

Make sure you are familiar with the design guideline presented by Alessi and Trollip for both tutorials and drills. Refer back to chapter 3 to review additional software components.

Locate and evaluate a drill and practice program or a tutorial. Java-based, Flash, Director, or HyperStudio programs on the web are acceptable for evaluation, as are commercial or shareware programs. Do not use “text-based” tutorials – even if they are posted on the web – that are primarily electronic page turners with no interactivity or feedback. Do your best to locate a program that meets most of the criteria outlined by Alessi and Trollip. Use the Summary of Tutorials or Summary of Drills pages (135 and 212, respectively) to guide your written evaluation, as well as information related to the general features of software (see chapter 3) and issues of gender, ethnicity, and stereotypes. Be brief and to the point, providing examples to support your statements. Include the name of the manufacturer, where to obtain the program, and its intended audience, as well as how the program may be improved.

Transcender.com is considered to be the best product on the market for preparing individuals to successfully pass IT industry certification exams from companies like Microsoft, Cisco, Comptia, Oracle, Sun, and others. Current IT industry exams now feature skills-based performance questions in which test takers must perform a specified task based on a given scenario, and Transcender’s test preparation tools help test takers to learn and pass these types of questions in addition to the standard multiple choice, multiple answer and scenario-based questions. I did my drill software evaluation on the Trancender Windows 7 test preparation product. This product is geared towards IT professionals who want to pass the Microsoft 70-680 certification exam. I have used Transcender products many times in the past and each time I have used them I have been impressed by how much they have improved their product. When I first started using their product it was nothing more than a simple Q & A testing program. They have expanded their features over the years to the point of being a very good drilling tool. I had never evaluated their products before based on the Alessi & Trollip criteria, but you can see by the table below that this product dose a very good job at providing many of the features recommended by A&T.

Guidelines for Drills	Yes	No
Short Title Page	X	
Complete Directions/Allow Return Anytime	X	
Organization Principle Supported	X	
Repetition Principle Supported	X	
Response Economy	X	
Mixed-mode Presentation & Responses	X	
Good Layout	X	
Graphics		
Context	X	
Prompts	X	
Feedback	X	
Motivator		X
Difficulty Remained Constant	X	
Random Selection	X	
Organized Queuing		
Flashcard Queuing	X	
VIP Queuing	X	
Retire Items Based on Mastery	X	
Terminate Drills Permanently Based on Performance	X	
Allow Temporary Termination		X
Allow User to Pick Up Where They Left Off	X	
Allow Help Requests and Requests to See Answers	X	
Judge Intelligently	X	
Give Format Feedback		X

Allow For Partially Correct Answers		X
Confirm Correct Responses	X	
Immediate Feedback on Incorrect Responses		X
Keep Feedback Short and Positive	X	
Keep Pace of Drill Quick	X	
Design Drill Sessions to Last About 15 Minutes	X	
Special Feedback and Queuing for Discrimination Errors		X
Sub-Drill Grouping Option Available	X	
Endless-Continuum Option Available	X	
Increased Motivation Techniques		
Games		X
Cooperative Learning		X
Competition*		X
Reasonable & Relevant Goals	X	
Progress Reporting	X	
Display & Response Variety		X
Adjunct Reinforcement		X
Short Drill Sessions	X	
Goal Setting & Scoring	X	
* Be sure competition doesn't discourage poorer learners		