Memorandum

# Usability Evaluation Report Memo

TO: Dr. Whittemore

FROM: Huan Liu and Ellie Morton

DATE: 8 April 2025

SUBJECT: Usability Test for Language Learning Website

We updated the Prototype last week, and this week, we are working on the usability test for our language learning website. Our goal for this test is to get feedback from potential users about the accessibility and usability of the website. **To get different perspectives, this test will include three participants one is an ESL tutor and the other two are language learners,** respectively. We will elaborate on **the participants’ background information, the methods and criteria, the procedures, the scenarios and interview questions,** and **the findings** in this memo. Our report will conclude with the recommendations (impact of the findings) and the next steps.

## Methods & Criteria (objectives)

We have created a with tasks for our participants to follow. Because our site is designed for various people, the scenarios change to accommodate learners and teachers. Participants will be instructed to follow the criteria given to them and report back any difficulties or accessibility issues found to help make the necessary changes to enhance user experience.

## Test procedure

We used a hybrid test method, such as testing the website in person or via Zoom meeting. Each meeting lasted about 40 minutes to one hour. The test procedure is listed below:

1. Upon verbally agreeing to take part in the test, we explain the test goals and the steps to the participants; we want them to test the **usability, functionality, accessibility,** etc. For example, we go through the tasks with them.
2. After the instructions, we asked them if they have and answered their questions.
3. The tester then began to brow the website and tell us the overall impression.
4. The participants tested the website. During the process, we provided some explanations to navigate them. In addition, we recorded the time and took notes.
5. At the end of the test, we asked them to reflect on the organization, and usability, and rate the website. Also, we asked for critiques and suggestions.

### Task scenarios and evaluation

Using the following questions, participants will navigate through Teaching and Learning to perform a usability test:

1. When are classes offered at Trinity Lutheran Church?
2. Where can you locate strategies for Language Learning?
3. Can you find the contact information and location address for Trinity Lutheran Church?
4. Can you locate the Common Questions lesson plan PDF?
5. Are you able to properly read all, or most, of the information available on the website? What is your visual experience using the website (think color and font size)?
6. What is Trinity Lutheran Church’s Mission Statement?
7. Where can you find Chinese lessons for beginners?

After participants complete the usability test, they will be asked to offer feedback; what went well during their experience? What would make their experience more enjoyable? This information will be used to improve our site and its functionality for users coming to learn or hoping to teach.

## Participants Introduction

Participant 1: ESL tutor: 22-year-old, female, graduate student, looking for materials to teach her ESL class and ways to stay connected with the learners.

Participant 2: Language learner:unknown age, male, an undergraduate student majoring in apparel design; a Chinese ESL student who wants to learn advanced English.

Participant 3: Language learner: 24-year-old, male, a graduate student majoring in computer science; a native English speaker and wants to learn Chinese.

#### Participant 1 ESL Tutor

Scenario 1: English is your first language, and you would like to Teach English as a Second Language (ESL) to interested learners in your free time and learn Chinese as a second language. You are local to the city of Auburn and have discovered Trinity Lutheran Church teaches ESL courses to learners. You navigate to the Teaching and Learning website to find: When and where classes are offered, how to contact Trinity Lutheran Church about volunteering, Trinity Lutheran Church’s mission statement, lesson plans for future classes, specifically a “Common Questions” lesson plan, and a beginner's lesson for learning Chinese.

Participant 1:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **URL of test site or name of app: Teaching and Learning Languages**  **Date: 4/6/2025** | | |
| **Tasks** | **Time on Task** | **Observations/Comments/Notes** |
| When are classes offered in person at Trinity Lutheran Church? | <1 minute | Participants immediately began scrolling before looking at drop down menus |
| Where can you locate strategies for language learning? | ~2 minutes | Participant looked through the homepage before browsing the top menu and looked through other subpages until she found the language learning strategies page |
| Can you find contact the information and location address for Trinity Lutheran Church? | <1 minute | As stated above, the participant made herself most familiar with the homepage, so she knew the address of the church was located at the footer of the homepage |
| Can you locate the Common Questions lesson plan PDF? | ~2 minutes | Participant found the lesson plan tab, clicked, and found the PDF folder compiling a list of all the lesson plans with their topic stated. (She mentioned that she liked this setup and found it helpful that they download as PDFs for her and others to easily access) |
| Are you able to properly read all, or most, of the information available on the website? What is your visual experience using the website (think color and font size)? | No time | Participant liked the set up and found no difficulties reading anything on the site.  \*It should be noted that English is her first language and she is not color blind\* |
| What is Trinity Lutheran Church’s Mission Statement? | ~3 minutes | This tab seemed more hidden for this participant, but it only takes one click when it is found. |
| Where can you find Chinese lessons for beginners? | <1 minute | Participant noted “Oh, that was easy to find” when looking for Chinese Lessons |

#### Participant 2 and 3 Language Learners

Scenario 2: You are interested in Learning English as a Second Language and are looking for a group and materials to help you practice. You are local to the Auburn City area and have found a program that operates at Trinity Lutheran Church. You navigate to their website and would like to find out when classes are offered, where Trinity Lutheran Church is located, Trinity Lutheran Church’s mission statement, and strategies for language learning in your free time.

Participant 2:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **URL of test site or name of app: Teaching and Learning Languages**  **Date: 04/06/2024** | | |
| **Tasks** | **Time on Task** | **Observations/Comments/Notes** |
| When are classes offered in person at Trinity Lutheran Church? | About 1 min | It takes a while for the participant to find the in-person class because we have a navigation button named “Classes offered.” It can confuse audiences. The participant’s first language is not English, which is another reason that causes a longer time. We might think of offering an alternative language option for clients. We also noticed that the blank space is wide so audiences may need more time to scroll down to find the schedule. |
| Where can you locate strategies for language learning? | About 40 s | The participant used the search bar to locate the strategies, which shortened the time to complete the task. |
| Can you find contact information and location address for Trinity Lutheran Church? | About 30 s | The participant can easily find it at the bottom of the website. |
| Can you locate the Common Questions lesson plan PDF? | About 1 min | This takes longer time because he needs to sign in to a Google or Facebook account to be able to access the lesson plans. Thus, we will work on removing this requirement. |
| Where can you find Chinese lessons for beginners? | About 30 seconds | The participant can easily find it because he is sensitive to the word “Chinese” |
| What is Trinity Lutheran Church’s Mission Statement? | About 10 seconds | He can find it easily but this button is listed in the “more” button that includes other options; too many options under the button can be overwhelming for audiences. |
| Are the colors and font sizes used overwhelming? Are you able to properly read all (or most) of the information available on the website? | No time | The participant likes the colors and overall design. However, he feels some font sizes are small. In addition, he suggested designing some friendly and welcoming words on a language-learning website to encourage learners. |

Scenario 3:

You are interested in Learning Chinese as a Second Language and are looking for in-person or online resources and materials to help you get started. You are local to the Auburn City area and have found a language learning website that is free for English speakers to learn different levels of Chinese in your city. You navigate to their website and notice there is an ESL program at Trinity Lutheran Church. You would like to find out when classes are offered on the website, where Trinity Lutheran Church is located, Trinity Lutheran Church’s mission statement, what activities you can join to meet ESL at Auburn, and strategies for language learning in your free time.

Participant 3:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **URL of test site or name of app: Teaching and Learning**  **Date: 04/06/2024** | | |
| **Tasks** | **Time on Task** | **Observations/Comments/Notes** |
| When are classes offered in person at Trinity Lutheran Church? | About 40 s | The participant was tested on an iPhone. It takes him a while to find the class offered because he also assumed the information should be located in the “classes-offered” button, but it is just in the middle of the Home page. |
| Where can you locate strategies for language learning? | About 10 s | It was easy for him to find the strategy with the navigation bar. He mentioned that he liked this section. |
| Can you find contact information and location address for Trinity Lutheran Church? | About 10 s | The participant clicked the navigation button to find the contact information and location, but it jumped to a blank space because of the design issue. We will need to adjust the padding and margins for this section. |
| Can you locate the Common Questions lesson plan PDF? | About 10 s | The participant could find the right place, but he also needed to sign in to an account to access the materials. |
| Where can you find Chinese lessons for beginners? | About 10 s | It was easy for him to find this information with the navigation buttons. |
| What is Trinity Lutheran Church’s Mission Statement? | About 5 s | He found it very quickly because he remembered it was on the navigation bar. |
| Are the colors and font sizes used overwhelming? Are you able to properly read all (or most) of the information available on the website? | No time record | The participant found the colors and font sizes are proper on an iPhone. However, he realized that it was not functional when he turned the phone from vertical to horizontal. |

## Findings/recommendations & Next steps

### Recommendations

After reviewing where our participants struggled the most when looking for specific information, we have decided to note the changes that affected user difficulty the most and brainstorm what steps we should take to improve our website's function. Some of these are simple fixes such as font and fixing padding while others might take a bit more time to find and resolve the issue. Below are the comments or recommendations we received from users:

* We would also like to try and find a way to offer a translation feature to help all learners and instructors to help language barriers.
* Adjust the Homepage to highlight important information and narrow down the padding to make the page more concise as a way to save space.
* Adjust so that when they access the lesson plan they have to sign in, we do not want them to sign in. This will have to be changed so that users do not become discouraged or get stuck on a sign-in page.
* When viewing “Major Courses” users are unable to view the course information, this will need to be updated.
* Users also requested for larger fonts to help better see information and to not let information become ignored.
* When viewing a homepage, the navigation bar varies and will need to be adjusted for other devices. The footer also jumps to a blank page when looking for contact information and location; this will need to be adjusted to help mobile users.
* Lesson plans again are not accessible for the mobile devices; however, the user was able to revisit the homepage.
* When the phone was switched from vertical to horizonal, the information was in all of the wrong spots and became inaccessible.

### Next steps

We will adjust the navigation bar to offer more options so that our clients and users can better locate specific pages or information on our site. We also would like to include a translation option for users whose first language may not be English. This will allow our website to be more inclusive to all users and not discourage others who may want to learn or need to find information about meeting locations for ESL classes.

Some buttons need to be fixed, such as the lesson plan “Sign In” function, which blocks users from viewing information and restricts them from going back to the home page. We will also need to fix the “Major Courses” page and button functions so that the information is accessible and updated.

Lastly, we will need to edit font sizes so it becomes easier to view on all devices and not as easily ignored by users because of its smaller font. This will then lead us to adjust how our website is viewed, whether that be via Laptop, iPhone, or Desktop so that all users have the same experience and can access all our website offers.

## Conclusion

As stated above, we invited and recruited three participants to test the usability, accessibility, and functionality of our language learning website. We planned to have a hybrid meeting to test the website, but due to the severe weather, we had to change to online tests. With diverse backgrounds, we had the opportunity to get well-rounded feedback and analysis from all three participants. We learned a valuable lesson about the importance of considering users’ experience in developing a website. Additionally, we found some layouts and some buttons will need to be modified. Our next steps are to resolve the comments from these tests and complete the rest of the content addition. We also look forward to hearing your thoughts about our usability test method, procedures, and test results.

Best regards,

Ellie Morton and Huan Liu