

Alpha Evaluation of Design Time's 'MSIDT CSU Fullerton – Understanding  
the practices of learning in an information age' Tutorial

MSIDT 530

Enlighten Design  
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An alpha evaluation was performed by Enlighten Design (Sangeetha Carmona, Ted Grover, Jenny Kellogg) on the prototype tutorial 'MSIDT CSU Fullerton – Understanding the practices of learning in an information age' by Design Time. Below is a brief description of the results of the review for each category requested by Design Time, which are additionally presented in the attached Alpha Evaluation Form.

#### Subject Matter:

Objectives of the tutorial are clearly stated and content matches goals. Readability is at an appropriate level for the expected audience. Content is presented consistently as is recommended by Alessi and Trollip (p. 60), with no unexpected or confusing attributes. In the area of subject matter the only suggestion is to include more ethnic diversity in the graphics. One reviewer “found the photographs a little dated and not presenting a strong diversity” and a second commented that “most of the people in the photographs were still caucasian, although there clearly was some attempt at presenting gender and ethnic diversity.”

#### Auxiliary Information:

Although Alessi and Trollip consider directions “essential in any multimedia program” (p. 50), the reviewers all agreed that the simplicity of the buttons, including symbolic depictions and rollover descriptions, sufficed and additional directions were not necessary. The placeholder for the context sensitive help page suggests that appropriate global help will be available to the learner and the 'Needs Work' evaluation is for bookkeeping purposes only. No other suggestions are made in this area. The conclusion page is appropriate for this tutorial.

#### Affective Considerations:

In a tutorial, aspects of consideration for learner motivation are content, interactivity and user control. Content and user control are implemented in such a way as to promote learner motivation. Interactivity could be improved with methodologies such as question/response. One reviewer noted that the student profile page of the tutorial likely has potential for user interactivity and will be a positive addition with respect to learner motivation. Another reviewer asserted the following suggestions related to affective considerations:

To improve the overall tutorial, questions should occur frequently. That is, as indicated by Alessi & Trollip (p. 94), sequences of information presentation should be divided with interspersed questions. They could be in question-feedback form, problem-solving scenarios, or commands to be obeyed (e.g. click on the answer you think is correct). For example in the prototype after defining what instructional design is, some positive and/or negative exemplars could be provided where the learner selects the right answer. Alternatively topic-related websites or hot words could be hyperlinked to help learners obtain more information. Where advanced technology tools are mentioned, learners could be provided with examples.

In terms of the content, one area of improvement would be in the affective considerations (p, 422). To increase learner curiosity or motivation to complete the tutorial, some advantages of being an instructional designer could be outlined. For example: Competitive pay, flexible scheduling, opportunity for creativity, teamwork, etc.

It is noted that some of the above may be currently planned for implementation in the full tutorial.

#### Interface:

The one suggestion agreed upon by all three reviewers regarding display is to adjust the text that does

not line up with the lines on the image of notepad paper behind it. Reviewers found this to be distracting and added another possible suggestion - to add an additional solid background behind all main text to avoid interaction with the lined paper and to draw attention forward to the text.

#### Presentation Modes:

All aspects of text and spacing are acceptable. Animations are appropriate and do not create unnecessary distraction from the content, but were regarded by reviewers as reminiscent of a slideshow presentation. However, the addition of interactive content could mitigate this feeling, since the reviewers did not find fault with the animations, which possibly promote attention and interest.

#### Navigation:

Although Alessi and Trollip suggest the convention of putting control options at the bottom of the display (p. 61), the buttons in this tutorial are consistent, clear and unambiguous with rollover text and symbolic presentation. The buttons are all global, which also contributes to consistency. For the sake of user control of sequencing and restart as discussed by Alessi and Trollip (p. 52), one reviewer suggested adding a menu with links to sections of the tutorial, if it is not currently planned for the full implementation.

#### Pedagogy:

The methodology of a tutorial is represented well with this prototype, however only suggestion of future additions of interactivity exist in the student profile page and the assessment placeholder page. Brief question/response style of interactivity within the tutorial content is one suggestion to promote motivation and deeper information processing (Alessi & Trollip, p. 426). The structure of the presentation of the learning material in short sessions of text per screen is noted as a positive aspect regarding cognitive capacity. The subtle learning metaphor of the yellow notepad, suggesting taking notes in class, was also appreciated by reviewers.

#### Invisible features:

This section was not applicable for this prototype.

#### Robustness:

The tutorial appears to be robust to expected and unexpected user actions and was accessible on three different platforms utilized.

#### Supplementary Materials:

This section was not applicable for this prototype.

In summary, the following is a complete list of all suggestions and recommendations for the Design Time tutorial, 'MSIDT CSU Fullerton – Understanding the practices of learning in an information age':

- Update graphics to feature more ethnic diversity
- Include some question/response style interactivity in the tutorial content
- Adjust main text, which at times does not line up with the lined paper background graphic
- Add menu with links to sections of the tutorial (if not planned)

The few recommendations reflect the generally excellent quality of the tutorial prototype found by reviewers.

## References

Alessi, S. M., & Trollip, S. R. (2001). *Multimedia for Learning: Methods and Developments* (3rd Ed.) Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

## ALPHA EVALUATION FORM

Program: **MSIDT CSU Fullerton** –

**Understanding the practices of learning in an information age**

Reviewer: **Enlighten Design**

Date: **6/11/10**

ITEM	ACCEPT- ABLE	NEEDS WORK	COMMENTS
<b>Subject matter</b>			
Matches goals	√		Content aligns with goals
Content structure	√		Information is presented sequentially (linear tutorial)
Content accuracy	√		
Language, style, grammar	√		Using readability scoring <a href="http://www.addedbytes.com/code/readability-score/">http://www.addedbytes.com/code/readability-score/</a> text scored 27 (easy readability)
<i>Reading level</i>	√		Using readability scoring <a href="http://www.addedbytes.com/code/readability-score/">http://www.addedbytes.com/code/readability-score/</a> The text scored 14.8 (undergraduate level text)
<i>Cultural bias - language</i>	√		Educators or designers with some instructional exposure.
<i>Cultural bias - reference</i>		√	Graphic depictions included genders, various ages, and some ethnicities. Users noted that graphics depict some diversity of culture, but majority of people in photos are caucasian.
<i>Technical terms and jargon</i>	√		Appropriately used terminology
<i>Spelling, grammar, and punctuation.</i>	√		Minor punctuation error
<b>Auxiliary information</b>			
Introduction	√		
Directions	√		No directions were given; however none were required due to the simplicity of design.
Help		√	Placeholder screen included for context sensitive help which will be included in full version of tutorial.
Conclusion	√		Acceptable for prototype
<b>Affective considerations</b>			
Motivation	√		Content written well to maintain motivation for the expected audience. See notes about interactivity and

			methodologies for suggestions regarding affecting learner motivation.
<b>Interface</b>			
Displays	√		Good balance between graphics and text.  Some of the text does not align with the lined page background (for e.g. the line goes through the text or the text is too high over the line) which can be distracting - suggest that text that does not line up with lined background be adjusted or possibly add additional solid background just behind all main text areas.
<b>Presentation modes</b>			
Text quality	√		Arial typeface in a readable size
Animation and graphics	√		High quality and topic related graphics
Input	√		Not applicable in this tutorial
Spacing	√		Aligned well within allotted screens
<b>Navigation</b>			
Navigation aids	√		Basic linear “forward” “back” “home” and “exit” permits learner control of progression and pace (A & T, p. 52)
Restarting	√		Suggest including a menu of sections to allow the learner to control sequencing or review/restart (A & T, p. 52)
Passive bookmarking	√		Not applicable in this tutorial
Active bookmarking	√		Not applicable in this tutorial
<b>Pedagogy</b>			
Methodologies	√		Tutorial methodology used well, including clear presentation of objectives and learner control. Questions/responses and feedback could be additionally utilized (A & T, p. 90)
Interactivity		√	Paging interactivity available to user; however a suggestion would be to add questions at the beginning or end of a module to increase interactivity to promote deeper processing of the information learned (A & T p. 426)
Cognitive capacity	√		Short learning sessions per screen
Cooperative learning	√		Not applicable in this tutorial
Learning metaphor	√		Yellow lined writing pad ☺
Learning Strategies	√		Not applicable in this tutorial
User control	√		Not applicable in this tutorial
Questions		√	Please refer to note above on interactivity
Answering questions		√	Please refer to note above on interactivity

Quality of feedback		√	Please refer to note above on interactivity
Format of feedback		√	Please refer to note above on interactivity
Mastery level	√		Not applicable for this prototype

<b>Invisible features</b>			
Records and data	√		Not applicable for this prototype
Security and accessibility	√		Not applicable for this prototype
Too much data	√		Not applicable for this prototype
<b>Robustness</b>			
For normal user actions	√		
For unusual user actions	√		
On different computers, software, and browsers	√		Used on three different computers (Enlighten Design Team)
<b>Supplementary materials</b>			
Manual: General	√		Not applicable for this prototype. User manual not necessary for scope.
Manual: Program operation	√		Not applicable for this prototype
Manual: Program content	√		Not applicable for this prototype
Auxiliary materials	√		Not applicable for this prototype
Other resources	√		Not applicable for this prototype