Usability Test Report of E-Learning Platform

The UA/Pearson Learning Studio

Date of Report: April 11, 2012
Last Update: April 15, 2012
Date of Interviews: March 21, 2012 – April 4, 2012
Location of Test: Akron, Ohio

Prepared for: John R. Savery
Director, Instructional Services
Instructional Learning
The University of Akron
Phone Number: 330-972-8238
Email: jsavery@uakron.edu

Prepared by: Kathleen Kennedy
Executive Director, The Taylor Institute and Suarez Labs
The University of Akron
Phone Number: 330-972-5758
Email: k.kennedy@uakron.edu

Confidential Research Report: This report contains personal information which cannot be published in whole or part without written permission from the research participants.

330.972.2174 – The University of Akron, The Polsky Building 5th Floor – Akron, OH 44325-4807
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .................................................................................................................. 4  
Summary of findings ............................................................................................................... 4  
Recommendations for site improvement ............................................................................... 5  

**Introduction** ......................................................................................................................... 6  

**Study Objective** .................................................................................................................. 6  

**Methodology** ....................................................................................................................... 7  
What happened during the usability test ............................................................................. 7  
Who we tested ......................................................................................................................... 7  
Testing location and technical specifications ..................................................................... 9  
The test site .............................................................................................................................. 9  
The test course ......................................................................................................................... 9  
Page loading speed ............................................................................................................... 10  
Page cannot be loaded errors ............................................................................................... 10  

**Introductory Questions & Tasks** ....................................................................................... 11  
Participant Profiles: Students .............................................................................................. 11  
Participant Profiles: Faculty ................................................................................................. 16  

**General Findings & Recommendations** ......................................................................... 17  
Website Design and Navigation ......................................................................................... 17  
Orientation within the site .................................................................................................... 20  
Differentiating between the three main sections of the Course Home ......................... 20  
Vocabulary and Terms .......................................................................................................... 20  
Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication Tools .................................................. 21  

**Course List Page** .............................................................................................................. 22  

**Course Homepage** ............................................................................................................ 25  

**Social Learning Widget** .................................................................................................. 29  

**Course Page – About “UA”** .............................................................................................. 32  

**Discussion Board** ............................................................................................................. 34  

**Gradebook** ....................................................................................................................... 36  

**Dropbox** .......................................................................................................................... 38  

**SOT Student Orientation Tutorial** .................................................................................. 40  

**One page reference – Gradebook Tool** ......................................................................... 42  

**Help** .................................................................................................................................. 43  

**Task Assessment: Students** ............................................................................................ 44  
Test Scenario 1: Log-in and Navigation .............................................................................. 47  
Test Scenario 2: Social Interaction - Classmates ................................................................. 48  
Test Scenario 3: Course Functionality Module 1 “About UA” ........................................... 50  
Test Scenario 4: Course Functionality Module 2 called “UA College Life” ...................... 51  
Test Scenario 5: Checking Discussion Board and Returned Assignments ....................... 52  

Page | 2
Test Scenario 6: Social Interaction - Classmates ................................................................. 54
Scenario 7: SOT Student Orientation Tutorial ........................................................................ 54
Test Scenario 8: Module 3/Tech Support ............................................................................... 54

**Students: Exit Questions/User Impressions** ....................................................................... 55
What would make this site better ......................................................................................... 55
The overall experience ........................................................................................................... 55

**Faculty: Exit Questions/User Impressions** .......................................................................... 56
What would make this site better ......................................................................................... 56

Appendix A: Research Participants ........................................................................................ 70
Appendix B: Interview Guide .................................................................................................. 70
Appendix C: Student Evaluations ............................................................................................ 70
Appendix D: Detailed Task Evaluation – Students .................................................................... 70
Appendix E: Pre-Interview Online Survey Responses – Students ........................................... 70
Appendix F: Additional Faculty Verbatims ............................................................................... 70

NOTE TO READER: The Appendices have been moved into a separate document (70 pages) to avoid having to print the whole document at once. – J. Savery
Executive Summary

This study was conducted to evaluate the usability of the Pearson Learning Studio a E-Learning Website. The interviews also provided an opportunity to gather some additional information about critical factors in delivering a successful online learning experience for both students and faculty/instructors.

Both students and faculty/instructors were interview in this study but the primary focus of this report is on delivering a successful student learning experience.

The study focused on the Pearson Learning Studio as implemented at The University of Akron and specifically on:

1. Overall task performance.
2. User difficulties and frustrations with the site.
3. Significant usability finding, both positive as well as negative findings.

Summary of findings

• Participants had positive attitudes toward the overall concept and streamlined appearance of the site.

• The Pearson E-Learning Website provides all the functionality that students and faculty/instructors required.
  
  o Collaborative whiteboard functionality was not included in the student interviews but was included in the facility/instructor interviews where it was deemed essential.

• The website incorporates many familiar tools and icons that aided understanding of how to use the site. There are some significant weaknesses with navigation, labeling and course tools structure. Most of these can be corrected with minor modifications to the site.
  
  o Navigation is the most significant usability issue and streamline the navigation framework is recommended.

• All of the study participants were familiar with Springboard and expected this site to incorporate Springboard-style course tools.

• The training support needed for successful use of this E-Learning Platform varies by cohort:
  
  o Students found most of the site easy to navigate and were able to do the majority of tasks without using the Student Tutorial or Help functions. Self-directed use of
the online training and reference materials should be enough to get them through most problems.

- Faculty/instructors who participated in the study had a range of exposure to E-Learning systems and a range of attitudes about E-Learning. None of the participants could accomplish all of the tasks without assistance and would need some form of training.

- Providing Faculty/instructors with a few model courses that employ different E-Learning approaches would be helpful in accelerating the adoption rate and quality of course design.

- Many of the students’ desired course design components can be delivered within the existing platform but will require substantial instructional design support:
  - Effective course design is the most critical component of creating the desired student experience.
  - Some students expected to have course presented with video and audio media integration.
  - Students were very interested in having a strong instructor presence on the site.

**Recommendations for site improvement**

A detailed list of recommendations is contained in this report. This is a brief overview:

- The site navigation is too complex and streamlining will improve overall usability.

- Site experience would be improved with the integration of more internal help to add users in navigating through tasks without having to refer to help, tutorials or other users for advice. Ideally, this help would be unobtrusive items like mouseover tags and help links on complex Course Tools pages.
  - The use of intermodal popup windows with instructions should be considered. This is a proven effective and time-efficient approach to integrating instruction into a page while eliminating clutter.

- The site terms and icons can be simplified and standardized.

- Two course tools, the Dropbox and the Gradebook, had functional weaknesses. These weaknesses are detailed in the Task Assessment section.
Introduction

Usability does not exist in any real or absolute sense. Our goal is to measure the general quality of the application to a purpose of specific tasks, functions and outcomes.

At the core of this study, we were trying to measure:

- Effectiveness – the ability of users to complete tasks using the system, and the quality of the output of those tasks.
- Efficiency – the level of resource consumed in performing tasks.
- User Satisfaction – users’ subjective reactions to using the system.

A total of 17 subjects participated in this study representing both student and faculty/instructor target user groups. The study employed in-depth, one-on-one interviews lasting approximately 60 minutes. These interviews provided very rich depth of information but, because of the small sample size, information from this study cannot be used for quantitative analysis and population projection.

Study Objective

Overall objective: Measure ‘effectiveness’ (degree of task completion), ‘efficiency’ (how much effort it takes to complete a task) and ‘satisfaction’ (positive attitudes toward the UA brand and web experience).

The study focused on the usability of the Pearson E-Learning Platform. The study was not an evaluation of E-Learning in general and did not compare this platform to alternative E-Learning Platforms or traditional face-to-face instruction.

E-Learning Platform Assessment by users to determine if it is:

1. Useful: it does what we want it to do
2. Effective: it allows us to perform our tasks quickly and proficiently
3. Learnable: it enables us to learn how to do our tasks
4. Flexible: it has system integrity and tolerates our errors
5. Satisfying: it encourages us to continue using the interface

Usability goals:

1. Determine how users interact with the system.
2. Overall satisfaction with ease of use and navigation.
3. Identify what makes intuitive sense and where users get lost.
4. Identify what is difficult for people to do and options for improvement.
User experience:

1. Identify aspects of the platform that make users feel distrustful or insecure.
2. Determine which aspects of the platform are liked and disliked.

Learner Tasks and Activities:

1. Can the user accomplish a key task?
2. Can the user find something specific?

Specific tasks tested are detailed in this report.

Methodology

What happened during the usability test

The usability evaluation of the Pearson E-Learning Platform was conducted by the staff of the Suarez Laboratories for Applied Marketing Research at The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio on March 21, 2012 through April 4, 2012. The study was supervised by Kathleen Kennedy.

During the usability evaluation, seventeen (17) participants, matching the user profiles, were asked to spend about 60 minutes on the site. During this session, participants:

- Answered questions about initial site impressions.
- Performed scripted tasks on the site while thinking aloud.
- Discussed how they would use this website in a class or as an instructor.
- Answered questions about new website features and tools they would value.
- Answered questions about their overall satisfaction.

The interviews were all conducted by Kathleen Kennedy. Sessions were videotaped and computer desktop activity, mouse movements and mouse clicks were recorded.

Who we tested

Seventeen (17) participants were recruited by the Suarez Labs research staff to participate in this study.

Student profile – 12 participants:

- UA students had taken online courses or were interested in taking online courses in the future and had substantial experience with Springboard.
- Moderate to high level of Internet skill.
- 25 or more years old.
- Mix of male and female (quota to skew female).
- 5 Graduate Students, 7 Undergraduate Students.
- Represent a cross-section of academic majors.
Immediately prior to the interviews, students were asked to complete an online survey that included information about their profile, internet knowledge and media usage. The complete survey responses are including in Appendix E. The responses to the questions on internet usage follow:

On average, how many hours a day do you spend...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Min Value</th>
<th>Max Value</th>
<th>Average Value</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Watching broadcast or cable TV</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening to broadcast radio</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Accessing internet from personal computer</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Internet from mobile phone/PDA</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you rate yourself in the following areas (scale of 1 – 10 where 10 = Very Expert)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Min Value</th>
<th>Max Value</th>
<th>Average Value</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knowledge about the Internet</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Use of online learning systems</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What type of device do you primarily use to access the Internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personal computer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Smart phone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty/Instructor profile – 5 participants:

- Selected from different UA Colleges and with different levels of E-Learning experience.

All 17 participants agreed to answer follow-up questions about the E-Learning website and release their contact information to the client. This information is in Appendix A. None of the participants were asked to allow public use of their comments.
Testing location and technical specifications

The tests were conducted in a computer usability lab at The Taylor Institute for Direct Marketing at The University of Akron. The lab is equipped with audio and video recording equipment. Desktop activity was recorded using Morae (TechSmith) and proprietary software. The subject session room was viewable from an observation room through a 1-way mirror. Subjects were informed of the recordings and observation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URL of tested website:</th>
<th><a href="http://ua.ecollege.com/internallogin.learn">http://ua.ecollege.com/internallogin.learn</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer platforms:</td>
<td>Dell OPTIPLEX 745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browser tested:</td>
<td>Firefox 10.0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display monitor:</td>
<td>19 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen resolution:</td>
<td>1280 by 1024 pixels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating system:</td>
<td>Microsoft Windows XP Professional Version 2002 Service Pack 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection speed:</td>
<td>Shared T1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test site

The website was in development when this study was conducted and some items did not function correctly for some users. This did not interfere with the ability of participate to experience this website and get a good idea of the functionality.

Users were informed that the site was in development and that some parts of the site were not functioning.

The test course

The test course, “About UA”, caused some confusion. For example, testers who were looking for information about the course instructor, clicked on the Course section labeled “Faculty” on the left-side navigation bar not realizing that was a section of the course. Because this was not a realistic situation, the interviewer explained this category.
**Page loading speed**

During the test session interviews, there were some problems with website page loading speed. In the instances where this occurred, the interviewer reminded study participants that this was a test site and participants were asked to ignore any issues.

**Page cannot be loaded errors**

Certain activities in sequence caused the site to hit a page loading error that required relogging into the site. When this occurred, the interviewer reloaded the site and returned the user to the login page.

Similarly, users who accidently logged out of the site, were asked to relogin.
**Introductory Questions & Tasks**

At the beginning of each session, there was a warm-up discussion with participant, including an explanation of Moderator and Participant Roles and three background questions:

Tell me a little about yourself.
Do you use the internet regularly?
How would you rate your level of web knowledge?

**Participant Profiles: Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL-01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you taken any online courses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many online courses have you taken?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When was the last time you took an online course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe those online courses to me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How involved were you with these courses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about online courses based on own personal experience with them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find the online courses you’ve taken matched your learning and studying style? (If no)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you planning to take any online courses in the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have you taken any online courses?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| EL-03 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| **Have you taken any online courses?** | Yes. |
| **When was the last time you took an online course?** | Two years ago. |
| **Can you describe those online courses to me?** | Introduction to Economic Analysis. |
| **How involved were you with these courses?** | Not asked. |
| **Why did you take these online courses?** | |
| **How do you feel about online courses based on own personal experience with them?** | She likes both online and live courses. For classes that are more intuitive, like the Economic Analysis course or a writing course, she would prefer to take it online. For courses that need more explanation and description, she would prefer to take those live. |
| **Did you find the online courses you've taken matched your learning and studying style? (If no)** | Did not think that either one (online vs. live) was suited better to her personal learning style. |
| **Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?** | Used video lectures, taken quizzes, turned in assignments, discussion board. |
| **How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.** | |
| **Are you planning to take any online courses in the future?** | Yes. |

<p>| EL-04 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| <strong>Have you taken any online courses?</strong> | Yes-attempted two but dropped due to complications with learning style (more of a visual learner). |
| <strong>How many online courses have you taken?</strong> | Two (eventually dropped) |
| <strong>When was the last time you took an online course?</strong> | Eight or nine years ago. |
| <strong>Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?</strong> | Yes. Turn in assignments, notes and lectures, and news announcements from the professor. Does not use for discussion board. |
| <strong>How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.</strong> | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL-05</th>
<th>Have you taken any online courses?</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?</td>
<td>Yes. Use to turn in assignments, discussion board, grades, distribute course material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL-06</th>
<th>Have you taken any online courses?</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When was the last time you took an online course?</td>
<td>Three years ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you describe those online courses to me?</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How involved were you with these courses?</td>
<td>Not asked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why did you take these online courses?</td>
<td>Not asked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you feel about online courses based on own personal experience with them?</td>
<td>It is just like sitting in class but you are looking at a screen instead of a whiteboard (like in a live class).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you find the online courses you've taken matched your learning and studying style? (If no)</td>
<td>Live class is more suited to her learning needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?</td>
<td>Yes. Used to turn in assignments, grades, and course materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you planning to take any online courses in the future?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL-07</th>
<th>Have you taken any online courses?</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?</td>
<td>Yes. Used to submit course assignments, look at course materials, grades, and discussion board. Finds it useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you taken any online courses?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many online courses have you taken?</td>
<td>Several.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When was the last time you took an online course?</td>
<td>Three years ago.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe those online courses to me?</td>
<td>Humanities and Psychology.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How involved were you with these courses?</td>
<td>Scheduling convenience- working at the time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you take these online courses?</td>
<td>It depended upon the set-up. Active engagement of the instructor was far superior to a less engaged instructor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about online courses based on own personal experience with them?</td>
<td>Yes. The classes online were more challenging.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find the online courses you've taken matched your learning and studying style? (If no)</td>
<td>Yes. The classes online were more challenging.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?</td>
<td>Yes. Used for dropbox, access course materials, and participated in discussion boards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you taken any online courses?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many online courses have you taken?</td>
<td>Two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When was the last time you took an online course?</td>
<td>Fall Semester 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe those online courses to me?</td>
<td>Behavioral Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you take these online courses?</td>
<td>The online classes were mandatory and only offered online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about online courses based on own personal experience with them?</td>
<td>Prefers a live setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find the online courses you've taken matched your learning and studying style? (If no)</td>
<td>She loves online testing (especially when it is open book) but feels that she misses out on the benefit of interacting with the professor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you taken any online courses?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you used Springboard for a course at UA?</td>
<td>Yes. Used for accessing course materials, turned in assignments on Dropbox, discussion board, and professor announcements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have you taken any online courses? No.

Have you used Springboard for a course at UA? Yes. Used for accessing course materials, Dropbox, and discussion board.
How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.
Are you planning to take any online courses in the future? Yes.

---

EL-12

Have you taken any online courses? No.

Have you used Springboard for a course at UA? Yes. Used for turning in assignments, accessing course materials, and using discussion board.
How did you use Springboard? RECORD ways ELMS were used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Profiles: Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EL-01</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEL-02</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEL-03</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEL-04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEL-05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average usage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Findings & Recommendations

Website Design and Navigation

The main problem users had with the site was basic navigation. For example, even very experienced Internet users resorted to using the back arrow when asked to exit the course.

The main site navigation icons – Exit Course (small house), Log-Out (small door with arrow out) and User Setting (Head) – could not be located by most users. Users expected these icons to be in the upper left corner of the 1 in the above diagram.

EL-04: “The icons are like really small in the bottom left corner. They should maybe be at the top. If they were at the top and I saw a house I would probably be inclined to click on it. (3:44-3:52 Disc2)
The main site navigation icons included an icon, “Hide Units and Content” (square), which was not used in testing or by any participants. Several users moused over this icon but there was no apparent understanding of the purpose.

The “Hide Units and Content” icon hides the left-hand course navigation section along with the main navigation icons for the site. Generally, the main navigation icons for a site should never be hidden because this increases the time to go from one function to another.

The “Hide Units and Content” icon may be better placed in the fourth position of the main site navigation icons and relocated to the upper left portion of the Course Home page. A more representative icon is recommended. The mouseover label, “Hide Units and Content”, should be changed to something more specific to its function and to courses where the instructor does not use the term “unit” is their course design. When the course content is hidden, it might be helpful to more dramatically change this icon to indicate that it was hiding content.

**The course tools** in the upper right toolbar were labeled with versus the mouseover tags used for the main site navigation icons. This is a more efficient way to communicate categories to users.

The course tools toolbar at the upper right corner was not clearly identified as course tools so users assumed it included the entire site navigation.
The course name and instructor name were not prominent enough and appears to be part of the banner background. Graphically separating this information from The University of Akron logo would be helpful. This could be accomplished with font size or color.

Clicking on the course name should take user back to the Course Home.

Clicking on the instructor’s name should take user to an Instructor Profile and Contact Information.
Most users did not realize that the “Course Home” bar returned them to the course home page. The location within the course materials navigation was not one of the intuitive locations.

Recommend adding an icon to the main navigation icons for Course Home. This also alleviates the problem that occurs when the “Hide Units and Content” function is used and eliminates the “Course Home” label.

Orientation within the site
Users did not have any standard orientation system to know where they were within the site or their course. There are many strategies for clarifying this for users. The most common strategy is to place the main navigation as a horizontal top bar or as the left navigation and use a graphic device to indicate where the user is.

Since the left vertical section is dedicated to navigation within the course materials, using the empty left side of the horizontal top bar would be an excellent location.

Differentiating between the three main sections of the Course Home
The Course Home is divided into three sections:

• Site framework (main navigation, lower left corner and top of left vertical navigation)
• Course materials (left vertical navigation)
• Course tools (right side of top bar)

Users did not intuitively understand these categories.

Vocabulary and Terms
Some terms were not understood, for example:

Webliography – some users guessed what this was but were not sure.
Some terms were ambiguous, for example Unread/Read has two different possible meanings.

Announcements

Welcome to the course!
Thank you for participating in this study! This short sample course is... Read More
Posted 3/5/2012

Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication Tools

Synchronous tools enable real-time communication and collaboration in a "same time-different place" mode. These tools allow students and the instructor, or student groups, to connect at a single point in time.

The Faculty/Instructors interviewed were very interested in synchronous tools.

The Students were not particularly interested in these tools in part because they require same-time participation that can create scheduling challenges. Students were more interested in participating dialogs that employed asynchronous tools.

*The balance between synchronous and asynchronous communications in E-Learning success is an area for additional study and beyond the scope of this investigation.*
The Course List Page was understood by most users and all users understood the primary use of this page – to access the courses that they were enrolled in or that they were teaching.

Some student participants did not understand that this was the listing for all the courses in which they were enrolled. Similarly, a couple of the instructors did not understand that this page listed all the E-Learning courses they are teaching.

Most users ignored the Mobile Announcement. Both students and instructors commented that it was too much text and that they would never read it. This and similar announcements could be streamlined to improve communications effectiveness.

All users ignored the Admin Message Center which required users to scroll down. If these announcements are important they should be moved up the page.

If possible, the content of this page should be managed so it fit on one screen without any vertical scroll.
Three recommendations to improve the usability of this page:

1. The section labeled “Upcoming Downtime” should either not appear when not needed OR should have a message underneath that says “No downtime scheduled”.

2. Other announcements, like the portion of the page with under the header “Mobile”, should be kept brief with a link to more information if a very detailed announcement.

Announcement titles should be clearer so users can quickly determine if they need to read. “Mobile” is not very specific or interesting; “NEW Mobile E-Learning App!” is more specific and more interesting.

Copy in the announcement that does not provide valuable information should be eliminated.

Link titles should be as short as possible and, whenever possible, a literal link. For example:

   Time consuming to understand: Students, to view the student training video click here [here](#)

   More efficient: [Student Mobile App Intro Video](#)

3. The labels on the Course List section: Slight modifications of the labels will help increase intuitive understanding of the page.

   Course List – My Course List OR John Smith’s Course List
   Special Courses – Tutorials OR E-Learning Guides OR some other more meaningful label

   The label for the active courses should clearly indicate that these are the active courses – recommended label is John Smith’s Courses or Active Courses.

   Course name should include number, department, course name and credits. End date for the course would also be useful.

A few of the student comments:

EL-03: “It looks pretty user friendly so far. It looks like I can see what my assignments would be.” (7:42-7:51)

EL-03: “I think that the professor’s information at the top of the page would be helpful just so that right away you can see if you need help who to contact.” (8:49-8:59)
EL-04: “It seems pretty straightforward.” (6:17-6:20 Disc1)

EL-07: “Well, these are the courses I signed up for so I would probably look into those.” (5:37-5:41)
The Course homepage that was tested was confusing to many users. There was no clear hierarchy of information.

*Note:* the central navigation arrows on the tested course home page was not used or noticed by testers. These arrows were removed from the new course home page.
The current student-centric page (Figure 2B) was not tested but based on the results of the study is most likely an improvement.

![Figure 2B]

All of the participants were somewhat confused about this page (Figure 2A) and the purpose of the various sections. The new design may eliminate some of these problems but not all of the issues.

Basic navigation on the page in the older version was complex and not intuitive. The biggest issue was the icons in the red circle in Figure 2B.

Important information is not present on this page or is located in places where it is overlooked:

- The Course Name and Instructor’s Name appear to be part of the UA Generic Banner. Because of this placement, they were not connected to the course information.

- Information about the instructor, including a link to email, should be including on the course home page.

The left side course information navigation was understood and the result was expected by the student users.
The center page navigation arrows (which have been removed since the test) were not understood or used by any of the participants without prompting.

Announcements: Many of the users were confused by Unread/Read classification of announcements. They were not certain which meaning of Read was intended. More clear, unambiguous labels like “New” and “Archived” are recommended.

The purpose of the Social Learning Widget was not fully understood by any of the participants. More information on this can be found in the next section.

A few of the student comments:

EL-01: “I am seeing the course page. I don’t actually know what all of these are. Is this the outline of the course?... Putting one and two together it looks like the outline of the course but it is not explicitly stated.” (15:04-15:24).

EL-01: “Looking at it I don’t see, at least for every course, there is going to be an instructor.” (16:35-16:42).

EL-02: “It’s more personalized... the website is trying to tailor the content more to my preferences. I see what’s neat here is the chat messenger. There’s no need to look for it in one of the tabs up top.” (9:58-10:30).

EL-07: “You can read the syllabus. It asks who you are. There’s five responses and why you are here. There’s five more responses. There’s announcements on the homepage. There’s... different pages where you can learn about UA, learn about UA college life or learn about research at UA.” (7:19-7:46).

EL-08: “At this point I think would probably have gone back and started looking at the tutorial” (10:08-10:12)


EL-09: “The first thing my eyes go to are the who are you and I hate that about online classes, it's like you're starting in a brand new class and your instructor wants you to fill out all this information about you to get to know you and its none of their business.” (8:27 – 8:40).

EL-09: “I do love drop boxes, it makes my heart happy.” (10:04 - 10:08).

EL-10: “Easy to read.” (26:23-26:29)

EL-11: “It kind of seems temporary there, and the more permanent stuff is usually like on bar.” (14:58 – 15:05).
The placement of Course Home is not completely intuitive. Recommend moving it to the gold navigation bar. A label indicating that these are the course units or modules would be helpful.

Some simple but more prominent icon that indicates that the sections contain sub-categories and open and close would improve usability.
Social Learning Widget

Figure 3A
Note: The current Social Learning Widget (Figure 3B) was not tested but the changes do not substantially change the core functionality that was tested.

Figure 3B

The full use of the Social Learning Widget was not intuitive to the students or most faculty/instructors. All participants understood that they could post messages and how to do that. None of the student participants understood how the Social Learning Widget filter could be used without assistance from the facilitator.

Some of the students’ comments:

EL-01: “It's not coming up the way I expected it to come up.” (23:11-23:14).

EL-01: “Because until I clicked ‘main’ that was when it loaded the Java outlet….Maybe because I was used to chat systems and I felt that something that needed to load before being able to use it.” (23:50-24:03)

EL-04: “It almost seems a little bit unprofessional to me to have…in a course setting it seems more like a social site rather than a class.” (16:14-16:24 Disc 2).

EL-05: “Basically to talk about my grades and ask other students questions that I might not understand.” (9:48-9:54)
EL-06: “Probably [chat with] classmates or professor.” (17:05-17:07)

EL-07: “No, I think that it’s quick and easy and there’s easy access to it.” (18:11-18:17)

EL-08: “Just by being short snippets you can take a quick look to see something you might be further interested in. And I could see where that could be a benefit … It would be something that would take me some time to navigate.” (16:43-16:56)

EL-08: “I like the way the button is right below it and you don’t have to go looking for it.” (12:32-12:35).

EL-12: “Confusing to see where I’m at on the page” when submitting response to other students. (9:20 – 9:32).
Very few usability problems were encountered by students or faculty/instructors with the course pages. In general:

- The course pages were easy to use and intuitive.
- Several users requested a next button to move through the material. Most wanted it placed in the lower right corner.
- The faculty/instructors did not realize the function of the Author tab but, once they were shown this, had no problems with this section.

A few of the students’ comments:

EL-03: “It would be nice if there would be a next button down here and you could just click an arrow… I would put it down in the right-hand corner/side somewhere along the bottom.” (12:51-13:06)

EL-08: “Now that I understand how that’s set up that’s very user friendly now that I understand that it’s in modules and subcategorized. But at first it was a little confusing for me.” (19:32-19:44)
EL-09: “I think it’s kind of...Like the little icons over here are crappy because they’re not self explanatory.” (18:17 – 18:22).

EL-12: “It's very vague; it doesn't have a lot of information on...” (11:03 – 11:08).

EL-12: After long pause, “Do I just click on one?” (12:20-12:30).
Discussion Board

Most aspects of the Discussion Board design were understood because it is a common functional format.

There were a few items that confused users:

- The majority of users did not easily know where to post to respond to the main question versus responding to another student. See Figure 5A.

The instructions were not read and add little value. Recommend eliminating these. The tutorial and help sections serve this purpose.

The link to respond to the main question is located too far from the question and appears to be part of the discussion comment commands. Recommend moving it up immediately below the question.

Figure 5

Figure 5A
• The instructions at the top of the discussion board were not used or read by participants and add little value. See Figure 5A.

• The use of an envelope icon for read/unread on the discussion board was not generally understood.

The use of the envelope icon is confusing. This icon is commonly understood to be email. The icon is used as a user-flag for read/unread and has limited utility for users.

Recommendations:
1. Convert to an automatic not manual change.
2. Replace icon with changing the title type font from black to gray or some other change similar to the “used link convention”.

The use of an envelope icon to email other posters on the discussion board adds to the confusion caused by the use of the read/unread envelope section.

A few of the students’ comments:

EL-01: “I think for most visual ... applications like this, I think it is best if you have lots of graphics. I think pictures really capture the imagination better than letters a lot of times. The mix is not very good. I think there should be a bit more (pictures).” (26:55-27:15)

EL-05: “It would be for people to interact about The University of Akron in general versus the other thing was for a class... specific.” (14:46-14:57).

EL-06: “Probably homework for class. So, probably more like formal than the one under the box earlier.”(19:51-20:03).

EL-06: “Actually, I think it should be just only one page so that I can look at it so I can see that it’s... that’s all my mails.” (20:20-20:27)

EL-08: “Looks like a straightforward discussion board with main subjects and people’s replies to the main subjects. I like the way it’s organized- easy to read- who started and who is responding.” (11:17-11:28).
Students found the Gradebook somewhat easy to use.

Most participants experimented to try to find what they wanted.

Students were interested in knowing how they compared to the rest of the class but could not find this information.

The design of the toggle buttons at the top was confusing to users. See Figure 6A.

The design of the buttons at the top of the page was not clear. Many users interpreted this as indicating "User Activity" when it was View Gradebook that was opened.
• Users expected that they could view the assignment and grade/instructor comments by clicking on the name of the assignment. See Figure 6B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gradebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Earned to Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1: About UA - Discussion</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1: About UA - Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2: UA College Life - Quiz</td>
<td>3/20/5</td>
<td>3.20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2: UA College Life - Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3: Research at UA - Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3: Research at UA - Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>17/20</td>
<td>17 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3: Research at UA - Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3: Research at UA - Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2: Research at UA - Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.20 pts (of 30 Complete)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade To Date:</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.20/30 (84%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A few of the students' comments:

EL-01: “It also helps to know that ok, general performance was bad or average- I didn’t do badly.” (35:33-35:40).

EL-03: Would like to see “If the grades are weighted, possibly the weighting.” (18:36-18:40)

EL-03: “I don’t know how easy it is to contact the professor from here, but it would be nice to have a link that... if you had a question on a grade you could just hit email a professor or something like that.” (19:11-19:22)

EL-03: What did you get on the assignment? “An 18. What that means I’m not sure. So it doesn’t really tell me out of how many, it doesn’t tell me what percent.” (21:24-21:34)
Participants found the Dropbox function to be awkward and requiring more clicks than necessary.

The concept of “Baskets” is a new concept and adds no apparent value. The most common concept for submitting documents is a file folder.

The use of “In Box” and “Outbox” was confusing and reminded users of mail. Changing these labels to more self-explanatory terms, for example, “Submitted Assignments” and “Returned Assignments” is recommended.

The use of the envelope icon for read/unread was not understood by many participants.

A few of the students’ comments:

EL-02: “I would click on this icon here: dropbox… I would look for the assignment… See submit assignment …and this field I would select.” (20:50-21:18)

EL-02: “It appears that there is an extra step. On Springboard… you would click on dropbox and you would see the assignment...For this one you have to click on dropbox… it has like an extra step. For Springboard’s dropbox procedure you just click on dropbox and you just click on the assignment and you just browse the file and you just post and submit. This one has an extra step.” (21:20-22:16)
EL-03: “I would click on the dropbox link, and then put in the appropriate basket, which I’m not sure what that is, I guess I will go back and look and see what it says.” (14:23 -14:43)

EL-03: “There is no dropbox labeled very short paper.” (14:52 - 14:55)

EL-04: “It wasn’t easy but it wasn’t really that big of a deal to fix. I guess after doing it one time you figure that out.” (09:53 – 10:01 Disc 2)

EL-04: “Again, I feel like I need to be clicking the back button to get back to the assignment but in fact I cannot. I have to click on this assignment… (would like to be able to use the back button?) yeah, especially if you don’t know where you came from it makes it a little easier.” (8:24-8:38 Disc 2)

EL-06: “Yeah, it’s pretty easy.” (23:35-23:37)

EL-07: “Yes, where it says attachments with the little paper clip you can click add and remove and you can attach the file from your hard drive.” She knew exactly how to attach a document. (16:51-16:58)


EL-09: “I don’t know if this is their inbox or my inbox.” (20:25-20:29)

EL-09: “What’s a basket?” (21:34-21:35)

EL-09: I didn’t know what a basket is, let alone find a tab for it.” (21:41-21:45)

EL-09: “Yea, I don’t know if my assignment went in or not, or who it went to or where.” (22:04-22:09)

EL-09: “It was confusing, we probably would have been calling each other, and saying ‘Hey how did you do that, no this is how you do it’ …. ’cause most graduate students are not as tech savvy as undergrads.” (23:06-23:17)

EL-11: “The dropbox that I’m used to has them listed, and I click … and I saw that, but I was like it’s not here.” (24:03-14)

EL-12: “Umm that’s not what I was expecting, I’m not sure exactly what is in the basket of my inbox because I don’t have anywhere I can go to submit an assignment I guess. (12:30-12:42).
The Student Orientation Tutorial was easy and intuitive to use.

In some cases there was too much copy on a page. Copy interspersed with graphics and rich media was preferred.

A few of the students’ comments:

EL-03: “Yeah, this is helpful.” (26:09-26:10)

EL-03: “I think all the course tools (section) seem pretty helpful. I don’t love videos inside of tutorials but… it seems like they would be helpful because it’s kind of just explaining things you’ll use every day. I don’t think achieving online success will be used.” (26:58-27:28)

EL-03: “‘Ensuring you’re ready’ should maybe should have a different name. If it’s for your student profile… maybe it should just have a different name. ‘Your success’ doesn’t really say to me that this is where you can update your profile.” (27:55-28:11).

EL-04: “Oh I like the grade book items not yet graded, things not entered, extra credit- that would be helpful.” (7:05-7:16 Disc 1).

EL-04: “Good I like it. It actually reminds me of Springboard a lot, which I like.” (7:42-7:45 Disc 1)

EL-05: “I would use the video for sure… Yeah, I’d say, you know, this is basically teaching me how to use the system. It’s very thorough. A lot of it is review for me but I think for some people this is totally necessary.” (7:01-7:21).

EL-07: “This is good. This reminds me of kind of like a FAQ’s page…Yeah I like to read them just …to get an idea just in case I run into any of the same problems.” (30:18-30:37)
EL-11: “I wouldn’t read it, there’s so much.” (43:15 - 43:25).

EL-01: “The good thing about most applications is that it has what you call an FAQ.” (9:40-9:45)

EL-02: "I did not expect …FAQ’s to be posted…. I don’t see that on Springboard… (useful?) Absolutely. Because there will be some questions on ok how do I access certain information on the interface…” (8:00-8:22).

EL-02: “You know, I was expecting to… in the left pane here to see the tabs listed like for example grade book, email. …Show each tab and there would be a link… of each tab where you would click on and it would it would list off the issues you may be having. Like, for example, doc sharing—I have a question about that but I’m having trouble looking up assistance for that.” (11:58-12:41).

EL-02: "Now, I would change the table of content list here. I would… I would list the …names of the tabs on the tab bar here.. readily available for students to access.” (12:54-13:18)
After reviewing the SOT information on the Gradebook Tool, students had a better understanding of how the tool functions.

A few of the students’ comments:

EL-01: “I thought it was straightforward…Because it’s a quiz… correct questions -I got 3. So there is no point at- to show which of the questions you actually got wrong? (34:31-34:47)

EL-02: “I would have expected to see the weight of the grade.” (25:12-25:14)

EL-05: “I mean, maybe perhaps if this was completely online, which I think you said it was, an area where I could go and view my assignment and find out what was wrong -why I didn’t get 20 out of 20.” (18:52-19:03).

EL-07: “I guess it says already the gradebook key …I think maybe it could be at the top of the page... I guess I don’t really read top to bottom of the page.” (23:10-23:24).

EL-09: “Why all the clicking to get here?” (30:23 – 30:27).

EL-12: “It’s different than what I’m used to… This gives more information than what I’m used to like it will calculate your percentage, my one that I’m used to does not.” (21:15 – 21:30).
The Help section was easy and intuitive to use.
Task Assessment: Students

This is a complete listing of the Task Assessment results. Detailed information about selected tasks follows this comprehensive list:

**Test Scenario 1: Log-In and Navigation**

Task 1.1: Log-on to site. No usability issue. *Users had to discover that log-in was case sensitive but this was because they did not set up their own accounts.*

Task 1.2: Course List page. No usability issue.

Task 1.3: Enter the first course [101...108 UA Online Course](#). No usability issue.

Task 1.4: Explore Course Home [101...108 UA Online Course](#). Slight to moderate confusion. *Users were confused by the subject matter of the course – About UA. The layout of the page lacked a clear identification of the course and functionality. See detail.*

The label Read-Unread on Announcements was not clear to users.

Task 1.5: Navigate to Module 1 called “About UA.” No major usability issues.

**Test Scenario 2: Social Interaction – Classmates**

Task 2.1: Name some of your classmates. No usability issue. This did not function for many of the sessions.

Task 2.2: Social Learning Widget to check for activity. Some confusion about functionality.

Task 2.3: Social Learning Widget to post a chat-type message. Posting a message is intuitive but the purpose was not clear to users.

**Test Scenario 3: Course Functionality Module 1 “About UA” [101...108 UA Online Course](#)**

Task 3.1: Instruct student to complete module 1 “About UA” [101...108 UA Online Course](#). Most participants required assistance to find the module. *The title and subject matter of the course was confusing and compounded the gaps in intuitive design.*

Task 3.2: Explore discussion activity. No usability issue.

Task 3.3: Post response. No usability issues.

Task 3.4: Post response to another student. Minor usability issues.
Some users had difficulty understanding how to respond to the main question versus respond to a specific comment by a student.

Task 3.5: Submit a document to a dropbox. No major usability issues.

**Test Scenario 4: Course Functionality Module 2 called “UA College Life”**

Task 4.1: Instruct student to go to Module 2 called “UA College Life” No usability issues.

Task 4.2: Take Course Quiz. No usability issues.

Task 4.3: Check grades (Gradebook). No usability issues.

**Test Scenario 5: Checking Discussion Board and Returned Assignments**

Task 5.1: Check for unread discussion board messages. Confusion about Read-Unread Messages.

Task 5.2: Check for returned assignments. No major usability issues.

Task 5.3: Access your returned assignment. No major usability issues.

**Test Scenario 6: Communicate with Instructor**

Task 6.1: Email Instructor. No usability issues.

Task 6.2: Exit course. Users had issues finding the main navigation icons located in the lower left corner. The common and expected location is in the upper left.

**Test Scenario 7: SOT Student Orientation Tutorial**

Task 7.1: Complete the SOT Student Orientation Tutorial course. No usability issues; some information design issues.

Task 7.2: Exit SOT Student Orientation Tutorial. Users had issues finding the main navigation icons located in the lower left corner. The common and expected location is in the upper left.
Test Scenario 8: Module 3/Tech Support

Task 8.1: Locate Help Desk information. No usability issues.
Test Scenario 1: Log-in and Navigation

All users could perform the tasks in the first test scenario.

Task 1.1: Log-on to site.
The only problem users encountered with logging into the site was determining if the user name and password were case sensitive. This is something that users are willing to experiment with and discover. No changes are recommended.

Note: There was not link to forgot password or help on the login page. It may be useful to consider adding this.

No major issues were encountered with these tasks except for basic navigation challenges that have already been noted.

Task 1.2: Course List page.

Task 1.3: Enter the first course 101…108 UA Online Course
Task 1.4: Explore Course Home 101…108 UA Online Course
Task 1.5: Navigate to Module 1 called “About UA”
## Test Scenario 2: Social Interaction - Classmates

### Task 2.1

**Name some of your classmates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 4.08

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*

### Task 2.2

**Social Learning Widget to check for activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 4.5

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*
Task 2.3 Social Learning Widget to post a chat-type message

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 4.5

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*
Test Scenario 3: Course Functionality Module 1 “About UA”

Task 3.3

Post a response to the discussion board assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score:  4.75

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*

Task 3.5

Submit a document to a dropbox

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score:  3.44

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*
Test Scenario 4: Course Functionality Module 2 called “UA College Life”

Task 4.2  
Take Course Quiz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 4.75

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*

Task 4.3  
Check grades (Gradebook)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 4.83

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*
## Test Scenario 5: Checking Discussion Board and Returned Assignments

### Task 5.1

**Check 101…108 UA Online Course for unread discussion board messages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 4.29

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*

### Task 5.2

**Check 101…108 UA Online Course for returned assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 3.81

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*
Task 5.3  Access your returned assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 4.83

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*
Test Scenario 6: Social Interaction - Classmates

Task 6.1  Email Instructor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who attempted task</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% successful attempts</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is “Could not complete” and 5 is “Completed with ease”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean difficulty score: 4.67

*Difficulty Task Rating is the mean score of participants who attempted the task.*

Scenario 7: SOT Student Orientation Tutorial

No task completion issues in this Test Scenario:

Task 7.1: Complete the SOT Student Orientation Tutorial course
Task 7.2: Exit SOT Student Orientation Tutorial

Test Scenario 8: Module 3/Tech Support

No task completion issues in this Test Scenario:

Task 8.1: Locate Help Desk information
Students: Exit Questions/User Impressions

At the end of each session, participants were asked:

Let’s go back to the entire system. Overall, how was your experience?
Is there anything that you would want to see changed/done differently in this system?
Particularly related to the tasks you completed today? If so explain.
Any other likes or dislikes that you’d like to mention?
Anything else you’d like to share with me or ask me?

The overall evaluation of the E-Learning Platform website was somewhat favorable.

What would make this site better

When asked, “What would make this site better?” Most student users did not have significant ideas.

For the most part they were interested in:

- Ease of use for the course tools.
- Dialog with the instructor
- Quality course materials

The overall experience

Most of the students who felt that the site was easy to use also expressed understanding that new sites take time to learn how to navigate.

Many students felt that the messaging system/chat section of the site was unique and felt that they would use it as a part of the site.

Most students also felt that more pictures or larger buttons/icons would help the site’s appearance.

Almost all students felt that the presence of the instructor in an online course is important and would like to see an increased presence of the instructor on the site.
At the end of each session, participants were asked:

Let’s go back to the entire system. Overall, how was your experience?
Is this something that you would use?
Is there anything that you would want to see changed/done differently in this system?
What would make this system more useful to you? To your students?
Which of the tasks would you normally perform and which tasks would you assign to a TA or GA?
Any other likes or dislikes that you’d like to mention?
Anything else you’d like to share with me or ask me?

1. The overall evaluation of the E-Learning Platform website was somewhat favorable.

2. There was no consensus from the faculty on their overall experience with the site.

What would make this site better

Monday, March 26, 2012

4:15pm Faculty, College of Business Administration (FEL-01)

What is not here? What would improve this site?

“I really like when I’m grading students’ papers to be able to see a picture of them ... and, so ... it doesn’t seem to have that...” (57:33 – 57:42)

“I use a touch sensitive screen, so another think that would be interesting ... and I don’t think I can do this on Springboard, if so I haven’t figured out how to do it yet easily.... is to just be able to write something, you know, with my light pen or my finger, or whatever, on my touch system screen on my laptop computer and have that sort of, you know, appear to the student when I return the paper to them.” (58:04 – 58:30)

Monday, March 26, 2012
6:30pm Faculty, Summit College (FEL-02)

*What is not here? What would improve this site?*

“I like it. I mean, it’s just something you’d have to get used to.” (1:01:07)

“Some of the, you know, little icons down here again would definitely take getting used to.” (1:01:25-1:01:30)

“The only thing I can tell you is if you’re going to make it look like a Springboard, make it look like a Springboard, if it’s going to be something totally new, then make it something just a little bit different than Springboard.” (1:02:33 – 1:02:42)

“And this an awful a lot like Springboard, so my suggestion would be if you’re going to make it different, let’s make it different.” (1:02:53 – 1:03:00)

Monday, April 2, 2012

10:00am Faculty, Speech Lang-Path (FEL-03)

*What would improve this site?*

“The main thing is if something goes wrong, and I’m talking … not where I can’t figure out where to navigate … but if something goes wrong with the actual material, if we had someone who could fix that, and fix it in a timely fashion … and I mean that day … sometime within that 24 hrs…” (49:23-49:41)

Tuesday, April 3, 2012

5:30pm Faculty, Anthropology (FEL-04)

*What is not here? What would improve this site?*

“I didn’t get a clear enough sense of how that “discussion exchange” would actually work.” (1:02:33-1:02:40)

“As a useful tool, looks pretty straight forward.” (1:03:51-1:03:55)

“Everybody’s pet-peeve about Springboard, and they only just fixed it surprisingly this year, is activating your course … when the students sit there and say “it’s not there.” … So I am assuming that this does not have that problem.” (1:03:56 - 1:04:20)
“It’s not that you would look at it all that often, but sometimes even on springboard, I write something into the announcement page, and then I’ll just flip over and see from the student point of view, looking at all of their stuff, what are they seeing.” (1:05:14 – 1:05:27)

Wednesday, April 4, 2012

9:00am Faculty, College of Education (FEL-05)

**What is not here? What would improve this site?**

“What the big problem was for our students was where the discussion boards were embedded versus on the menu across the top because in Springboard the discussion board was up here separate, so we had to re-direct them back into how it was embedded over here. I do like how it’s embedded because if there are in Module 3, and in this course there might be in a different module …. they know where they are at in each course, and everything they need is right there, so if they taking a quiz it’s all in there, versus they have to go back and forth. Now that I have done this it makes more sense than having to go back and forth” (40:57-41:38)

“In the old system, you go into discussion, there is this long list of things you have to scroll down to get to the one you have, where here its right here … everything you need is right there in that chunk together, which makes sense to me.” (41:48-42:00)

“One thing that also is missing from here, that I liked and didn’t like, they had ok … you had to scroll through though … it would be nice to know, automatically come up, ‘where am I at in this class’ … ‘we’re on Unit 3’ … so automatically you know where you’re at you don’t have to figure out.” (42:56 -43:12)

“We still have the structure of the traditional class, you start here you end here at that Module, and so on, and that’s where you’re at in the course so to me when you get to the page, just like when you walk into a class, a traditional class, you know where you’re at …. Also have a timeline to give to students, sp students can print that off and have that visual to check them off themselves.” (44:04 – 44:23)

“The scrolling part is fine, but it should have the most current ‘this is where we’re at’ “(50:03 - 50:06)

“What I think would be nice is if we can actually just click here rather than have to give them a link to do what we’re wanting to” (51:58-52:03)