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Background

Instructional Purpose

This course was designed to increase the skills of web developers by teaching how to develop dynamic content that will enhance web-based training. It presents a complete process, from analysis through development and evaluation.

The lesson to which this evaluation pertains is "Selecting a Tool." In this lesson, the students are introduced to the various tools that are used to develop dynamic content. They learn to evaluate each tool in terms of factors such as technical capabilities, cost, and ease of use. Finally, they are presented with a scenario in which they are tasked with selecting the best tool for a project.

Audience

The intended audience for this entire course is experienced web developers who are already experienced in developing web-based training. They may have various years of experience, and may work in fields such as higher education, government/military contracting, private industry, or as independent contractors (i.e., self-employed).

Context

This course is entirely web-based. It is delivered through the internet, and students may log-on from any internet connection. Students may complete the course from home, at work, or a combination.

Purpose

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to improve the quality of the instructional material. Feedback from each evaluator will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Wherever feasible, specific recommendations will be incorporated in the lesson.

Method

Subjects

Five subjects were asked to evaluate this lesson: a subject matter expert (SME), a web developer, and a project manager.

1. *SME and Instructional Designer* – Francisca Yonekura was asked to evaluate this lesson as both a subject matter expert and an instructional designer. Fran is the lead New Media Instructional Designer at Course Development & Web Services (CDWS) at the University of Central Florida (UCF). She also holds a master's degree in Instructional Systems and Technology.
2. *Instructional Designer* – Sue Bauer holds a M.A. in Instructional Technology/Instructional Systems and has worked as an instructional designer at UCF's CDWS for four years.
3. *Web Developer* – Susan Hicks holds a B.A. in Anthropology and a B.S. in Legal Studies; she has worked for UCF's CDWS for 5 years.
4. *Web Developer* – Matthew Dunn was asked to evaluate this lesson from the standpoint of a potential student. Mr. Dunn is currently employed as a web developer and graphic designer by the College of Arts & Science at the University of Central Florida. He has two years of professional website development experience and a B.A. in graphic design.

The purpose of the web developer evaluation was to verify the technical accuracy of the content, as well as to provide feedback on the general layout and flow of the lesson content.

5. *Project Manager* – Russell Newman was asked to evaluate this lesson from the standpoint of a manager that would consider purchasing this course for his employees. Russell holds an M.A. in Education/Instructional Technology and has six years experience in creating and/or managing new media, digital media or Web-based projects.

The purpose of the project manager evaluation was somewhat different from those of the SME and web developer. He was not asked to review the entire lesson content. Rather, he was asked to review the course goals and objectives. He then provided feedback, in the form of an interview, as to whether or not he would consider enrolling employees in this course, and why or why not.

Design

The design of each phase of evaluation was driven by the specific role of each evaluator. The SME and web developer were both asked to make specific comments on the content of the lesson. The SME was expected to comment on technical accuracy, while the web developer was expected to comment from the standpoint of a potential student. The web developer was then asked to complete a survey to describe his reaction to the lesson, much like a student perception survey. The SME and project manager were both interviewed in order to ascertain their individual perception of the lesson.

Instruments

Several instruments were used for the evaluation of this lesson. Both the SME and the web developer used the observation form (appendix C). This form allows the evaluator to note specific discrepancies and make recommendations to correct these discrepancies. In addition, the web developer was asked to complete a survey (appendix E) and the SME and project manager were both interviewed using questions from the interview forms in appendix D and F.

Procedure

The procedure for the evaluation was fairly straightforward. Both the SME and the web developer were asked to review the entire lesson. Any discrepancies or recommendations were noted on the observation form (appendix C). The SME was then interviewed, and the web developer completed a survey.

The project manager was introduced to the purpose of the course, and the goals and objectives were explained. The project manager was then interviewed about his/her perception of the usefulness of the course.

Following the reviews and interviews, all evaluation instruments were collected and compiled by the course development team. Compiled results are presented later in this report.

Constraints

The only constraint that affected this formative evaluation was time. Because of project deadlines, the evaluators were asked to complete their evaluation in a single day. Another constraint was

Results & Discussion

Subject Matter Expert

Observation – Fran was asked to review the entire Unit 4 content. She was provided with an observation form on which to record any discrepancies or recommendations. An example of the observation form can be found in appendix C. Fran observed some clarity errors, particularly in description of performance requirements. She also suggested that the course material be more robust and detailed.

Interview – Fran was then interviewed after reviewing the course. The specific interview questions can be found in appendix D. During the interview Fran expanding upon her comments concerning additional detail. She felt that the information provided in the unit was accurate, but that it did not express all the aspects of the dynamic webpage tools that were covered. She did, however, feel that the medium of delivery (the webpage) was appropriate for the subject matter.

Instructional Designer

Sue Bauer was asked to review the entire Unit 4 instructional design. She was provided with an observation form on which to record any discrepancies or recommendations. An example of the observation form can be found in appendix C. Sue found that the most confusing elements of the course were the layout and webpage design. In her observation form she did not make any negative comments about the instructional design.

Interview – Sue was then interviewed after reviewing the course. The specific interview questions can be found in appendix D. She restated her concerns about the layout. In addition, she suggested that time constraints be set for the assignments, but added that she would like to know more background information about the intended learning audience.

Web Developer

Observation – Matthew and Susan were asked to review the entire lesson 4 content. They were provided with an observation form on which to record any discrepancies or recommendations. An example of the observation form can be found in appendix C. Matthew was drawn to the design of the website; he felt that the layout and colors were distracting and could be improved. However, he felt that the content and structure were well developed. Conversely, Susan felt that the layout and flow were well handled, but she felt that the course was not particularly exciting or engaging. Both Matthew and Susan felt that the Internet was well suited as a medium for the course.

Survey – Matthew and Susan were asked to complete a survey after reviewing the course. The specific survey questions can be found in appendix E. Matthew and Susan disagreed about the quality of the layout (Matthew ranking the layout as 4/5 (with 5 being the worst) and Susan ranking it a 1/5). Both Matthew and Susan did agree that the content's structure and clarity were well done.

Project Manager

Interview – Russell was asked to complete a survey after reviewing the course goals and objectives. The specific interview questions can be found in appendix F. Most interestingly, Russell said that as a project manager, he would be most interested in “The inclusion of planning and pre-production lessons, and the focus on researching applicable tools.” He also said that he would be likely to allow his employees to take this particular course “on the clock,” and that the content seems to have the right amount of breadth and depth.

Recommendations

Based upon these five formative evaluations, Unit 04 should probably undergo some changes. First, the course webpage needs to be proofread, since Matthew found several spelling and grammatical errors. Second, the amount of detail should be more closely examined. Fran suggested that more detailed be added, but none of the others surveyed offered similar recommendations. Finally, if feasible, it would be helpful to bring in more input from project managers. The course should be appealing to students, but it should also satisfy their employers' needs and desires. At the least, Russell's suggestions concerning pre-production and planning lessons should be incorporated.

Appendix A

Overall Formative Evaluation Plan

Phase	Evaluator	Date	Target	Instruments/Techniques
Expert Reviews	Instructional Design Expert		Goals & Objectives Assessment Instructional Strategy	Observations forms Interview questions
	Subject Matter Expert		Goals & Objectives Assessment Content Accuracy and completeness	Observations forms Interview questions
	Usability Expert		Interface design of entire unit/course	Talk –out-loud Heuristic Card sorting
One-to-One Evaluations	Web Developer (higher ed)		Entire course content	Observations form Interview questions
	Web Developer (government contracting)		Entire course content	Observations form Interview questions
	Web Developer (private industry)		Entire course content	Observations form Interview questions
	Web Developer (freelancer)		Entire course content	Observations form Interview questions
	Project Manager		Goals and Objectives	Interview questions Survey
Small Group Evaluations	4 Students (one from each background)		Problematic areas/units from 1-to-1 Interface usability	Survey Interview Questions Card Sorting
	3 Project Managers (one from each background)		Management-Oriented Approaches	Survey Interview Questions
Field Test	20 beta testers (students)		Entire Course	Survey Interview Questions

Appendix B

Specific Formative Evaluation Protocols

Protocol 1: Subject Matter Expert (SME)

Course: Enhancing Online Courses

Facilitator: _____

Evaluator: _____

Date: _____

Target: Unit 4 lesson content, including objectives

Technique: Expert Review (SME) Formative Evaluation

Purpose: To verify validity of instructional objectives, content matter, assignments and performance criteria

Questions: See appendix D

Procedure:

1. Discuss purpose of FE with SME
2. Discuss proposed course with SME, including Goal Analysis, Subordinate Skills Analysis, and objectives.
3. Explain observation form (Appendix C) to SME
4. Have SME review lesson 4
5. Collect observation form from SME
6. Conduct interview with SME
7. Thank SME for his time.

Materials:

- Hardcopy of Goal Analysis, Subordinate Skills Analysis, and objectives
- Computer Workstation with internet access
- Interview Questions

Protocol 2: Web Developer

Course: Enhancing Online Courses

Facilitator: _____

Evaluator: _____

Date: _____

Target: Unit 4 lesson content, including objectives

Technique: One-to-One Formative Evaluation

Purpose: To verify validity of instructional objectives, content matter, assignments and performance criteria

Questions: See appendix E

Procedure:

1. Discuss purpose of FE with web developer
2. Discuss proposed course with web developer, including Goal Analysis, Subordinate Skills Analysis, and objectives.
3. Explain observation form (Appendix C) to web developer
4. Explain survey (appendix E) to web developer
5. Have web developer review lesson 4
6. Have web developer complete survey
7. Collect observation form and survey from web developer
8. Thank web developer for his time.

Materials:

- Hardcopy of Goal Analysis, Subordinate Skills Analysis, and objectives
- Computer Workstation with internet access
- Survey form

Protocol 3: Project Manager

Course: Enhancing Online Courses

Facilitator: _____

Evaluator: _____

Date: _____

Target: Course goals and objectives

Technique: One-to-One Formative Evaluation

Purpose: To verify perceived value of course

Questions: See appendix F

Procedure:

1. Discuss purpose of FE with project manager
2. Discuss proposed course with project manager, including Goal Analysis, Subordinate Skills Analysis, and objectives.
3. Explain survey (appendix F) to project manager
4. Complete interview with project manager
5. Thank project manager for his time.

Materials:

- Hardcopy of Goal Analysis, Subordinate Skills Analysis, and objectives
- Interview form

Appendix D

SME Interview

Was the material in the lesson technically accurate? If not, please explain.

Was the material in the lesson clearly presented?

Did the material in the lesson cover the topic sufficiently?

Is there any material that should be added to the lesson?

Is there any material that should be removed from the lesson?

Did the exercises reinforce the content?

Did the quiz accurately cover the material presented?

Is the presentation medium (web-based) suitable for this content?

Appendix E Web Developer Survey

Please answer the following questions using the following key:

- 1 – Strongly agree
- 2 – Agree
- 3 – Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 – Disagree
- 5 – Strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
The information in this lesson was clearly presented.					
The layout and flow of the lesson was easy to follow.					
The presentation medium (web-based) is suitable for this lesson.					
The information in this lesson will help me in my daily work.					
The exercises in this lesson helped reinforce the content.					
The lesson quiz accurately covered the material presented.					
The objectives of the lesson were clearly stated.					
I feel I was able to achieve the objectives of the lesson.					
Based on this lesson, I would enroll in the entire course.					
I would recommend this course to others.					

Appendix F

Project Manager Interview

Based on the goals and objectives of this course, would you consider enrolling members of your team in this course? Why or why not.

If not, what could be done to the course to make it more appealing?

If you would consider enrolling members of your team, what specific factor(s) are most appealing about this course?

Can you see how a course like this could be of value to your team?

How likely would you be to allow your employees to complete this course “on the clock” at work?

Are there any topics you would like to see added to the content?

Are there any topics you feel should be removed from the content?

Have you had any prior experience with similar courses? If so, please describe your experience(s).