
 - Did Not Meet Expectations: 0 students
 - Did Not Participate: 0 students



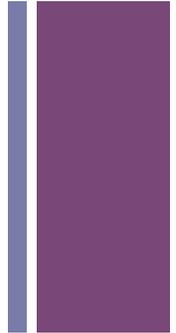


Assessment: Web Design



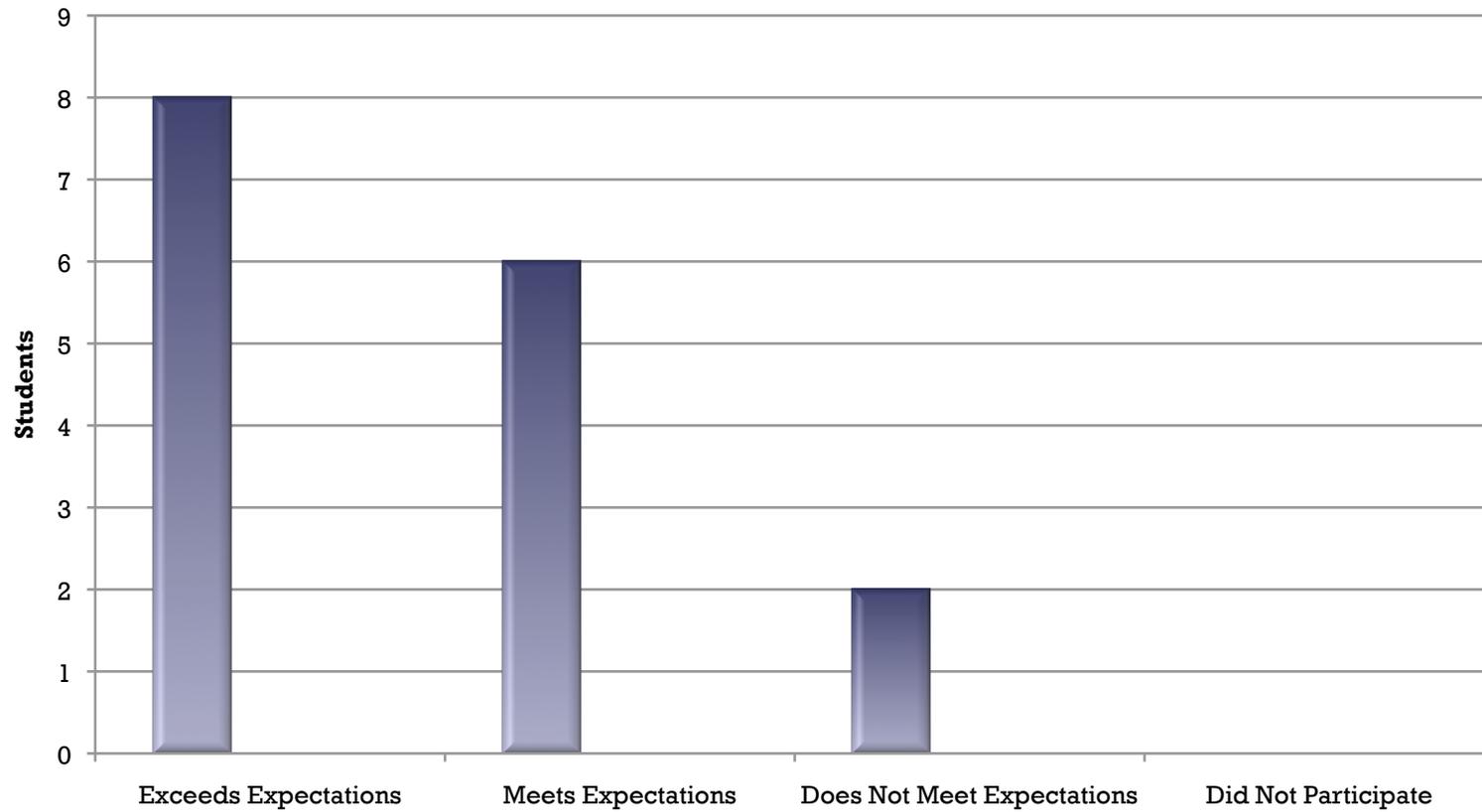
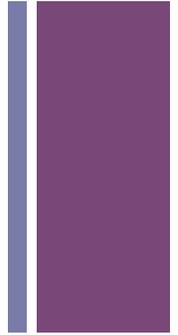
+ Assessment: Web Design

- **Assessment Test 2: Final Exam — Test of direct HTML and CSS knowledge and how to recreate website page using HTML and CSS**
 - Type: Test
 - Exceeds Expectations: 8 students
 - Meets Expectations: 6 students
 - Did Not Meet Expectations: 2 students
 - Did Not Participate: 0 students





Assessment: Web Design

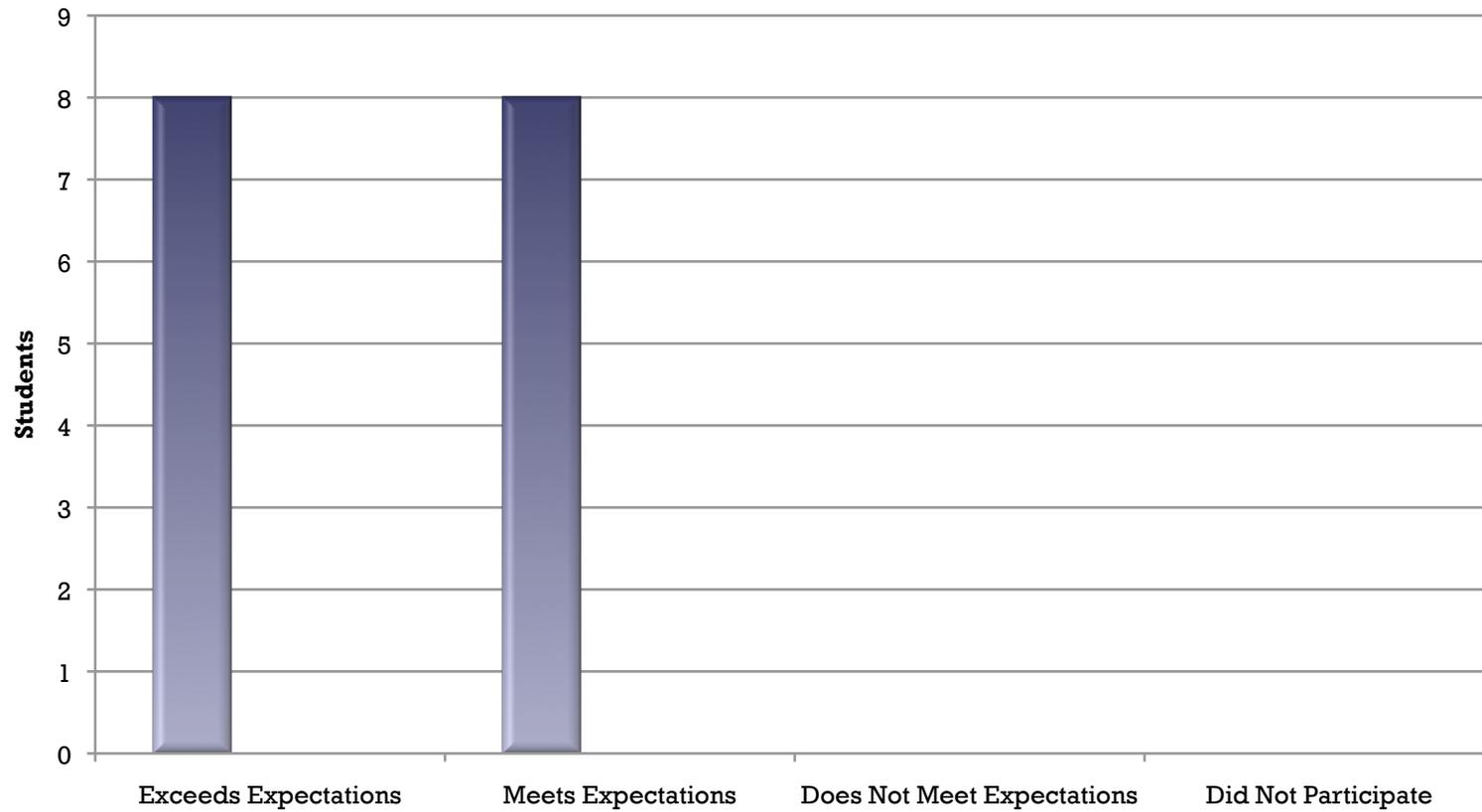
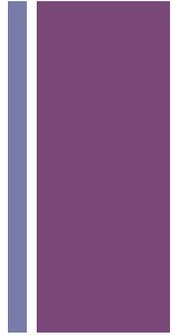


+ Assessment: Web Design

- **Assessment Test 3: create a website from scratch (design, HTML, CSS)**
 - Type: Project
 - Exceeds Expectations: 8 students
 - Meets Expectations: 8 students
 - Did Not Meet Expectations: 0 students
 - Did Not Participate: 0 students

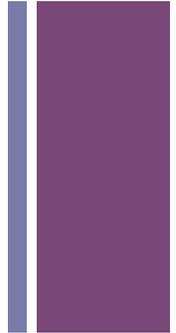


Assessment: Web Design



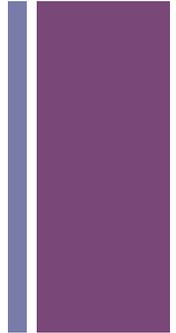
+ Assessment: Web Design

- Project overview: design a website including a home page with navigation and at least two sub pages.
 - Part one: design the site using Adobe Photoshop CS5 and show 2-3 design choices to your client (instructor and class). Part two: from the feedback received from your client, produce the final design using Adobe Dreamweaver CS5 with HTML and CSS.
 - Target audience: student generated (student must detail to what audience he/she is targeting with the design)
 - Applications required: Adobe Dreamweaver CS5 and Photoshop (some students were allowed to use other programs to create the original designs depending on background and courses taken).
 - Other skills required: HTML and CSS for layout and style



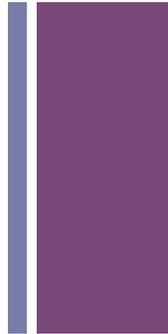
+ Assessment: Web Design

- In addition to the design, the websites had to be fully functional HTML with CSS styling all done to current standards as put forth by the W3 Consortium (the authority on Web standards).
- For each design, all files were submitted and then analyzed for navigation, code verification, and usability.



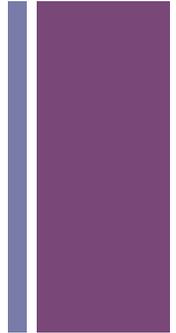


Assessment: Web Design



+ Assessment: Computer Illustration

- **Objective 1:** Create original computer graphics using Adobe Illustrator.

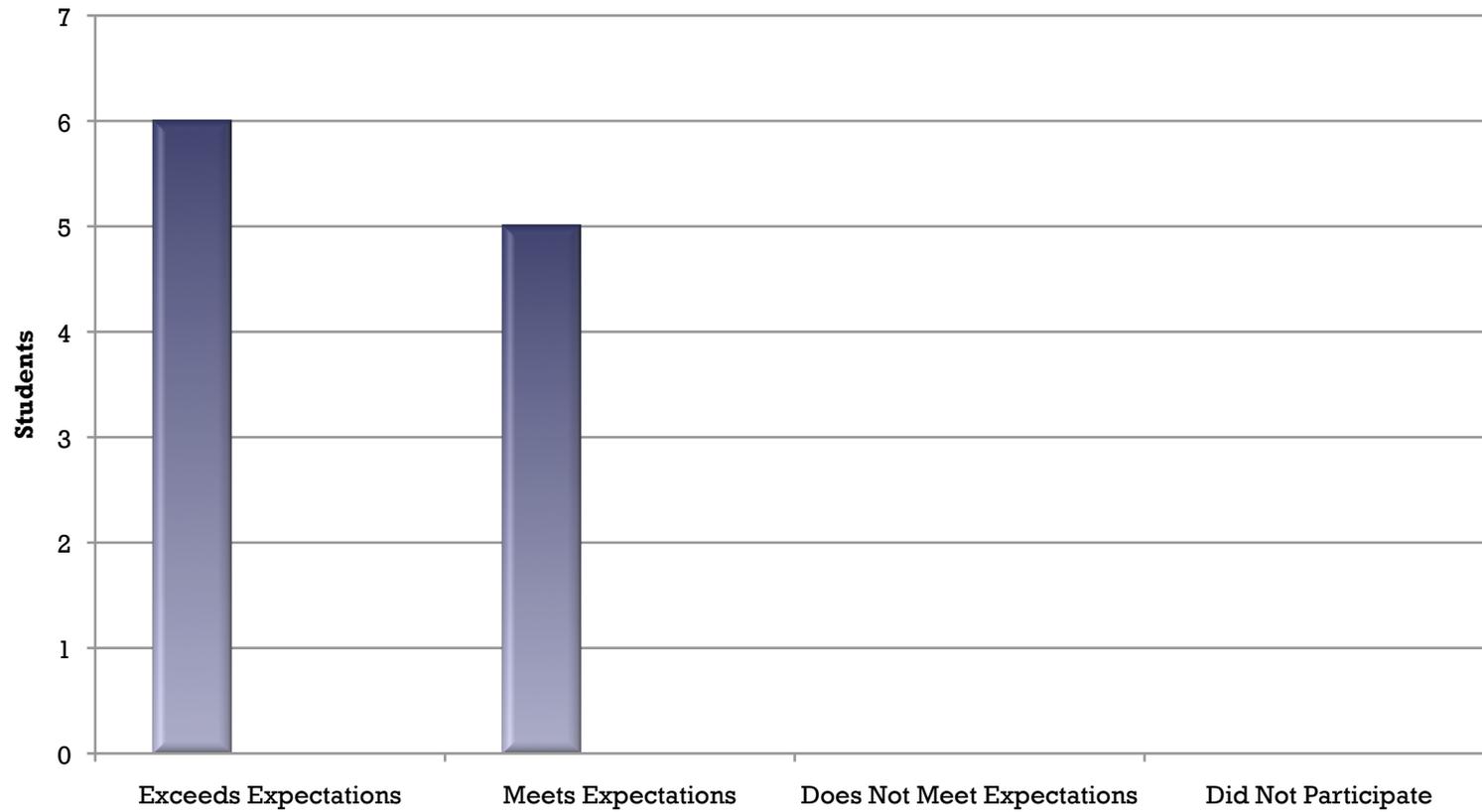
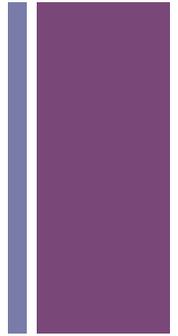


+ Assessment: Computer Illustration

■ **Assessment Test 1: Still Life**

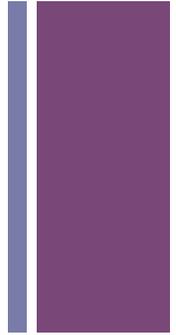
- Type: Project
- Exceeds Expectations: 6 students
- Meets Expectations: 5 students
- Did Not Meet Expectations: 0 students
- Did Not Participate: 0 students

+ Analyzing the results



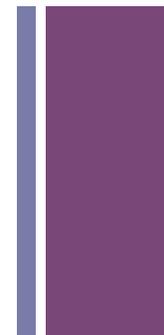


Assessment: Computer Illustration



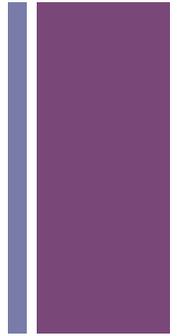
- Project overview: illustrate a classic bowl of fruit using a realistic “photo-illustrative” style.
 - Start by taking a photo of a bowl of fruit. Without tracing or using Auto Trace, recreate the bowl of fruit as closely as possible to the original in a photo realistic illustration style.
 - Applications required: Adobe Illustrator CS5.
 - Other skills required: For best realistic results use the Mesh Tool to create gradients, highlights, and shadows. Consider your lighting source, depth, perspective and color.

+ Assessment: Computer Illustration





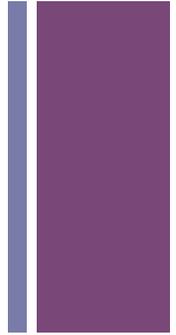
Assessment: Computer Illustration



	A	B	C	D	F
Software Skills	Student shows a mastery of software skills learned in class. Student uses a variety of tools and techniques to accomplish the project objectives. Student completes work on time.	Student shows a solid understanding of the tools and techniques learned in class. Several different tools and solutions used. Student completes work on time.	Some software skills are shown but others need to be learned. The project lacks a variety of tools and solutions used.	Software skills are not evident. The project is not finished and does not meet the objectives.	Software skills not evident. Project is not done.
Presentation	Work is neat, organized and labeled clearly. Student is able to explain project in detail.	Work is fairly neat, files mostly organized and all files included. Student is able to explain project in detail.	Work is fairly neat but files are not organized and/or some support files are missing. Student is able to explain the project in detail.	Work is sloppy and numerous files are missing and not organized. Student struggles or is not able to explain the project in detail.	No work completed.
Creativity	Student shows creativity in solutions to the project objective.	Student shows basic creativity in solutions to the project objective.	Student completes the work but the project lacks creativity.	Project is incomplete and lacks creativity.	No work completed.



Assessment: Computer Illustration



■ Exceed Expectations:

- Student shows a mastery of software skills (Adobe Illustrator CS5) learned in class. Student uses a variety of tools and techniques to accomplish the project objectives. Student demonstrates a deep understanding of aesthetics and technical skills to successfully complete projects.

■ Meets Expectations:

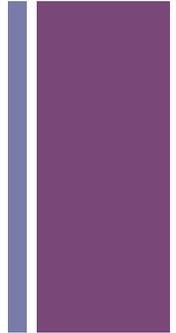
- Student shows a solid understanding of the tools (Adobe Illustrator CS5) and techniques learned in class. Student uses several different tools and solutions. Student understands basic aesthetics and technical skills.

■ Does Not Meet Expectations:

- Student's work does not show an understanding of the tools and techniques learned in the class. Student fails to create successful computer graphics using Adobe Illustrator CS5.

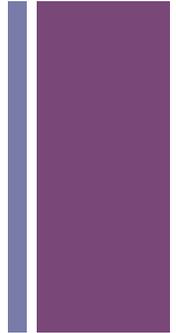
+ What was learned

- While the results of the assessments were overall impressive, they still showed some areas that could be improved upon including:
 - developing custom rubrics with point breakdowns
 - provide better project descriptions with example
 - standardize rubrics across curriculum
 - create projects/assessments that showcase both creative and technical skills
 - create study guides that support the classroom lectures and book materials



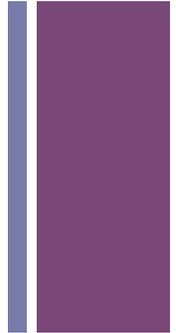
+ Creating objectives

- Detail the project as much as possible.
- Give specifics that you are looking for both creative aspects and software skills/technical skills mastery.
- Give steps the student might take to accomplish the objective but do not solve the objective for the student.
- Some projects will be more vague than others and that's okay. Vague parameters can help the student ask questions of his/her "client" and get more information.



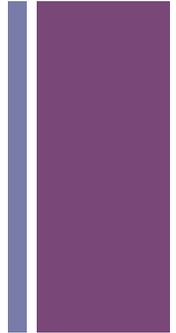
+ Project description example

- Final Project: Recipe Card Web Site
- 25% of total course grade
- Due May 9
- This project should demonstrate a deep understanding of the software skills and techniques you have learned all semester. It should also show your creative solutions for the design objectives of the project which is to design a recipe card web page that supports and reflects the style you have chosen (i.e. kid's site, elegant restaurant site, family meal recipe site, etc.).



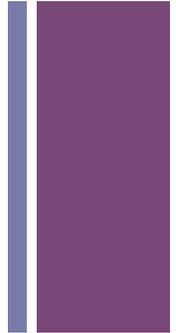
+ Project description example

- You will be designing a layout in Photoshop for a food based web site. The site may be in any style you would like and may be a restaurant site, recipe site, or any other food site that would have recipes on it. Start by taking original photos of 3-4 plates of food. The food may be any type of food and you do not have to cook it yourself. For example, you could buy a muffin and photograph that. The big requirement here is that photo be your original photo. Make the plate of food look as appetizing as possible (style the food/plate and color correct it in Photoshop).
- Now take your photos and create recipe cards and a web site layout with navigation and other content. Your recipe cards should have ingredients and recipes on them.



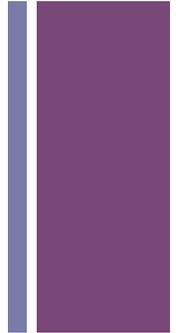
+ Project description continued

- After the design/layout of the site is ready, you will make a working prototype using Adobe Acrobat's linking feature. For this you will need 3 additional "dummy" pages for your site. Take your recipe card layout, copy the file and keep only the navigation and common items on the page. Put some text on each dummy page that says which page it is so that we will know that the prototype is working. For example, on one dummy page you may have "about us" or "contact us" as your content type. There is no need to put any additional content on the dummy pages but you are welcome to do so as this will be a great portfolio piece.



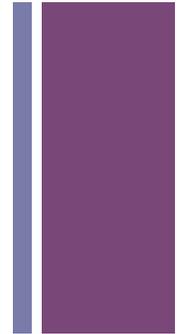
+ Standardizing rubrics

- Rubrics should contain standard elements across the curriculum whenever possible.
- Departments should work together to create a standard rubric from which customized rubrics are based upon.



+ Customizing rubrics

- Customizing a rubric is easy since it is essentially based upon the project description and the generic rubric.
- Break down each criteria into a points spread or show the maximum points given for exceeding expectations, meeting expectations or not meeting expectations.



+ Customizing rubrics

	A	B	C	D	F
Software Skills 40 points max	Student shows a mastery of software skills. Student uses a variety of tools and techniques to accomplish the project objectives. 36-40 points	Student shows a solid understanding of the tools and techniques. Several different tools and solutions used. 32-35 points	Some software skills are shown but others need to be learned. The project lacks a variety of tools and solutions used. 28-31 points	Some software skills are shown. The project is not finished and/or does not meet the objectives. 15-27 points	Software skills not evident. Project is not done. 0 points
Presentation and Organization 20 points max	Files and layers are neat, organized and labeled clearly. All files are included and have student name. 18-20 points	Files and layers are neat, files mostly organized and all files included. 15-17 points	Work is sloppy, files are not organized and files are missing. Layers are not named. 10-14 points	Work is sloppy and files are missing. Layers are not named or merged incorrectly. 5-10 points	No work completed. 0 points
Creativity 30 points max	Student shows creativity in solutions to the project's objectives. The style of type, layout, imagery and other elements all support each other and add to the overall appearance of design. 27-30 points	Student shows basic creativity in solutions to the project's objectives. Most elements of style of type, layout, imagery and other elements all support each other and add to the overall appearance of design. 23-26 points	Student completes work but the project lacks creativity. Styles, type, and/or imagery may clash or detract from overall design. Design lacks a clear focus and purpose. 21-23 points	Project is incomplete and lacks creativity. Project lacks focus, consistent style and has no clear purpose or solves the objective. 18-20 points	No work completed. 0 points
Prototype 10 points max	Prototype is complete and fully functioning. 10 points	Prototype is complete and fully functioning. 10 points	Prototype is partially functioning. 5 points	Prototype is missing but pdfs are made. 3 points	Prototype is missing. 0 points

+ Conclusion

- Creative projects by their very nature offer widely differing results and present challenges to assess but by carefully considering and clarifying the objectives of a particular project one can minimize the impact of factors such as personal preference and subjectivity.
- Utilizing a skill-based point system on a Rubric eliminates confusion and need to defend/explain project grades.

