

USU ACADEMIC ADVISORS TRAINING MODULE

Preliminary Requirements
by The NEWbies

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*InsT6800 Project in Instructional Technology
Project Feasibility Study*

Fall 2003

Change History

S/No.	Item(s) Changed	Date Updated	Changed By	New Ver. No.
1	Compilation, editing of language, creation of 1.0.	26 Oct	Tan	1.0
2	Addition of new section by Lee. Edited by Tan.	26 Oct	Tan	1.1
3	Minor revision of content (pertaining to learner activities/evaluation)	26 Oct	Tan	1.2
4	Minor corrections by Oliver. Insertion of TOC by Lee.	26 Oct	Tan	1.3 Final Version



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Key User / SME Identification & Interview for Primary Requirements

We have access to three SMEs in this project, of whom two are members of this project team. Having two SMEs within the team gives us easy access to information and great insight into the learning needs, client requirements, resources available and timeline of the project. The SME who is not part of the design team, who happens to be a major stakeholder (Director of office of Advising & Transition Services [ATS]), provides the team with valuable comments and inputs from a non-instructional designer, “outsider”, point of view. Thus, the input we get from our SMEs is both comprehensive and well-balanced. The three SMEs are:

- Wade Oliver, Assistant Director of ATS. Oliver is a member of the project team.
- Susan Parkinson, Program Coordinator of HASS Advising Center. Parkinson is a member of the project team.
- John Mortensen, Director of ATS.

After several discussions between the project team and the SMEs, the following instructional needs were identified:

- There is a need to articulate and disseminate benchmarks for the 400 plus academic advisers in Utah State University (USU).
- The target learners for our instruction are the new academic advisers (less than three years of experience) employed by USU.
- Academic advisers should have proper and structured initializing training, skills upgrade, and skills development.
- The training module for USU advisers should be designed in a way such that it is both relevant and engaging, with a problem-solving approach.

We conducted interviews with several new advisers, asking questions regarding how they were trained in transfer articulation advising, the resources they currently use, how they learned about those resources, and how they feel about the current advisor training program at USU (see Appendix A).

The interview results showed and confirmed two problems that we had identified earlier:

- Training for advisers was not consistent and did not take place in a timely manner.
- Not all advisers were aware of all of the resources available to assist with their transfer articulation advising.



Our training module will be designed to eliminate the above mentioned problems. The module will be online, self-paced, and to be taken at a time when it is most convenient and comfortable to the learner. It will ensure that learners will be informed of all available resources (paper-based and online) that are pertinent to transfer articulation advising. In addition, the learners will be asked to complete activities allow them to use the resources to solve problems that are modeled after real-life cases.

Major Instructional / Training Goals

The instructional goal of this project is to ensure that, at the end of the training module, the advisors will be able to make use of all available resources to solve problems pertaining to transfer articulation advising.

There are three Primary Instructional Goals for the learners and three Secondary Instructional Goals. The three Primary Instructional Goals will be achieved by presenting the learners with the relevant resources, and then specifically testing their knowledge and more importantly, their ability to *apply* their knowledge by solving scenario-based questions. Whether or not the Primary Instructional Goals are achieved can be evaluated by the test results of the activities. Evaluation will be partly self-evaluation/reflection and partly administrator assessed. The Primary Instructional Goals are:

- Using the WebCT course management system, the learner will demonstrate their understanding of correct use of five on-line and paper-based transfer evaluation resources at USU by evaluating a sample transcript and correctly answering 5 multiple choice questions assessing his/her evaluations. If the learner's answers are incorrect, he/she will be presented with the correct answer alongside with explanations.
- Using the same environment, the learner will show his/her ability to differentiate between the resources and compare their appropriate uses by evaluating a complex sample transcript that requires use of a combination of the resources and correctly answering a short-answer and essay quiz.
- Using the same environment, the learner will reflect on his/her evaluation of a new complex sample transcript, comparing his/her results with documentation provided to judge what mistakes were made, and deduce how the mistakes were made. This reflection will have to be posted on an online message forum within WebCT.



The Secondary Instructional Goals are non-observable and testable — they are useful skills and procedures that we hope the learners will pick up after fulfilling the Primary Instructional Goals. They are:

- The learner will create bookmarks for each on-line resource.
- The learner will be familiar with the offices on campus that produce and maintain the transfer evaluation resources.
- The learner will build a network of fellow advisors and resources when he/she needs assistance.

Simple Design & Interface Rapid Prototype

The training module will be created mainly in html format and incorporated into WebCT. The quiz and record keeping functionalities of WebCT will be used in the design and implementation of our three main learner activities. Another reason for using WebCT is that it is easily maintained and that will ensure that the addition future content modules will be hassle-free. A screenshot of the rapid prototype is shown under the next section in Figure 1.

Style Guide with Extended Simple Prototype

Please refer to Figure 1 for the font type, font size, font color and color scheme of the Graphic User Interface (GUI) of this training module. Arial font was chosen because of its readability and a largely bluish color scheme was used because it is congruent with the school color of USU. Every page of the training module will have the same header which includes the title of the training and a subtitle identifying the training module.

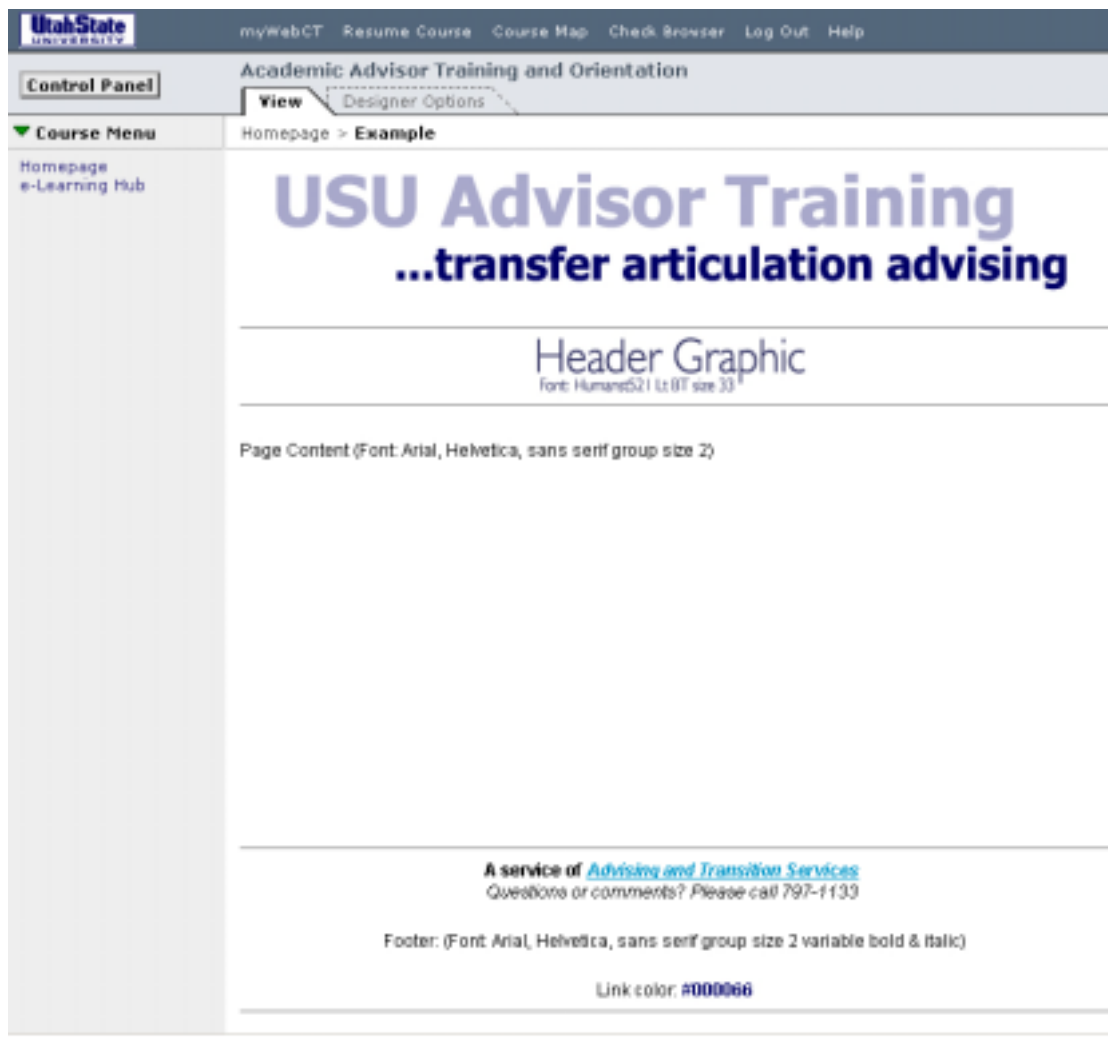


Figure 1. Screenshot of Rapid Prototype.

First Project Estimate

Budget

The initial project budget estimate as mentioned in the Feasibility Study Plan remains unchanged at US\$100.00.



Man-Hours

For the first week of the project, a total of 18 man-hours had been contributed by the team. Therefore, it is estimated that, on average, each team member will contribute approximately 4 man-hours for each subsequent week. As such, for a project that spans over eight weeks, the total man-hours required for the entire project is estimated at 160.

An estimate for the cost per unit of man-hour will be factored into subsequent report for the purpose of accounting for the contributions by the team members to the total cost of the project.

Project Schedule

	Feasibility Study	Resource Gathering/Interviews	Preliminary Requirements	Detailed Requirements	Scriptwriting	Video Production	Web Content Development	Stage 1 Prototype UAT	Formative Evaluation 1	Stage 2 Prototype UAT	Formative Evaluation 2	Final UAT	Final Report Preparation	Presentation Preparation
Week 1 (13-19 Oct)	■	■												
Week 2 (20-26 Oct)		■	■											
Week 3 (27 Oct-2 Nov)		■		■	■	■	■							
Week 4 (3-9 Nov)						■	■							
Week 5 (10-16 Nov)							■	■	■					
Week 6 (17-23 Nov)							■			■	■			
Week 7 (24-30 Nov)							■					■	■	■
Week 8 (1-5 Dec)													■	■



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With reference to the project schedule as shown in the Feasibility Study, development work on the first prototype will commence in Week 3. The activities to be performed are:

- Set-up login Ids for each team member in WebCT to facilitate web content development and reference.
- Design the overall structure of the training module.
- Commence on creating content in html formats.
- Commence on creating tasks and activities for each section based on the instructional goals.

The first rapid prototype is targeted to be delivered by 5 November 2003. It will be reviewed by key stakeholders. Further changes will be incorporated into the next prototypes after the change requests have been reviewed and accepted by the project team.

Updated Risk List

The following five possible risks / liabilities to the project were identified in the Project Feasibility Study:

- Unexpected Reformation of SIS System Features & Interface
- Information Loss
- Failure to Streamline Content
- Group member incapacitation
- Overcompensation by SMEs within Team

Presently, the project has not encountered any of the projected possible problems. The temporary absence of half the project team for a week due an academic conference has negligible impact on the status of the project, and design and development is still progressing according to the planned schedule.



Appendix A : Key User Interviews

Interviews were conducted with three key users: Tami Spackman, Susie Maughan, and Lisa Hamblin. All three interviewees are academic advisors. Spackman is from the College of Agriculture, Maughan is from the department of Elementary Education, and Hamblin is from the College of HASS.

Q: What resources do you use when evaluating transfer credits?

Tami Spackman: Online Transfer Guide.

Susie Maughan: Advisor Handbook, Colleague Advisors, General Catalogs from other institutions, Online Transfer Guide.

Lisa Hamblin: Online Transfer Guide, SIS 142 & 140 screens.

Q: How did you learn to use these resources?

Tami Spackman: Through an advisor training meeting.

Susie Maughan: ATS, Advisor Training Sessions.

Lisa Hamblin: Paper guides in the beginning until I realized updated material was available online and now I use both.

Q: How confident are you with your ability to use these resources?

Tami Spackman: Very confident.

Susie Maughan: Really confident.

Lisa Hamblin: More confident each day.

Q: How do you wish you would have learned to use these resources?

Tami Spackman: In an early and automatic training that includes such resources. Hands-on training.

Susie Maughan: Early and automatic.

Lisa Hamblin: Paperless and less linear (like documents or books).



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Q: Are there differences between the tools or techniques used to evaluate major requirements vs. general education?

Tami Spackman: No difference.

Susie Maughan: If it's pertaining to major requirements, I make the decision myself; if it's GE (general education) course, I refer to screen 142 and the advisor handbook.

Lisa Hamblin: No.

Q: How do you feel about the current advisor training program at USU?

Tami Spackman: It is repetitive.

Susie Maughan: Good. I look forward to training. The yearly meetings are long and boring. I am lucky to have colleagues nearby in my office to ask questions when I need to.

Lisa Hamblin: Didn't attend.