

Usability Testing Your OWI Course

From Why? to How?

Joseph Bartolotta, Hofstra University



The #1 Question:

How do I make my course more “usable?”

But what is “usability”?

Usability and PARS

All of the PARS concepts can be enhanced by usability testing.

For this presentation, I'll focus on **Accessibility**.

Accessibility

Usability can help us uncover accessibility issues students would not normally share with us unprompted.

Our assumptions about instructional design as teachers is limited by our imagination about what the student experience is like.

We need to think at a task-level.

We have **goals** and **tasks** when we think of User Experience.

My **Goal** may be successfully completing an assignment...

My **Task** would involve finding where I turn in the assignment online.

Goal:

Find out when an assignment is due so you can turn it in.

Possible Tasks:

Find the course schedule in the LMS

Find the assignment module in the LMS

Email the instructor to ask when an assignment is due.

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- Announcements
- Syllabus
- Faculty Information
- Course Documents
- Assignments
- Groups
- Email
- Discussion Board
- My Grades

Course Library Resources

- Writing Center
- Help
- Bookstore
- Student Access Services
- Zoom Room

Announcements

Syllabus quiz is now available

Posted on: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 2:44:34 PM EDT

Dear Students,

I was notified earlier today that the syllabus quiz was not accessible. I have fixed this issue and I believe you can get to it now in the "Assignments" tab on the left navigation bar.

There is also an issue where the quiz is marking one answer wrong when it is not, and there are several open-ended question that I need to grade myself, so the score you receive immediately upon completion may not be entirely accurate. I'll grade everything by Friday morning.

I'll see you all tomorrow!

Posted by: Joseph Bartolotta
Posted to:
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Getting ready for WSC 130

Posted on: Monday, August 24, 2020 5:13:53 PM EDT

Dear Students,

Greetings and welcome back to campus! Whether you are joining us in-person or online, I am looking forward to having you join us for this semester's WSC 130 course!

This message is designed to help you prepare for tomorrow's class session.

Posted by: Joseph Bartolotta
Posted to:
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We can only control what we can control

LMSs do not provide a lot of room for adjustment.

WYSIWYG sites (such as WordPress) allow more customization, but require at least some knowledge about web design.

Your First Usability Test

Find a Task to Test

Look for the actions that people undertake in the course.

“post” to a discussion board, “access” a class reading,
“download” a rubric, “record” a video...

For us: Make an appointment with the writing center

Note Your Own Assumptions

Note your own assumptions by building a User Experience map



**Keep this to yourself!
Student journeys may
be much different!**

Instruction on Detailed Prose

Teaching students how to write in more detail is an evergreen writing activity.

Consider having students write detailed descriptions about other websites.

Modelling

Offer an example of what a usability test might look like.

Perhaps use Camtasia or Screencast-o-matic to dictate your own journey through a similar task.

The Students Test

Give students time for their own usability tests.

Encourage them to record their journeys in-process.

Debrief

After reading all of the reports, generate some general class observations. Not both places of overlap and outliers.

Let students finally see your UX map, and talk about what was similar or different between you and them.

My initial user experience map



New possibilities

Using Google to navigate to the Writing Center.

Calling/emailing the writing center to make an appointment.

Reaching out to a friend in the Writing Center.

Writing Center was bookmarked on their computer.

Importantly:

Let students know what changes you will make based on their data.

PARS - Revisited

How have we made the class more Personal, Accessible, Responsive, and Strategic?

Further Resources

Barnum, C. M. (2011). *Usability testing essentials: Ready, set...test!* Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann.

Krug, S. (2014). *Don't make me think, revisited: A common sense approach to web usability.* Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

Rubin, J., & Chisnell, D. (2008). *Handbook of usability testing: How to plan, design, and conduct effective tests.* Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Thank you!

Please reach out if you have further questions or ideas!

joseph.bartolotta@hofstra.edu
@jbartolotta