Formative Evaluation

<u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this document is to provide information concerning the progress of the instructional manual for course-related blog production. This document provides a summary and analysis of the formative evaluation of the instructional material and includes a description of the participants, the evaluation procedure, the participants' comments, and a plan for revision.

<u>Participants</u>

Three participants were chosen for the evaluation from the instruction's target audience, Mercer University professors. To provide unbiased feedback, participants were chosen that had varying computer proficiencies and blog experience. Table 1 provides each participant's names and backgrounds, as well as information relevant to the evaluation.

Table 1

	Dr. Susan Codone	Mr. Gary Blackburn	Dr. George Hayhoe
Position	Associate Professor of Technical Communications	Professor of Art	Professor and Director of Master of Science and Technical Communication Management
Years at Mercer	9	25	7.5
Computer Proficiency (Low, moderate, high)	High	Low	Moderate
Blog Experience	Has used Google's blogging site, Blogger.com	none	Has read blogs but has never used one
Evaluation Setting	Office	Office	Office
Selection Rationale			

<u>Evaluation Procedure</u>

The one-to-one evaluations took place in the comfort of the participants' own offices, where each had access to their personal computer and all the files on it. The instructor (me) sat down next to each participant to observe the evaluation process. Each participant was given a general overview of the evaluation process and a copy of the instructional manual. The participants were encouraged to pause throughout the instructional process to write down any comments or suggestions on improving the manual, as well as to indicate any errors or areas of confusion. Any verbal comments made by the participants were also documented. To test the accuracy of the projected time allotments, each participant's progress was timed per section of instruction.

Results

Throughout the evaluation process, the participants were encouraged to provide both verbal and written feedback. The comments are displayed below in Table 2 and are organized per section of instruction.

Table 2

	Dr. Susan Codone	Mr. Gary Blackburn	Dr. George Hayhoe
Pre-Instructional Activities		Specify what type of syllabus is needed (paper, online, computer file)	
Step One	Specify the need to press "Create Blog" at the end of the profile creation process; Add a step to include checking email to activate blog	Add directions to get to signup page; Put instruction under each substep instead of grouping together in one paragraph; Include checking email to activate	Add a step to include navigating to signup page; Modify instruction to inform that only lowercase letters may be used in the blog address and username; Add instruction on navigating to the dashboard page after completion
Step Two	Says menu is on the right when it		

	should say left; Add a separate "Activate" step instead of combining		
Step Three	Add description of what a widget is; Add instruction for inserting a link	Add instruction for inserting a link/uploading a file; Specify to click "close" after activating a widget; Specify that some widgets are given; Edit instruction to include the Pages widget	
Step Four	Add examples; Clarify that the practice is meant solely to be done on paper	Better explain the function of categories; Edit instruction, delete "hover your mouse"	"Objectives" is not the correct word to use; The Posts tab is already dropped down
	Explain the term "model post"; Instruct learner to categorize the model post		
Assessment	Clarify the meaning of the term "Professional Title"	Include instruction on navigating to the finished blog	
Overall	Describe how blogs could be used per semester	Make photos smaller, they could be mistaken for instruction themselves	Make some steps optional, like adding links

Revisions

All of the comments made by the participants were analyzed to determine the areas of instruction in need of revision. Table 3 describes the problems found and the proposed change in instruction.

Table 3

	Problem	Change in Instruction
Introductory materials	No revision	
Pretest	None given	
Information presentation	The instruction for Step One is grouped as one paragraph and hard to follow	
	The photos are large and easily mistaken as instruction themselves	
Instructional content	Some information needs to be added	In step one, add navigation to signup page In step one, add a step to include checking email to activate blog In step two, add instruction on inserting a link In step two, add instruction on uploading a file In step four, instruct the learner to categorize the model post
	Some information needs to be elaborated	In the pre-instructional activities, specify preferred forms of the syllabus
	Some information needs to be modified	In step one, modify instruction to inform that only lowercase letters may be used in the blog address and username In step two, change description of menu from "on the right" to "on the left" In step two, specify that some widgets are provided

		In step two, include the ability to display blog pages in widget qualifications
		In step four, modify the "hover your mouse" phrase about the Posts tab
	Better explanation of some of the used terms is needed	In the pre-instructional activities, reword "professional title"
		In step two, define the function of widgets
		In step four, explain the function of categories
		In step four, explain the term "model post"
Posttest	Cannot find finished blog to evaluate	In step four, add instruction on navigating to the finished blog

Points 69(75)		Elements of Review
47(50)	One-to-one formative evaluation plan	• contains description of target learners, location of testing, and estimated time • describes specific evaluation procedures • summarizes the feedback received from the learners • summarizes the results of any assessment instruments that were given to learners • summarizes your observations on problems with the instruction • includes sample surveys, if appropriate, especially attitude surveys
22(25)	Revised instructional materials	• revisions and rationale for the revisions summarized in table format • revised instructional materials with appropriate connections made