IT 636 Project Report

Weathersavy

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Table of Contents

**Introduction …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….3**

**Needs Assessment …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..4**

**Goal / Performance Objectives .……………………………………………………………………………………..…….…….…..4**

**Learner Analysis……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….5**

**Tutorial Lesson Plan …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………5**

**Illustration #1 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………6**

**Illustration #2 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..…….6**

**Illustration #3 ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………..……….7**

**Instructional Strategies ………………………………………………………………………………………………………….…..…….7**

**Assessment Plan Strategies ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………8**

**References ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….9**

Introduction

*Weathersavy* is a Google sites based online tutorial designed to give those without meteorology backgrounds a better understanding of common weather-related terminology as well as information on such forms of severe weather as hurricanes and tornadoes.

The tutorial contains a welcome page that describes the process used in creating the site name. While scientific jargon can be quite challenging to some learners, this page welcomes viewers and attempts to put them at ease. Weather, after all, is around us every day and we just need to be able to recognize it for what it is. Some say to “stop and smell the roses,” maybe we should all just look for objects in cloud formations as when we were younger.

The actual learning components are broken down into three categories including terminology, latitude and longitude, and storm tracking. These sections consist of both text items and short YouTube videos that provide in depth information accompanied by graphic displays. The National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center have developed a library of electronic resources that are available to the public and quite suitable to this tutorial.

This report focuses on the creation of the *Weathersavy* site from the conception of its name to the logical flow of the instructional information. It also discusses the elements of needs assessment, goal/performance objectives, learner analysis and course map as well as instructional and assessment strategies when used within the ASSURE model of instructional design.

Needs Assessment

While a formal needs assessment was not conducted, the design of this tutorial was based on several years’ worth of actual interactions with the public where it became apparent that the average person is lacking in basic meteorology knowledge. The targeted learners were identified as young adults and older although the content is appropriate for all ages possessing adequate reading comprehension skills. Some of the feedback that I received along the way from classmates and fellow IT students was put into place and served as my revision phase. Comments on the choice of color scheme seemed to reinforce the approach used in having a friendly looking site.

Goal / Performance Objectives

The primary instructional goal of *Weathersavy* is to give users a foundation of knowledge from which they can better comprehend explanations of weather patterns and make preparations in the event of severe weather without the years long intense study required to be a subject matter expert. Upon completion of the three lessons, the successful mastery of the following objectives is expected:

* Become familiar with sources of local weather updates as well as national.
* Understand basic meteorological terms.
* Differentiate between related terms such as funnel cloud and tornado.
* Distinguish between latitude and longitude.
* Be able to locate certain global reference lines
* Better understand movements of large weather systems such as tropical storms.
* Appreciate that weather surrounds us every day.

Learner Analysis

The learner analysis for *Weathersavy* consists of the limited responses received from fellow classmates. The most comment seen most often was that the site was enjoyable and very user friendly. External learners were used for feedback as well, but they were mostly family members who have been exposed to weather terminology and would not be considered neutral learners.

Tutorial Lesson Plan

The first two lessons, terminology and latitude/longitude, were followed by short assessments consisting of a set of questions where the learner would have to identify the concepts being described. The assessment was immediately followed by the correct responses so that learners would have immediate feedback should they wish to review the section.

The presented material is illustrated graphically in the next section in order to provide a comprehensive look at how the lessons relate to achieve the objective of providing a foundation sufficient enough for use within the home, school or work setting. The listing of additional sources of information included in the lessons gives learners the opportunity to increase their knowledge and to stay up to date with current weather reports. The third illustration provides a detailed look at the terminology categories.

Illustration #1: Overall Design

Illustration #2: Overall Design

Increased awareness of weather conditions, especially severe weather events.

Illustration #3: Breakdown of Terminology Lesson

Instructional Strategies

Our course textbook states that any instructional activity should attempt to address the nine events of instruction (Dick, 2009). These events encompass gaining the attention of the learner and presenting the objectives; identifying any prerequisite knowledge; providing stimulus material and learning guidance; obtaining, assessing and providing feedback to performance; and allowing for retention of knowledge. By creating a user friendly webpage with less sophisticated weather jargon, the instruction design appeals to the identified category of learners. A few simple questions that test common misconceptions about weather entice the learner to further explore the tutorial. YouTube videos and links to additional information sites serve as learner stimulus materials. Feedback is given immediately after the assessments in the form of correct responses and leaners can go back to review an item at any time I the tutorial. A learner’s retention of the presented instruction is purely on an individual basis as some will be more apply the newly gained knowledge to ever day life while others will simply rely on outside sources of weather reports.

Assessment Plan Strategies

The tutorial’s assessments will be found at the end of the lesson sections for ease of use and immediate feedback to the learner. Performance objectives will be measured by the level of satisfaction and confidence experienced by the learner upon the completion of the sections. There is no formal measurement within this tutorial, only an opportunity for the learner to compare his or her prior knowledge of weather concepts to that obtained by completing the tutorial. A user satisfaction survey like those available via Survey Monkey could be incorporated at the conclusion of such a tutorial, but is not at present time. Survey questions might be designed to center around the user friendliness and and appropriateness of the *Weathersavy* website, correlating with the initial objectives of the instruction.

Reference

Dick, W. C. (2009). *The Systematic Design of Instruction* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education.