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Evaluation of a French 202 Website Used in a Traditional
Face-to-face Environment

Diego G. Flores G.

An evaluation report submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

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December 2010

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of a French 202 Website Used in a Traditional Face-to-face Environment

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Department of Instruction Psychology and Technology

Master of Science

The Center for Teaching and Learning, Independent Study, and the Department of French and Italian at Brigham Young University collaborated to develop the French 202 Website to be used with the French 202 course. Currently, the French 202 Website is used with the French 202 Independent Study course and with the traditional face-to-face course. This evaluation focused on the French 202 Website as it is used with the traditional face-to-face course. This evaluation was conducted in conjunction with the Center for Teaching and Learning at Brigham Young University (BYU).

Based on the information collected, the evaluator found that (a) faculty used the website to supplement the face-to-face French 202 course, (b) students indicated that the website appears to function according to the criteria for this evaluation, and (c) students felt that because they used the website they were better able to achieve the learning outcomes of the course.

Keywords: online resources for face-to-face courses, undergraduate language courses, French teaching, online course evaluation.

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I dedicate this effort to my wife Fátima and to my daughter Elizabeth for their extraordinary support.

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Introduction

Many courses use online resources to supplement or replace in-class instructional activities. The French 202 Website was designed to supplement the traditional face-to-face instruction of French 202 at Brigham Young University (BYU). This evaluation examines the website's usability in terms of faculty and student use and satisfaction. This introductory section includes a description of the evaluand (the website), stakeholders who care about the evaluand, and the criteria the stakeholders care about related to the evaluand. Evaluation questions based on these criteria are then presented.

Evaluand: French 202 Website

French 202 is a traditional face-to-face course designed to meet the foreign language culminating course requirement for General Education. The French 202 Website supplements this course, making it a blended course. The French 202 Website provides content and instructional activities that complement activities the teacher carries out during face-to-face class time. As a virtual environment, the French 202 Website provides flexibility for learners so that they are not required to be online at a specific time or place. The asynchronous learning session begins with a student login to the system. Dziuban, Hartman, Moskal, Sorg, and Truman (2004) mentioned that the adoption of web-enhanced modalities is changing the traditional way of teaching and learning. The role of the teacher becomes more facilitative, and the student adopts a more central role. Students focus on flexible thinking, problem solving, and the development of new social and behavioral skills. The experiences offered through the French 202 Website seem to fit within this construct.

The French 202 Website is a collection of web pages. The website includes content in the form of text, graphical representations, animations, podcasts, mastery checks (which help the

students to prepare for the course quizzes and exams), video clips, and other digital assets that are accessible via the Internet. Students are able to work synchronously and asynchronously on the website but are required to attend the face-to-face class. The purpose of the podcast is to facilitate students' listening to native French speakers. The purpose of the animations is to give students opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills through interactive practice. Students watch video clips based on the play "Antigone" and read the accompanying book, *Antigone*, in French to practice listening, reading, and other skills.

In addition to the French 202 Website, students use an optional grammar text at the teacher's discretion. Compact disks and DVDs are also available for students, containing a complete version of recordings and videos that are provided in the website.

Key Stakeholders

Faculty members in the Department of French and Italian at Brigham Young University, Mark Olivier (Subject Matter Expert), and students enrolled in the traditional (face-to-face) French 202 class are the key stakeholders of this evaluation. Brigham Young University (BYU) is founded, supported, and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) at BYU sponsored the evaluation of the French 202 Website and Dr. Larry Seawright, Associate Director of the CTL, proposed the website evaluation.

Stakeholders' Criteria and Evaluation Questions

The evaluator distinguished two important aspects of evaluation usability: effectiveness and efficiency. Efficiency addresses the "criteria whereby the attainment of a minimum level of effective performance may be determined" (Pearrow, 2007, p. 62). Being efficient means producing results with little wasted effort and can be seen as the optimization of the resources in attaining the website's objectives and learning outcomes. On the other hand, effectiveness

encompasses the “criteria whereby the success or failure of task performance may be determined” (Pearrow, 2007, p. 62). Effectiveness involves achieving the worthwhile goals of the course; that is, its objectives and learning outcomes. Although it is clear that both effectiveness and efficiency are important goals, a reasonable balance might be helpful. Smith and Ragan (2005) suggested that efficiency is a controversial concept. They asserted that the term “efficiency” must reflect the avoidance of unnecessary and unproductive waste and mention that effectiveness seems to be more important than efficiency for meaningful learning. The evaluator organized this evaluation using two aspects of usability—efficiency and effectiveness—and by considering faculty and student’s perspectives.

Faculty criteria and evaluation questions regarding website efficiency. The faculty criteria regarding website efficiency included the following: (a) Faculty should be involved early in the definition of the learning outcomes and their involvement should be maintained over time; (b) Faculty members should use the website; (c) Faculty members should be trained to use the website; and, (d) An assessment plan should be developed parallel to the learning outcomes definition and the plan should be implemented.

The evaluation questions associated with these faculty efficiency criteria were as follows:

- Were faculty involved early in the definition of the learning outcomes and was their involvement maintained over time?
- Did faculty members use the website?
- What features (if any) were not being used and why?
- Were the teachers trained to use the website?
- Was an assessment plan developed parallel to the learning outcomes definition and
- Was the plan implemented?

Student criteria and evaluation questions regarding website efficiency. The student criteria regarding website efficiency centered on students' use of the website and whether they felt their experience was satisfactory.

The criteria included the following: (a) The website should be easy to use; (b) The website should be functional; (c) The website should be satisfactory; and, (d) The content of the website should be relevant, accurate, fair, appealing, and aligned to the learning objectives of the course.

Questions associated with the student efficiency criteria were as follows:

- Was the website easy for the students to use?
- Did the website function for the students?
- Did the students have a satisfactory experience using the website?
- Did the students consider the website content to be relevant, accurate, fair, meaningful, appealing, and aligned to the learning objectives of the course?

Student criteria and evaluation questions regarding website effectiveness. Student criteria regarding website effectiveness dealt with students' perceptions about how well the website helped them reach the learning outcomes of the course. The following criteria were included: (a) The objectives of the website should be clear to the students; (b) The learning outcomes should be clear to the students; (c) Students should believe they were accomplishing the learning outcomes of the course through use of the website; (d) Students should feel that the website was contributing to their preparation for the course assessment; (e) Students should feel that the assessment was aligned with the learning outcomes of the course; (f) Students should feel that the prerequisites for language skills were at the appropriate level.

These criteria led to the following evaluation questions regarding effectiveness of the evaluand from the students' perspective:

- Were the objectives of the website clear to the students?
- Were the learning outcomes clear to the students?
- Did students feel the website was helping them achieve the learning outcomes of the course?
- Did the students feel that the website was contributing to their preparation for the course assessment?
- Did the students feel that the assessment was aligned with the course content and learning outcomes of the course?
- Did the students feel that the prerequisites for language skills were at the appropriate level?

In this section the evaluator discussed the objectives of this evaluation, introduced the evaluand, and presented the stakeholders' criteria and evaluation questions. In the following section the evaluator introduces the concepts of usability, efficiency, and effectiveness and establishes a framework for this evaluation.

Background and Context

In this section, the evaluator summarizes efficiency and effectiveness issues associated with usability.

Scriven (1967) differentiated between formative and summative evaluation and mentioned that the difference is frequently blurred; however, the terms are important in highlighting the types of judgments, decisions, and choices of the evaluation. According to Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004), “an evaluation is considered to be formative if the primary purpose is to provide information for program improvement” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004, p. 9). Summative evaluations are “concerned with providing information to serve decisions or assist in making judgments about program adoption, continuation or expansion” (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2004, p. 17).

Usability is a form of evaluation that can be formative as well as summative. In the formative phase the purpose is to provide accurate and purposeful feedback to support the product development. Pearrow (2007) suggested that “user testing can occur at any stage in the design life cycle, and it should happen as often as it is economically feasible and meaningful” (p. 68). A summative usability test can provide a certain level of assurance that the product ultimately responds to the objectives and criteria previously defined. When usability studies are applied to websites, they are called website usability studies. The conceptual framework for this usability evaluation is presented below, addressing the evaluation questions and criteria identified earlier.

People use artifacts and tools to accomplish tasks. Websites as well as other artifacts are usually designed to accomplish a determined task and to solve a problem (Pearrow, 2007).

People are generally satisfied when the tools work well and might be frustrated when those tools

are ineffective or difficult to use. Pearrow defined “usability” as “the broad discipline of applying sound scientific observation, measurement, and design principles to the creation and maintenance of websites” with the intent “to bring about the greatest ease of use, ease of learnability, amount of usefulness, and least amount of discomfort for the humans who have to use the system” (Pearrow, 2007, p. 15).

Usability specialists should focus on understanding the users’ requirements and then on communicating them to designers and engineers, so they are able to narrow the gap between designers and users. For Pearrow (2007), usability specialists are the needed go-between for designers, engineers, and users:

Designers often lose the perspective of an outsider because long-term exposure to the innards of a system has this side effect. When there is a breakdown of information flow between end users and designers, the result will almost inevitably be a unusable design. (Pearrow, 2007, p. 3)

Frequently, usability studies narrow the gap between users and designers by incorporating the user in the development process.

Usability resides in the eyes of the user. Nielsen (2000) insisted that “the web is the ultimate customer-empowering environment. He or she who clicks the mouse gets to decide everything” (Nielsen, 2000, p. 9). Usability has an important role in assuring client satisfaction. Usability specialists are trained to seek out the weaknesses of websites, including the inconsistencies that cause people to feel frustrated, confused, or even angry (Pearrow, 2007). Therefore, using real users is essential to good design and usability evaluation.

From the point of view of quality assurance, a final inspection will not provide the advantages of inspecting the product in every phase. Consequently, incorporating quality

assurance throughout the design and development processes is substantially more effective than incorporating it only at the final stage. Formative evaluation uses a similar approach. Taking care of the needs of the user is at the core of usability testing and such testing has a positive impact on websites' development and maintenance costs. Pearrow (2007) explained, "usability's power to detect issues before they are released into production saves money. Eighty percent of the software lifecycle costs occur after the product is released, in the maintenance phase" (Pearrow, 2007, p. 19). This idea that improving quality will cost less in the long run often leads organizations and evaluators to use formative usability and quality assurance during the product development process.

Two types of usability commonly evaluated are *efficiency* and *effectiveness*. Each is discussed below, in relation to the French 202 Website study.

Efficiency

Assuming that students engage in learning program activities, follow the instructions, and are a reasonably well-matched target audience, the next big question is whether the program functions properly. Efficiency focuses on determining if the website is easy to use and functions properly; if content is relevant, fair, accurate, and aligned with the objectives of the course; if the website promotes social interaction (sociability) among the students and between the students and the teacher; and if the website satisfies the students.

Ease of use. Users want to experience ease of use. They are not interested in understanding the intricacies of product development, the principles of design, or the challenges that engineers faced. "If something is hard to use," wrote Krug, "I just don't use it as much" (2000, p. 9). Pearrow (2007) clarified: "The simple idea is that no product, website, or software system matters—at all—unless there are users to use it" (Pearrow, 2007, p. 17). According to

Duyne, Landay, and Hong (2003), “people would be more willing to leave the website if they are frustrated, think it is too much effort to navigate the site, get surprises that they don’t like, feel it takes too long to load” or if they do not find the resources they are looking for (p. 9).

Krug (2000) indicated that web design can be accomplished by considering five important things: (1) Create a visual hierarchy on each page to highlight what is prominent and what is not; (2) Take advantage of conventions to improve navigability and consistency; (3) Break pages up into clearly defined areas; (4) Make obvious what’s clickable, and (5) Minimize noise to avoid unnecessary user attention and work.

In the present evaluation, the evaluator considered three elements to promote ease of use: navigability, consistency, and intuitive interaction. Navigability is the ability “to know where you are in the system, what you can do there, where you can go next and how to get back” (Moggridge, 2007, p. xv). Consistency means that “a certain command in one part of the system should have the same effect in other parts” (Moggridge, 2007, p. xv). It also implies that clear conventions allow the users to figure out a lot about the web page (Krug, 2000). Intuitive interaction “minimizes the burden of conscious thought needed to operate the system, leaving us to concentrate on our goals” (Moggridge, 2007, p. xvi).

Functionality. Users are concerned about product functionality; they want a product that works properly. Whether the purpose for using the product is to solve a problem or to achieve a specific goal, users expect the product to perform or function according to certain standards and expectations. In customer-centered design, Duyne et al. (2003) wrote, “you do the work up front to ensure that the website has the features that customers need, by determining and planning for the most important features and by making certain that those features are built in a way that customers will understand” (p. 6). On the other hand, it is necessary to recognize that function

is not enough. Moggridge (2007) stated, “if we only design the function of something, not what it also communicates, we risk our design being misinterpreted” (p. xiv).

Satisfaction. Users are not necessarily looking for the optimum solution but a satisfactory alternative. Satisfaction resides in the user’s mind. Satisfaction is one of the “criteria by which the users may be judged to have interacted with the system to their internal degree of sufficiency” (Pearrow, 2007, p. 62). Certainly, there are occasions when the optimum solution is required, but most of the time satisfactory solutions are sufficient. There is also a strong correlation between increased satisfaction and increased profits for commercial websites. Similarly, Duyne et al. (2003) indicated that customer-centered design increases the value of websites through better design and evaluation and ensures that the customer’s needs are met to his or her satisfaction. Thus, a major component of web usability studies is to determine if the interaction with the website is providing a satisfactory user experience.

Content. Nielsen (2000) called for “quality content” as “one of the two most important determinants of web usability” and further explained: “Content is the focus of the web user’s attention. It’s the reason they go online, and it’s the first thing they look at when they load a new page” (p. 160). Instructional designers are trained to answer the question: What kinds of content must be learned by the students? In answering this question the designer conducts a series of needs analyses to determine what skills and knowledge the students need to master. Frequently, content is only linked to the acquisition of pieces of information; however, students not only need to remember certain pieces of information but they also need to understand, apply, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate to gain meaningful learning. The following attributes fulfill most university stakeholders’ requirements for content: relevance, accuracy, fairness, appeal, alignment, and sociability.

Relevance. The relevance of content is frequently determined by the subject matter experts and by others who have a vested interest in the instruction. It also must be relevant to the student; otherwise, the student will not be motivated to learn the content—and without that effort, content is frequently forgotten. Brandsford, Brown, and Cooking (2000) explained that “relevant knowledge helps people organize information in ways that support their abilities to remember” (p. 237). In terms of web design, Krug emphasized that users need help to find information relevant to them: “On most pages, we’re really only interested in a fraction of what’s on the page. We’re just looking for the bits that match our interests or the task at hand, and the rest it is irrelevant”(2000, p. 22).

Accuracy. Accurate content can be obtained by incorporating accredited resources and subject matter experts in the course development. Content accuracy contributes to the validity and reliability of assessments. Accuracy also implies simplicity, as Nielsen stated: “Simplicity always wins over complexity, especially on the web, where every five bytes saved is a millisecond less download time” (2000, p. 22).

Fairness. Smith and Ragan (2005) indicated that is critical that designers take into account their target audiences in designing interesting and effective instruction. Insufficient effort in analyzing the prospective learner might be influenced by the following erroneous ideas: all learners are alike; learners learn and think like the designers do; what is familiar to the designers is also familiar to the learners. In other words, problems in fairness arise when designers design as they expect the learners would be rather than as they are. To be fair, the website content, context, and functionality must reflect knowledge, values, and experiences that are equally familiar and appropriate to all users and be as free as possible of cultural, ethnic, and gender stereotypes.

Appeal. “Web pages should be dominated by content of interest to the user,” wrote Nielsen (2000, p. 18). But regardless of how relevant and accurate the content might be, the content must also be attractive. Visual aids like graphics, photographs, videos; audio aids such as podcasts; and motion features instead of static features enhance the product’s appeal.

Alignment. Linn and Miller pointed out: “Content considerations are of special importance when we wish to describe how an individual performs on a domain of tasks that the assessment is supposed to represent” (2005, p. 73). In French 202, for example, there must be alignment between the course’s goals, learning outcomes, content, and assessments. Instructional designers first determine what students need to learn; second, they define the content and instructional activities that satisfy the students’ needs; and third, they assess if the students have reached the learning objectives of the course.

Sociability. Sociability in online courses is becoming more frequent and important. The development of Internet tools is clearly directed towards social learning. In fact, because students are constantly using interactive technologies such as games, social interaction is becoming a necessity to avoid student boredom and loss of interest. As Moggridge (2007) insisted, “when IT systems fail to support the social aspect of work and leisure, when they dehumanize and de-civilize our relationship with each other, they impoverish the rich social web in which we live and operate, essential for both well-being and efficiency” (p. xiv).

Effectiveness

Effectiveness focuses on the instructional goals and objectives, the learning outcomes, and the assessment process. As Linn and Miller (2005) summarized, “instructional goals and objectives play a key role in both the instructional process and the assessment process” (p. 45); these objectives should describe “intended learning outcomes in performance terms” (pp. 45,47).

As part of effectiveness, it is also important to determine if the students feel the prerequisites of language skills are sufficient.

Clear objectives and purpose. An essential element of web usability is clarity of the objectives and purpose of the website. Pearrow (2007) said, “In a nutshell, the first step toward website usability is to figure out the main goals of your website” (p. 9). Objectives give students a clear understanding of what the website covers. They also help designers make sure all necessary content is present and guide product development and organization. Pearrow elaborated that usability specialists’ “goal is to actually speed users through the successful completion of their errands” (Pearrow, 2007, p. 11).

Learning outcomes. To get more specific about objectives through the use of learning outcomes, developers ask the following questions: What do we want the students to know? What do we want the students to be able to do? What values or attitudes do we want to instill in the students? Linn and Miller (2005) claimed that effective assessment depends as much on what is assessed as how to assess it.

Learning outcomes clarify “what” is to be assessed. Learning outcomes can help students to understand what is expected of them; prioritize their goals; realize which knowledge and skills they need to acquire; and choose an institution, program, or class. Simultaneously, learning outcomes can help faculty and staff to identify what to teach in terms of knowledge, values, skills, and behaviors; provide structure for co-curricular programs; determine what will be evaluated at the conclusion of the course or program; and provide clear guidelines for design, development, implementation, and evaluation purposes.

Assessment. Assessment is an integral part of learning. A good educational practice is to prepare the assessment plan parallel to the learning outcomes definition. Smith and Ragan

(2005) indicated that “there is a definite benefit to writing assessment items immediately after writing objectives” (Smith & Ragan, 2005, p. 104). The purpose of the assessment and final step of the instructional process “is to determine the extent to which the learning objectives were achieved by the students” (Linn & Miller, 2005, p. 31).

Prerequisites for language skills. Students enter courses with varying degrees of proficiency that might eventually impact their performance. According to Smith and Ragan (2005), “the most important factor to consider about the audience is specific prior learning” (p. 69). The evaluator assessed this factor by asking the students if they felt that the degree of French proficiency they had when they started the course was appropriate.

In this section the evaluator discussed literature which formed the basis for this evaluation. In the following section the evaluator introduces the evaluation design that guided the current evaluation.

Evaluation Design

The data collection method and procedures necessary to answer the evaluation questions and to determine if the evaluand met the criteria established by the stakeholders are presented in this section. First, the evaluator categorizes the methods and procedures (aligned with the criteria and evaluation questions) by faculty efficiency, student efficiency, and student effectiveness. Second, the evaluator provides information about the participants, process and activities to collect data, data analysis procedures, resources to carry out the study, evaluator characteristics, and limitations of the study.

Website Efficiency From Faculty's Perspective

The evaluator considered if the website was used by faculty, if faculty were trained to use the website, and if they received appropriate feedback about their performance using the website. The faculty stakeholders' criteria, evaluation questions and data collection method, sources, and procedures associated with evaluating efficiency of the website from faculty's perspective are shown in Table 1.

Website Efficiency From Students' Perspective

The student stakeholders' criteria and evaluation questions are matched in Table 2 with data collection methods and procedures used for evaluating efficiency of the website from students' perspective.

Table 1

Faculty View of Website Efficiency: Criteria, Evaluation Questions, Method, and Procedures

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Method and procedures
Faculty involved early in defining learning outcomes; involvement maintained over time.	Were faculty involved early in the definition of the learning outcomes and was their involvement maintained over time?	Summarize major themes of interviews; integrate all results.
Faculty used website.	Did faculty members use the website? What features (if any) were not being used and why?	Summarize major themes of interviews; integrate all results through qualitative analysis; determine whether program content was used for quizzes, exams, and class discussion.
Faculty trained to use website.	Were the teachers trained to use the website?	Summarize major themes of interviews; integrate all results through qualitative analysis; determine how and if faculty received training to use the website.
Assessment plan developed and implemented; plan parallel to learning outcomes definition.	Was an assessment plan developed parallel to the learning outcomes definition and was it implemented?	Summarize major themes of interviews.

Note. Data collected through interviews with faculty.

Table 2

Student View of Website Efficiency: Criteria, Evaluation Questions, Method, and Procedures

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Method and procedures
Website was easy to use.	Was the website easy for the students to use?	Quantitative analysis of student survey data; Summarize major themes of student interviews.
Website was functional.	Did the website function for the students?	Quantitative analysis of student survey data; summarize major themes of student interviews.
Website was satisfactory.	Did the students have a satisfactory experience using the website?	Quantitative analysis of student survey data; summarize major themes of student interviews.
Website content was relevant, accurate, fair, appealing and aligned to the learning objectives of the course.	Did the students consider the website content relevant, accurate, fair, meaningful, appealing, and aligned to the learning objectives of the course?	Quantitative analysis of student survey data; summarize major themes of student interviews; summarize major themes of faculty interviews.

Note. Data collected from student survey and interviews, with data for the final objective also collected from faculty interviews. Students were surveyed with a Likert-type scale.

Website Effectiveness From Students' Perspective

The purposes of this effectiveness study were to invite students to judge if objectives of the website were clear and if the website helped them reach the learning outcomes of the course. The study also explored if the stakeholders were involved in the definition of the learning outcomes, if an assessment plan was developed and implemented parallel to the learning outcomes definition, if participants felt the website was contributing to the preparation of the students for the course assessment, if the assessment was aligned with the learning outcomes of the course, and if the prerequisite language skills for the course were at the appropriate level. It is also important to mention that separating the learning impact of using the website from other instructional activities that were part of the face-to-face French 202 course was beyond the scope of this evaluation and its limited resources.

The student stakeholders' criteria, evaluation questions, data collection method, and procedures for evaluating effectiveness of the website from students' perspective are shown in Table 3.

Participants

Participants in the evaluation consisted of students and faculty, as well as staff of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), all at Brigham Young University.

Students: Students were the source of information for evaluating efficiency and effectiveness of the website. The evaluator surveyed 61 students who were using the French 202 Website and course. The evaluator interviewed four students for additional details; other students declined the invitation.

Table 3

Student View of Website Effectiveness: Criteria, Evaluation Questions, Method, and Procedures

Criteria	Evaluation questions	Method and procedures
Website objectives clear to students.	Were the website objectives clear to the students?	Quantitative analysis of student survey results.
Learning outcomes clear to students.	Were the learning outcomes clear to the students?	Quantitative analysis of student survey results.
Students feel they are accomplishing course learning outcomes.	Did students feel the website is helping them achieve the learning outcomes of the course?	Quantitative analysis of student survey results.
Website helps prepare students for course assessment.	Did the students feel that the website was contributing to their preparation for the course assessment?	Quantitative analysis of student survey results.
Assessment aligned with course learning outcomes.	Did the students feel that the assessment was aligned with the course content and learning outcomes?	Quantitative analysis of student survey results.
Course language skills prerequisites at appropriate level.	Did the students feel that the prerequisites for language skills were at the appropriate level?	Quantitative analysis of student survey results.

Note. Data collected through Likert-type survey of students.

Faculty: Faculty member Mark Olivier served as the Subject Matter Expert in this study. Other participating faculty members included Johanne Hillam, Marie-Laure Oscarson, Robert J Hudson, and Carlos Amado. Mark Olivier and Carlos Amado were interviewed even though they were not teaching during the semester when the evaluation was conducted; however, they had taught the course previously.

CTL Associate Director and CTL staff: The CTL Associate Director of Evaluation, Evaluation Supervisor, Project Manager, and Instructional Designer provided valuable information pertaining to the evaluation design.

Process and Activities to Collect Data

Evaluation and decision making should be made on the basis of high quality information; otherwise, the tendency is to make poor evaluations and decisions: “Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders” (Joint Committee, 1994, p. 37). Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) indicated that validity “concerns the soundness and defensibility of inferences or conclusions that are drawn from the information-gathering processes and products” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 562).

This evaluation consisted of five main phases of data collection. The first step was to interview the Instructional Designer, the CTL Supervisor Evaluator, and the Subject Matter Expert (SME), Mark Olivier. The second step was to interview five faculty members including the SME (see Appendix A). The third step consisted of a focus group made up of four students to review the questionnaire (see Appendix B) to be submitted to the French 202 class (six students expressed their desire to participate in the focus group and they were invited to participate, but only four students attended). The fourth step consisted of surveying the French

202 students, and 61 students participated. In the fifth step the evaluator interviewed four students (see Appendix C) to collect additional information about the website to deepen understanding of the survey results. Other students were invited but declined the invitation to be interviewed. The results of the four interviews were similar and consistent. It is also important to mention that the evaluator performed the interviews, transcription, and analysis by himself. The constraint on the resources available also limited the number of students interviewed.

Instruments

Questionnaire. An anonymous online questionnaire was used to collect students' opinions about their experience with and opinions of the website. The questionnaire included a series of statements and associated Likert-type scales (see Appendix B). Anderson explained the use of such scales: "In simplest terms, information is obtained by interpreting the responses or reactions made by the respondents to the statements or adjectives that comprise the scale" (Anderson, 1981, p. 149). The scales allowed the students to respond to each statement in terms of direction (positive and negative) and intensity (strong and very strong). The questionnaire included three open questions; a small percentage of students answered these questions. That information was taken into account in the evaluation.

The evaluator informed the students of the general purpose of the scale and that there were no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire was piloted in a previous semester, and none of the responses collected during the previous semester were used in the evaluation results. The questionnaire was discussed with the Evaluator Supervisor, Subject Matter Expert, and with the IPT graduate committee members, faculty and students. The evaluator was trained to obtain systematic information and assured that the questions and statements were clear, objective, and

accurate by piloting them and obtaining helpful feedback from students similar to those who finally completed the questionnaire.

Interviews. The evaluator interviewed the participants using student and faculty protocols (see Appendices A and C). The interview protocols were discussed with the supervisor of the evaluator and with the IPT committee members. They all offered suggestions that were implemented.

The interaction was flexible enough that faculty members and students were able to express their ideas and points of view openly. Each interview began with a statement by the evaluator, explaining that he had not been involved in the design or implementation of the French 202 Website, and that all responses would remain confidential. A consent form was completed for each interviewee.

Interviews with faculty were conducted in their offices. Three student interviews were conducted at the Harold B. Lee Library and one student was interviewed through video-conference. The interviews took approximately 15 minutes each. Students who participated in these interviews received a \$10 gift card. Independent Study and CTL staff interviews were conducted at the CTL facilities and were unstructured interviews. All student interviews were recorded using Audacity and all relevant parts of the interviews were transcribed.

Focus group. The evaluator conducted a focus group with four additional students to obtain feedback about the questionnaire while it was being developed. The focus group allowed the evaluator to get information about reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Students were asked if the questions and statements included in the questionnaire were clear. They were also asked if they were able to understand the scales used in the questionnaire (included in Appendix

B). The evaluator included the insights provided by the students by modifying the online questionnaire.

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative analysis. The qualitative data gathered through interviews were analyzed to identify themes in responses to each question. To answer the stakeholders' questions, the evaluator followed a process of analysis and synthesis recommended by Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007). During the analysis the evaluator indentified the constituent elements, interrelationships, and their meaning. The evaluator used synthesis to discern the validity and meaning of findings across information collection procedures.

This process involved the evaluator in interviewing, reading all the responses, writing notes about comments he judged to be relevant to the evaluation purposes and questions, organizing the comments and notes into categories, and synthesizing them. The questionnaire allowed the evaluator to ask the students to answer specific questions and to respond to several statements about their experience using the French 202 Website. The analysis and synthesis objective was to find patterns that would allow the evaluator to judge and provide reasonable answers to the evaluation questions and address the stakeholders' criteria. The interviews confirmed and expanded the results obtained through the questionnaire.

Quantitative analysis. The questionnaire contained specific questions about the usability and learning outcomes components of the evaluation. These questions were answered by using Likert-type scales, which served to compare the students' responses against the evaluation criteria. The evaluator computed descriptive statistics to compare responses to the criteria for each part of the website evaluated.

Report to Stakeholders

The evaluator shared interim reports with the Subject Matter Expert and the Associate Director of Evaluation of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Given that this project fulfills the requirements of an evaluation project for the evaluator's Master of Science degree in Instructional Psychology and Technology (IP&T), the evaluator used APA format for the report.

Evaluator Background

The evaluator is a graduate student of the Instructional Psychology and Technology program at Brigham Young University, with an emphasis in evaluation. The evaluator worked for the CTL as a student evaluator and research assistant and has participated in the evaluation of Blackboard—a platform for delivering learning content, Mendel's Genetics simulation, and other educational programs. Working at the CTL gave the evaluator the opportunity to understand the importance of evaluating instructional programs to determine their efficiency and effectiveness, and to provide suggestions for their improvement. Prior to this study, the evaluator had not worked at all with the design of the French 202 Website. All interviews were conducted in English.

Evaluation Limitations

The evaluation design has limited the ability of the evaluator to answer some of the questions. When pertinent, the evaluator discusses these design issues as they arise in addressing each evaluation question throughout the report. The following are general considerations that, if taken into account earlier, might have improved the evaluation:

The Likert-type scale used in the questionnaire included a neutral or midpoint that caused ambiguity. There were several questions where a significant number of students selected this

option. The scope of the evaluation and limited resources did not allow the evaluator to collect additional information to clarify what students meant when they selected the neutral midpoint option.

Although the student interviews were carried out after the administration of the questionnaire, the evaluator treated both instruments independently. The evaluator followed the protocols (see Appendices A and C) but did not systematically use the results of the questionnaire to deepen the interviews and clarify points that were ambiguous, such as the neutral midpoint.

Interviews and the questionnaire were administered in the middle of the term. Scheduling the data collection at this time was not adequate because a significant number of students had not used the video clips that were programmed for use in the last portion of the term. In addition, video clips and podcasts were optional features. The evaluator did not collect information to clarify this issue.

In the following section the evaluator discusses the results, based on the data collected and the analysis performed.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this evaluation have been organized around the evaluation questions regarding usability of the website in terms of efficiency and effectiveness for students and faculty. For each question, the evaluator used the professors' and students' responses given during the interviews and also the students' answers to the questionnaire to make evaluative judgments about the usability of the website. See Table 4 for a summary of numbers of respondents to the interviews and questionnaire.

Table 4

Number of Respondents by Data Collection Method

Data collection method	Dates of collection	Number of respondents
Faculty interviews	09/15/2009 to 10/30/2009	5
Student interviews	09/15/2009 to 10/30/2009	4
Student surveys	09/15/2009 to 10/30/2009	61

The evaluator has categorized the responses to the evaluation questions into two groups: faculty and students. The labels F1, F2, F3, F4 and F5 are used to designate the faculty members interviewed and S1, S2, S3, and S4 to designate the students interviewed.

Faculty Questions for Website Efficiency

In this section, results addressing evaluation questions associated with efficiency components of the website from faculty's perspective are summarized.

Did faculty members use the website? All five professors interviewed reported that they demonstrated parts of the website during their face-to-face interactions and encouraged students to use the website content in preparation for the class discussion and/or to review the material taught in class. The following are samples of faculty comments:

“I was giving them the oral explanation, but then I have [the website on the screen] so I use it in class” (F1). One of the students said, “I went through the [website] pages to support the discussion” (F1); “In class I always have the class we are discussing on the screen. I used that screen to read passages” (F2); “The only difference is that they have the text on the big screen, the screen of the class” (F3). According to the French 202 professors the website links were embedded in the Blackboard environment; consequently there are additional Blackboard quizzes, exams, grades, and other information that are provided through Blackboard that complement the website. Blackboard did not interfere with the use of the website and its features.

What features (if any) were not being used and why? The professors indicated that they incorporated the website into their instructional activities and assignments. From faculty interviews, the evaluator inferred that the features have been used. However, the use of the features varied from one professor to another, and the website is only one of the instructional activities that faculty members used. Two of the professors indicated that a grammar section might be included as part of the course. As one noted, “They are trying to modify this course to include [grammar]. Due to the [fact that the] website covers mostly literature, and I think the department is trying to also incorporate grammar into the course that the website does not have” (F2). Following the evaluator discusses the mastery checks, podcasts, and video use separately.

Were the mastery checks used? All professors indicated that the mastery checks helped the students to review and to evaluate their understanding of the material. One of the professors

said, “mastery checks are very creative and interactive” (F2). In class, professors use the mastery checks even though the students are required to complete the activities at home.

Because these activities are not graded, students can make mistakes and correct them.

Were the podcasts used? Students can download the podcasts and listen to them on their portable media players or on a computer. One of the professors mentioned, “I can see a lot of improvement in my students from the beginning, because they have listened to the text” (F3). Podcasts were optional; however, most professors emphasized their use.

Was the video used? Professors used the “Antigone” video in class. The video presentation allowed the teacher to review the vocabulary, practice pronunciation, explain the cultural context, and to answer students’ questions. Students were also encouraged to watch the video clips out of class with the accompanying book, *Antigone*.

Were the teachers trained to use the website? None of the professors indicated that they have been formally trained to use the website; however, they said that the use of the website was very intuitive or self-explanatory. One of the professors (F1) indicated that he observed the use of the website by another teacher. Another teacher (F2) had a conversation with the SME about the use of the website.

Was an assessment plan developed parallel to the learning outcomes definition and was it implemented? Series of test items were developed parallel to the learning outcomes and content development. Mark Olivier (SME) said that the mastery checks and test items were aligned with the content of the course. However, faculty members had the flexibility to create and use different items, regularly posted on Blackboard. According to faculty members, students who used the website, reviewed the course content, and practiced using the mastery checks were better prepared for quizzes and exams.

Student Questions for Website Efficiency

In this section, results addressing evaluation questions associated with efficiency components of the website from students' perspective are summarized.

Was the website easy to use? In order to answer this question the evaluator considered several aspects that could make the website easy to use. These included launching (accessing and initiating) the website, the website organization and integration, menu structure and navigation, sequencing of the website, and use of the mastery checks, video clips, and mp3 files. Results obtained for each of these aspects are presented below.

How easy was it to launch the French 202 Website? Fifty-nine students surveyed (90%) reported it was fairly easy or very easy to launch the website (see Table 5). During the interviews students did not report any problems, and all indicated that the website was very easy to launch. One student volunteered, "I thought it was really easy to access [the website]" (S2). According to the students, it appears overall that the French 202 Website was easy to launch.

Table 5

Student View of Website Efficiency: Launching of the Website

	Not easy at all	Not too easy	Fairly easy	Very easy	Total
How easy was it for you to launch the French 202 Website?	0	2	4	55	61

Was the website well organized and integrated? Fifty-six (92%) of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the website was well organized and integrated (see Table 6). One student surveyed stated, "it [the website] is well-organized and is easily accessible"; another student said that "the separation of the chapters and the content within the chapters was great." The evaluator did not determine why five students were neutral, disagreed, or strongly

disagreed. Based on the results it appears overall that the students perceived the website as well organized and integrated.

Table 6

Student View of Website Efficiency: Website Organization and Integration

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The website is well organized and integrated.	35	21	3	1	1	61

Were website menus easy to follow? Fifty-nine (97%) of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the menus of the website were easy to follow (see Table 7). The students interviewed agreed that the menus were easy to follow; one of them said, “I like how it was organized. On the left hand column, there is a list of all chapters; it was really easy to find which chapter and it had the pages underneath the chapter on the left side. I felt like it is easy for me to use it” (S2). Based on the questionnaire and student interviews results it appears overall that the students perceived the menu structure of the website as easy to follow.

Table 7

Student View of Website Efficiency: Website Menus

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The menus of the website are easy to follow.	30	29	1	0	1	61

How easy was it for students to navigate through the French 202 Website? All 61 students surveyed (100%) said it was fairly easy or very easy to navigate through the website (see Table 8). Likewise, all the students interviewed indicated that the website was easy to

navigate. One of the students interviewed said, “It was easy [to navigate]; like the first time I explored a little bit, I saw the mastery checks, and how you can do the quizzes, how you can go back and forth” (S1).

Table 8

Student View of Website Efficiency: Website Navigation

	Not easy at all	Not too easy	Fairly easy	Very easy	Total
How easy was it for you to navigate through the French 202 Website?	0	0	5	56	61

How easy was it for students to follow the sequencing of the French 202 Website?

Sixty of the students surveyed (98%) felt it was fairly easy or very easy to follow the sequencing of the website (see Table 9). The students interviewed agreed that the website sequencing was appropriate, as one student mentioned, “It was really great, really straightforward, and easy to maneuver” (S2).

Table 9

Student View of Website Efficiency: Website Sequencing

	Not easy at all	Not too easy	Fairly easy	Very easy	Total
How easy was it for you to follow the sequencing of the French 202 Website?	0	1	13	47	61

How easy was it for students to complete the mastery check activity for every lesson?

Forty-five of the students surveyed (73%) said it was fairly easy or very easy to complete the mastery check activity for every lesson. Sixteen students (27%) indicated that it was not too easy (see Table 10 below).

Table 10

Student View of Website Efficiency: Mastery Checks

	Not easy at all	Not too easy	Fairly easy	Very easy	Total
How easy was it for you to complete the Mastery check activity for every lesson?	0	16	31	14	61

Regarding the easiness of the mastery checks, one student indicated in the survey that “it helps to have the mastery checks just to make sure one has mastered the material and really understood each concept before moving on.” Another student said, “I was a big fan of the mastery checks”. It should be pointed out that the question did not disambiguate between the site being easy to use and the content being easy to learn. The content of mastery checks was challenging so that students were able to evaluate their learning. However, it seems that the simulation itself was easy to use. It was expected that a group of students might not necessarily find this activity fairly easy or very easy.

How easy was it for students to watch the video clips? Fourteen students (23%) out of 61 had used the video clips at the time of the survey. Having the administration of the questionnaire in the middle of the term and the video clips scheduled at the end of the course prevented most of the students from answering this question. This became a significant limitation to answering the evaluation question. Of the 14 students who watched the video, 13 students (93%) felt it was fairly easy or very easy to watch the video clips available in the website outside of class; 13 (93%) of these students felt it was fairly easy or very easy to view the Antigone video clips. Only one student considered watching the video clips not easy at all (see Table 11). One interviewed student reported that this feature was interactive, “so that it really helps to review and understand the concepts that we have been taught” (S1), and another

student mentioned, “it was really easy [to use the website] the audios were good, the clips were good” (S1).

Table 11

Student View of Website Efficiency: Video Clips

	Not easy at all	Not too easy	Fairly easy	Very easy	Total
How easy was it for you to watch the video clips available in the website outside of class?	1	0	7	6	14
How easy was it for you to view the Antigone Video Clips?	1	0	10	3	14

Based on the data collected, it appears overall (except for the previously stated limitations) that the students were able to watch the video clips without any significant difficulty.

How easy was it for students to download MP3 files for playback on portable media players or personal computers? Only 21 out of 61 students surveyed (34%) answered this question. Eleven out of those 21 students (52%) said that it was fairly easy or very easy to download MP3 files for playback on portable media players or personal computers.

The students interviewed recommended improving the instructions for downloading the MP3 files. It appears that the instructions were not appropriate and affected the use and easiness of this feature, since 10 (48%) of the 21 students who answered the survey question felt that downloading the MP3 files was not easy or not easy at all (see Table 12), and 40 students (67%) did not answer the question.

Table 12

Student View of Website Efficiency: MP3 Files

	Not easy at all	Not too easy	Fairly easy	Very easy	Total
How easy was it for you to download MP3 files for playback on portable media players or personal computers?	6	4	6	5	21

The fact that only 34% of the students apparently tried to use this feature is concerning. The evaluator does not know why 40 of the 61 students chose not to respond about downloading the MP3 files. However, during the interviews, three out of four students recommended improving the instructions for the MP3 file downloading and it appears that the instructions were somewhat unclear and this may have affected the students' use of this feature. In addition, the evaluator does not know how useful students found these MP3 files as a resource for learning. However, one of the students surveyed indicated that "the podcasts were very useful as we read along." Further inquiry into why most students did not even attempt to download MP3 files and how useful students found these resources is needed.

Did the website function for the students? In order to answer this question the evaluator and stakeholders considered several functionality aspects of the website, including adequacy of the content; length of the website; clear and meaningful writing assignments; clear and complete instructions to download podcasting files, easiness to download the MP3 files, and podcast audio quality; pop-ups to expand understanding; illustrations to make the website visually appealing and to expand the student understanding of the website content; mastery checks and instant feedback throughout the lesson, and not just when students were graded, to

help the students prepare for the course quizzes and exams. The results obtained for each of these functionality aspects of the French 202 Website are reported in the following paragraphs.

Was the content length appropriate? Fifty-three students (87%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the content length of the website is too short (see Table 13 below). It is not clear why 8 students marked the neutral option.

Students interviewed indicated that the content length was appropriate; however, two students recommended distributing the content more evenly among the lessons. One of the students mentioned, “some pages were so long, it was kind of hard to keep attention.” (S2). A surveyed student suggested, “don't have too much text on one page. It gets really frustrating and my eyes start to hurt if I have to keep reading like twenty paragraphs on page. An example was for the Gabrielle Roy story, there are like 18 paragraphs on one page.” It seems that reading on the screen for long periods of time causes discomfort to readers.

Table 13

Student View of Website Efficiency: Content Length

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The content length of the website is too short.	0	0	8	40	13	61

Were writing assignments clear and meaningful? Forty-two students surveyed (69%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “the writing assignments were clear and meaningful.” Nineteen students (31%) were neutral or disagreed (see Table 14).

Based on the interviews the evaluator found that the instructions could be improved. In addition, because the evaluator did not ask separate questions about the Blackboard writing assignments and the French 202 Website assignments, the students might be reporting on both types of writing assignments in the responses reported here.

Table 14

Student View of Website Efficiency: Writing Assignments

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The writing assignments are clear and meaningful.	7	35	16	3	0	61

Were podcasts downloading instructions and audio clear and complete? Nineteen students surveyed (31%) agreed or strongly agreed that the instructions to download podcasting files for iPods or MP3 players are clear and complete. However, the instructions may not be clear enough and students might have difficulties downloading podcasting files, since 8% disagreed and 61% were neutral in their responses to this item (see Table 15). It is also possible that the students did not try to download the MP3 files, as evidence was not collected regarding actual file use.

Twenty-eight students surveyed (46%) agreed or strongly agreed, and none disagreed, that the audio quality of the podcast is clear (see Table 15). However, 33 students (54%) were neutral. Whether students did not attempt to use the podcast or whether they were not able to download the MP3 was not sufficiently clarified by this evaluation. It seems that students who used the podcasts found them helpful for their French pronunciation. As one student said, “There are some words I would not understand ...but when I listened to the podcast, it made

sense” (S1). Another student mentioned, “When you are reading in your head you put English accent, here you would hear how a French person would say it” (S2). And a third student indicated, “Instead of reading the lecture, you can hear it, so that helps you with the pronunciation” (S4).

Table 15

Student View of Website Efficiency: Podcast Downloading Instructions and Audio Quality

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The instructions to download podcasting files to be used in your iPod or MP3 player are clear and complete.	3	16	37	2	3	61
The audio quality of the podcast is clear.	11	17	33	0	0	61

Did pop-ups help expand student understanding of the concepts? Thirty-nine students surveyed (64%) agreed or strongly agreed that the pop-ups were helpful to expand the understanding of the concepts. Only two students disagreed (see Table 16). However, 20 students were neutral (33%). The information collected in the survey, or through the interviews, does not provide sufficient information to determine why the students selected the neutral alternative.

Table 16

Student View of Website Efficiency: Pop-ups

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The pop-ups were helpful to expand my understanding of the concepts.	14	25	20	2	0	61

In the interviews, one student indicated that this feature was useful in “understanding the meaning of some difficult words” (S1) and another student said “that [the pop-ups] was the best” (S2). However, one student mentioned that the pop-ups did not work properly with a Macintosh computer: “I did not really use the pop-ups. I usually skip over it. . . . Sometimes depending on which computer you use, the vocabulary words do not pop-up. I have a Macintosh [the student uses the Safari browser]. . . . Sometimes they did not work; it depends on which computer you are using” (S4). It seems that some students experienced technical difficulties and the browser they used may have negatively impacted the functionality of this feature. The high number of neutrals is a motive of concern; unfortunately, the evaluator lacks information to determine its causes, beyond that it seems that students who use the pop-ups found them useful. There were no other observations of technical difficulties reported on the open questions or interviews.

Did illustrations make the website visually appealing and help expand students’ understanding of website content? Fifty-five students surveyed (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that the illustrations help in making the website visually appealing; two students (2%) disagreed. Forty-eight students surveyed (79%) strongly agreed or agreed that the illustrations help in expanding the understanding of the website content; 10 students (16%) were neutral and three students (5%) disagreed (see Table 17). One student surveyed indicated that “having the images and videos livened it up a bit.”

Based on the interviews, it seems that the students liked that the website has “lots of pictures” (S2). At least one student felt the pictures helped with learning: “That was helpful remembering what it was about, so that when I was asked about that specific piece on the test I could easily remember which one it was” (S4). It seems that students found the illustrations help in making the website visually appealing and in expanding the website content. The evaluator

did not determine the reasons 10 students selected the neutral option; however, based on the positive cases of the survey, answers to the open question, and interviews, it seems that the website helped the students expand their understanding of the subject matter and it made the website visually appealing.

Table 17

Student View of Website Efficiency: Illustrations

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The illustrations help in making the website visually appealing.	26	29	4	2	0	61
The illustrations help in expanding my understanding of the website content.	19	29	10	3	0	61

Did mastery checks help students prepare for course quizzes and exams? Fifty-five students surveyed (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that the mastery checks helped them to prepare for the course quizzes and exams (see Table 18). Four students (7%) were neutral and 2 strongly disagreed (3%). One student surveyed indicated that it is helpful “to have the mastery checks just to make sure one has mastered the material and really understood each concept before moving on.”

Table 18

Student View of Website Efficiency: Mastery Checks

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The mastery checks help me to prepare for the course quizzes and exams.	25	30	4	0	2	61

According to the students interviewed, the mastery checks helped them to study, to summarize what they have learned, and to “put all the ideas together and then to understand it” (S1). Mastery checks also helped them to determine if they needed to study more: “I knew which things to study more. I thought it was really helpful” (S2). The mastery checks increased understanding, as explained by one of the students: “maybe from doing the activity you will understand a little bit better” (S4). Based on the information collected it seems that the mastery checks helped the students to prepare for the course quizzes and exams.

Did instant feedback help students prepare for course quizzes and exams? Fifty-six students surveyed (92%) agreed or strongly agreed that instant feedback throughout the lesson, and not just when they were graded, helped them prepare for the course quizzes and exams. Only four students were neutral and one disagreed (see Table 19).

Table 19

Student View of Website Efficiency: Instant Feedback

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Instant feedback throughout the lesson, and not just when we were graded, helps me to prepare for the course quizzes and exams.	31	25	4	0	1	61

One student surveyed mentioned, “I love how you can get immediate feedback through the quizzes that are offered on the site. It also helps review for the tests.” It seems that the website helped the students throughout the lesson and in preparation for the course quizzes and exams.

Did the students have a satisfactory experience using the website? As a measure of satisfaction, 55 students surveyed (90%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they feel frustrated

using the website. Fifty-eight students (95%) agreed or strongly agreed that they found the website user-friendly. Fifty-one students (84%) agreed or strongly agreed that they found the website interesting (see Table 20).

Twenty-seven students surveyed (44%) would recommend the French 202 course because of the website; however, the majority of students did not say they would recommend the course to other students because of the website. Perhaps this question was not appropriate, considering that there are many other elements besides the website that might influence the decision to recommend this class.

Based on the interviews the evaluator found that students might experience a decreasing ability to read when the time using the website increases. One student related: “After awhile it is hard to read so much on the screen, you know, kind of hurts your eyes. Other than that I thought it was great. . . . [The website] is really nice, you can just pull the text on the screen. . . . reading and reading on the Internet, after a while your eyes start to hurt” (S2).

Table 20

Student View of Website Efficiency: Satisfaction

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I feel frustrated using the website.	1	1	4	33	22	61
I find the website user-friendly.	29	29	2	1	0	61
I find the website interesting.	14	37	8	1	1	61
Because of the website I will recommend this course to other students.	10	17	25	7	2	61

The evaluator concludes that the students found the website interesting and user-friendly; however, long periods in front of the screen might cause eye irritability. Only one case of this was reported. One of the solutions might be to use relative font sizes as Nielsen (2000) suggests to support users who can see but have reduce eyesight “never encode information with absolute font sizes, but use relative sizes instead.” (p. 302). However, to determine the best solution to this particular issue, a more thorough usability study is recommended.

Was the website content relevant, accurate, fair, meaningful, appealing, and aligned to the learning objectives of the course? Fifty-nine students surveyed (97%) agreed or strongly agreed that the content of the website was relevant to the learning objectives of the course. Fifty-three students (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that the content of the website is interesting. Fifty-one students (84%) agreed or strongly agreed that content of the website has been distributed evenly and fairly during the semester. Forty-eight students (79%) agreed or strongly agreed that the content of the website is presented using media and technology that makes the course appealing. Thirty-six students (59%) agreed or strongly agreed that the website supports their interaction with other students and with the teacher; 19 students (31%) were neutral and six students (10%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. The evaluator did not collect enough information to determine why the students selected the neutral and negative alternatives for each item. It seems that the website supported social interaction; however, social interaction was not a strong characteristic of the website (see Table 21).

Table 21

Student View of Website Efficiency: Content

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The content of the website is relevant to the learning objectives of the course.	34	25	0	1	1	61
The content of the website is interesting.	20	33	6	1	1	61
The content of the website has been distributed evenly and fairly during the semester.	17	34	8	2	0	61
The content of the website is presented using media and technology that makes the course appealing to me.	20	28	11	1	1	61
The website supported my interaction with other students and with the teacher.	9	27	19	4	2	61

In addition to the survey results, students mentioned during the interviews that the content was good, relevant, interesting, and the information was very straightforward. However, the content was challenging and some students found it hard to comprehend, especially poems. From both a web design and a linguistic standpoint, poems might be considered difficult content to manage. One interviewed student expressed appreciation for content that gave context for the literature:

[The content] is good, I think. It has a lot of material; not only does it have the lectures but it also gives a little bit of historical background to the time when the piece is written, and a little bit of the biography of the author's life, which I think is interesting and it helps you to understand the lecture a little bit better. I think [the content] is definitely

relevant. I think the material is a lot easier to comprehend, if you have a little bit of background about when it was written, what was going on in the time period. It makes it a little bit easier to analyze the literature rather than just read it. (S4)

Another interviewed student concurred: “[The content] helps to understand why the author write things, like he wrote, like what type of period it was” (S1). A third interviewed student praised the content as well:

The content was good for our level of French. I cannot say I understood 100% of the reading but probably 85% to 90%. . . . It [the content] was interesting, compared to other literature books that I have seen, that I have read, like the information was very straight forward, like this is what you are going to learn this is what is expected from you to learn. (S1)

It appears overall for most students that the website content was relevant, accurate, fair, meaningful, appealing, and aligned with the learning objectives of the course.

Student Questions for Website Effectiveness

In this section, results addressing evaluation questions associated with effectiveness of the website from students’ perspective are summarized.

Were the objectives of each lesson clear and easy to understand? Fifty-seven students (93%) surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives of the website were clear and easy to understand (see Table 22). One student surveyed said, “I liked how the objectives were stated in English, ensuring that I would understand overall what I was supposed to understand in the reading.” In general, it appears that the objectives of the website were stated clearly and were easy to understand.

Table 22

Student View of Website Effectiveness: Lesson Objectives

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The objectives of each lesson are stated clearly and are easy to understand.	29	28	2	1	1	61

Were the stakeholders involved early in the definition of the learning outcomes and was their involvement maintained over time? The Subject Matter Expert, Mark Olivier, as well as professors of the department of French and Italian collaborated in the definition of the learning outcomes of the course. They also were involved in the definition of the learning outcomes of the website that are aligned with the learning outcomes of the course.

Were the objectives of each lesson clear and easy to understand? Fifty-seven students surveyed (93%) agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives of each lesson are stated clearly and are easy to understand (see Table 23).

Table 23

Student View of Website Effectiveness: Lesson Objectives

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The objectives of each lesson are stated clearly and are easy to understand.	29	28	2	1	1	61

Did the students feel that the website helped them achieve the learning outcomes of the course? The students felt they were able to achieve the learning outcomes better after using the website, as summarized in Table 24.

Table 24

Student View of Website Effectiveness: Learning Outcomes

After using the French 202 Website, I am better able to...	Not well at all	Not too well	Fairly well	Very well	Total
Recognize and analyze the most important genres in French literature.	0	3	38	19	60
Read beyond the basic plot and learn tools of literary analysis.	0	7	39	14	60
Identify and define key characteristics of the most important French literary movements.	0	4	37	19	60
Place French literature in a meaningful cultural and historical context.	0	3	41	16	60
Improve my reading and writing and listening skills in French.	0	5	37	18	60
Broaden and deepen my perception and appreciation of French culture.	2	3	33	22	60

Fifty-seven students surveyed (95%) considered that they were fairly well or very well better able to recognize and analyze the most important genres in French literature. Fifty-three students (88%) considered that they were fairly well or very well better able to read beyond the basic plot and learn tools of literary analysis. Fifty-six students (93%) considered that they were fairly well or very well better able identify and define key characteristics of the most important French literary movements. Fifty-seven students (95%) said that they were fairly well or very well better able to place French literature in a meaningful cultural and historical context. Fifty-five students (92%) considered that they were fairly well or very well better able to improve reading and writing and listening skills in French. Fifty-five (55) students (92%) considered that

they were fairly well or very well better able to broaden and deepen their perception and appreciation of French culture.

In the interviews, one of the students emphasized that the website helped her to learn by increasing her interest in the subject matter:

I really did not want to take it [the French 202 class] because I did not like literature very much. But when I started reading, the way the online textbook was set up, it made me understand more, it made me more interested in learning French literature. . . . I took English literature and it was really boring so for me, English literature was really boring. But French literature was really different, it was really cool, and I learned a lot. (S1)

It seems that overall, the French 202 Website helped the students to accomplish the learning outcomes of the course; however, a small percentage of students reported that the website was not necessarily helpful to accomplish the learning outcomes. The evaluator was unable to clarify why.

Did the students feel that the website helped them prepare for course assessment?

Fifty-six (92%) of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the content of the website helped them prepare for tests and exams (see Table 25). It seems that tests and exams are aligned with the content of the course, and the instructional activities help the students prepare for the assessments.

Table 25

Student View of Website Effectiveness: Learning Outcomes Assessment

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The content of the website helped me prepare for tests and exams.	30	26	3	1	1	61

Was the assessment aligned with the course content and learning outcomes of the course? Overall, the assessment is aligned with the course content and learning outcomes of the course, according to the students, though there was some disagreement by a minority of the respondents. Thirty-four students surveyed (57%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that there were questions in tests and exams that were not covered in the website. It is important to mention that 15 students were neutral, and 11 students agreed or strongly agreed; thus, a total of 43% did not necessarily feel that the assessments were aligned with the course content and learning outcomes.

Of course, the website was also used within the traditional face-to-face environment and faculty members had the flexibility to adjust content and assessments to their particular needs. The scope of the evaluation did not permit clarifying this issue. Forty-eight students (80%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that test and exams were not representative of the learning objectives of the website; in other words, the large majority of students felt there is significant alignment. Fifty-two students (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that tests and exams were appropriately placed throughout the website (see Table 26).

Table 26

Student View of Website Effectiveness: Assessment and Content Alignment

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
There were questions in my tests and exams that were not covered in the website.	1	10	15	25	9	60
Test and exams were not representative of the learning objectives of the website.	1	3	8	36	12	60
Test and exams were appropriately placed throughout the website.	11	41	6	2	0	60

It seems that the assessments—with the exception already mentioned—were properly aligned with the website content and with the learning outcomes of the course. During the interviews, one of the students said, “No, I think, they are aligned; I think that a professor writes the exams based on the material of the website, so they are pretty well aligned” (S4).

Did the students feel that they were prepared to start the course? Fifty students surveyed (82%) agreed or strongly agreed that the prerequisite language skills for the course were at the appropriate level (see Table 27). It seems that in spite of the challenging content, most students considered that the prerequisites of the course were appropriate to carry out the website activities and manage the French 202 content. More information is needed to understand why so many students were neutral about this issue.

Table 27

Student View of Website Effectiveness: Prerequisite Language Skills

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
The prerequisite of language skills for the course is at the appropriate level.	13	37	9	2	0	61

In this section the evaluator summarized the collected data and the analysis performed on those data relevant to stakeholders’ criteria and evaluation questions. It seems that the French 202 Website satisfies the stakeholders’ criteria, except for a few elements highlighted above. The evaluator reported data that provide the details to justify conclusions and recommendations presented in the following section.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This evaluation had a usability focus; two aspects of usability were studied, efficiency and effectiveness. The evaluator organized this evaluation around the website's efficiency from faculty and students' perspectives and the website's effectiveness from students' perspective. In general, the French 202 Website appears to fulfill the criteria established for this evaluation; however, there are a few additional observations, summary comments and recommendations explained in this final section.

Website efficiency from faculty's perspective. The French 202 Website was implemented and faculty members used the website in the classroom as an instructional tool to explain, review, highlight or emphasize the French 202 content. They encouraged students to use the website's features including pop-ups, podcasts, videos, illustrations, animations, and mastery checks. The face-to-face class approach allowed faculty members to adjust the website use to their particular needs.

Faculty were not formally trained to use the website; however, they found the website intuitive or self-explanatory, very easy to navigate, and functional. They did not receive formal feedback about their performance; however, because they had used the website during the previous semester they felt even more comfortable using it during the semester of this study. Two of the professors indicated that it might be useful to include grammar as part of the website features.

Website efficiency from students' perspective. This evaluation provides a certain level of assurance that the website ultimately responds to the objectives and criteria previously

defined and that it also satisfies the stakeholders' requirements. The website performed or functioned according to the established criteria. Only minor technical problems were found and they were explained in this report. In particular, improving the instructions for the use of the podcasts is recommended. The objectives and purpose of the website, as indicated by students and faculty members, are clear. Students were able to navigate the website easily and considered the website easy to use. They found the organization and structure of the website appropriate and the interaction with the website and its features was intuitive and self-explanatory without the need of specific training. Students indicated that they had a satisfactory experience using the website, and pointed out that the website is user-friendly and appealing. The content of the website is relevant, accurate, fair, and aligned with the course objectives. To a lesser degree, students indicated that the website helped them interact with other students and faculty.

Website effectiveness from students' perspective. This evaluation did not involve a rigorous use of pre- and post-assessments, documenting that students are able to demonstrate the accomplishment of the learning outcomes because of their use of the website. Instead, the evaluator collected participants' opinions about the effectiveness of the website. This approach was due to the evaluation scope, the difficulty in isolating the website use from other instructional activities that were part of the course, and the lack of additional resources. The evaluator conducted the evaluation individually without the assistance of other personnel.

According to the SME, all the important outcomes related to the website and class goals were addressed. Students agreed that the outcomes were realistic in terms of students' abilities, time available, and facilities. The stakeholders were involved early in the definition of the learning outcomes and their involvement was maintained over time. Students stated that the objectives and learning outcomes are clear and the objectives of each lesson are easy to

understand. Based on the stakeholders' criteria, students have indicated that the website is helping them achieve the learning outcomes of the course.

The evaluator acknowledges that several factors may influence the achievement of the learning outcomes beyond the website use, such as students' liking the subject matter or professor, personal circumstances, natural skills, previous knowledge, and student dedication.

From the questionnaire results, the evaluator concludes that after using the French 202 Website, students felt they were better able to recognize and analyze the most important genres in French literature; to read beyond the basic plot and learn tools of literary analysis; to identify and define key characteristics of the most important French literary movements; to place French literature in a meaningful cultural and historical context; and to improve their reading, writing, and listening skills in French and broaden and deepen their perception and appreciation of French culture.

From the interviews, the evaluator infers that the assessment plan was developed parallel to the learning outcomes definition and it has been implemented; however, faculty members had the flexibility to adjust quizzes and other assessments to their particular needs. Assessments like quizzes and exams were managed outside the website environment by using Blackboard for quizzes, for example. It seems that the test items are aligned with the content and course objectives.

Recommendations

Overall, the website should continue to be offered and improved, according to feedback from the stakeholders involved in this study. A few formative suggestions for improving it in future iterations include the following:

- A printable version of the text might help students to highlight and make annotations instead of printing each page one by one. The course content could be available in a word-processor or pdf format to facilitate its printing.
- Based on feedback from faculty, it is recommended that a grammar section be included in the website.
- One of the students interviewed mentioned that after several hours of reading the website, their eyes got very tired. Conducting another usability study specifically regarding the fonts and text organization might inform future projects on ways to address this issue.
- There is a need to improve the instructions about managing the podcast. Apparently, students did not find those instructions very useful and this task was not very intuitive.

In addition to these formative suggestions, the evaluator recommends that an ongoing evaluation process be built into the website development plans so it can be continually improved.

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Appendix A: Faculty Interview Protocol

The following questions will provide a general sense of the faculty's experience using the French 202 Website:

Tell me about your experience using the French 202 Website. How did you use the website?

How was this experience—using a website—compared to the experience of a traditional use of a text-book?

What did you like or dislike about the French 202 Website?

How easy or difficult was it for you to use the French 202 Website? Why?

Did you experience any technical problems using the website?

What do you think about the content of the website? Is it interesting, relevant?

What do you think about the instructional activities, for example assignments, quizzes, master checkups, videos, and podcasts provided by the website?

From your perspective, did the website help the students in their preparation for tests and exams and to achieve the course objectives?

What would you recommend to change or improve in the website?

Appendix B: Student Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the French 202 Website-course. Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty. You can also discontinue your participation at any time during the survey. Confidentiality will be maintained and no academic grade or student performance will be impacted by your participation. Please feel free to provide any input – positive or negative. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. Thank you!

1. How easy was it for you to launch the French 202 Website-course?
 Not easy at all Not Too Easy Fairly Easy Very Easy
2. How easy was it for you to navigate through the French 202 Website-course?
 Not easy at all Not Too Easy Fairly Easy Very Easy
3. How easy was it for you to follow the sequencing of the French 202 Website-course?
 Not easy at all Not Too Easy Fairly Easy Very Easy
4. How easy was it for you to complete the Mastery check activity for every lesson?
 Not easy at all Not Too Easy Fairly Easy Very Easy
5. Did you watch the video clips available in the website-course outside of class?
 Not easy at all Not Too Easy Fairly Easy Very Easy
6. How easy it was for you to watch the video clips available in the website-course outside of class?
 Not easy at all Not Too Easy Fairly Easy Very Easy
7. How easy was it for you to view the Antigone Video Clips?
 Not easy at all Not Too Easy Fairly Easy Very Easy
8. Did you try to download MP3 files for playback on portable media players or personal computers?
 Yes No If “Yes” then go to question 9 if “No” then go to question 10.
9. How easy was it for you to download MP3 files for playback on portable media players or personal computers?
 Not easy at all Not Too Easy Fairly Easy Very Easy
10. The website-course is well organized and integrated
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. The objectives of each lesson are stated clearly and easy to understand
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
12. The content of the website-course is relevant to the learning objectives of the course
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
13. The content of the website-course is interesting
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
14. The prerequisite of language skills for the course is at the appropriate level
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
15. The content of the website-course has been distributed evenly and fairly during the semester
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
16. The content of the website-course is presented using media and technology that makes the course appealing to me
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
17. The content of the website-course helps me to prepare for tests and exams
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
18. The length of the website-course is too short
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
19. The menus of the website-course are easy to follow
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
20. The writing assignments are clear and meaningful to my learning experience
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
21. The instructions to download podcasting files to be used in your IPOD or MP3 player are clear and complete
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
22. The audio quality of the Pod casts are clear
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
23. The pop-ups were helpful to expand my understanding of the concepts
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
24. The illustrations help in making the website visually appealing
 Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
25. The illustrations help in expanding my understanding of the website-course content

- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
26. The mastery checks help me to prepare for the course quizzes and exams
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
27. Instant feedback throughout the lesson, and not just when we were graded, helps me to prepare for the course quizzes and exams.
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
28. I felt frustrated using the website-course
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
29. I found the website-course user-friendly
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
30. I found the website-course interesting
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
31. Because of the website-course I will recommend this course to other students
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
32. The website-course supported my interaction with other students and with the teacher
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
33. After using the French 202 Website, I am better able to: Recognize and analyze the most important genres in French literature
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
34. Read beyond the basic plot and learn tools of literary analysis
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree
35. Identify and define key characteristics of the most important French literary movements
- Not well at all Not too well Fairly well Very well
36. Place literature in a meaningful cultural and historical context
- Not well at all Not too well Fairly well Very well
37. Improve my reading and writing and listening skills in French
- Not well at all Not too well Fairly well Very well
38. Broaden and deepen my perception and appreciation of French culture
- Not well at all Not too well Fairly well Very well
39. There were questions in my tests and exams that were not covered in the website-course
- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

40. Test and exams were not representative of the learning objectives of the website-course

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

41. Test and exams were appropriately placed throughout the website-course

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

42. How has the website-course contributed to reach the learning objectives of the course?

43. Please provide feedback of the website course features that have made it usable, effective, or understandable:

44. Please provide suggestions for the improvement of the website-course:

45. Would you approve to be contacted for a 15-minute interview about the website-course? (If the answer is yes, please write your e-mail address)

Appendix C: Student Interview Protocol

The following questions will provide a general sense of the participant's experience using the French 202 Website:

Tell me about your experience using the French 202 Website.

How was this experience—using a website—compared to the experience of a traditional use of a textbook?

What did you like or dislike about the French 202 Website?

How easy or difficult was it for you to use the French 202 Website? Why?

Did you experience any technical problems using the website?

What do you think about the content of the website? Was it interesting, relevant?

What do you think about the instructional activities, for example assignments, quizzes, master checkups, videos, and podcast provided by the website?

Did the website help you to prepare for tests and exams and to achieve the course objectives?

What would you recommend to change or improve in the website?