

TEAM ESL

HCDE 318

P7: Experience Evaluation Plan & Simple Evaluation

Part I: Basic Evaluation Plan

Platform Scenario:

ESL International Student: You are an ESL international student who wants to more effectively find help in revising, editing, and writing in formal/academic English. You want an alternative resource to traditional peer tutoring resources that is more efficient and individualized so that you can get the help you need in a more efficient way.

Peer Helper: You are signed up as a peer helper and have a lot of requests for tutoring so you want to be able to sort through them in order to most effectively help ESL international students write, edit, and revise formal writing.

Three Tasks:

Task 1: *ESL student browses through Peer Helpers profiles and sends a request*

For this task, we will have the ESL students search for Peer Helpers by using the filtering function or by search. We will then ask them to look through different peer helper's profiles until they find the peer helper that they think would best serve their needs. They would then be asked to submit a request and fill out the information that is needed. The task is considered complete once the participants successfully submit a request to Peer Helpers and get the confirmation pop up.

Task 2: *ESL student and peer helper online meeting to edit essay.*

For this task, we will ask the ESL students to go on the home page and look for the notifications from peer helpers. The users then are asked to go to direct messages with the peer helper who they scheduled an online meeting with. Then, we asked them to start a video chat and start editing the essay that was submitted. To complete this task the participants have to successfully be on the Google Docs page with a pop-up video chat of the Peer Helper.

Task 3: *Peer helper accepting and rejecting student's request.*

For this task, we asked the peer helper participants to look for notifications for new student requests. We then asked the users to look through pending requests and students profiles so they can decide to accept or reject based on their availability. The task is complete ones they verbally say they are done accepting and rejecting all pending requests.

Participants Profiles

ESL Student: Our main target users are University of Washington international students who speak English as their second language who need assistance in formal English writing. Because the peer tutoring services currently offered through UW require excess time and effort, our users seek to find a more efficient system to receive help editing and writing in formal English.

Peer Helper: Although our target user group is undergraduate international students who speak English as their second language, we also ran usability tests on potential peer helpers to insure that they would be able to efficiently help students edit essays and English writing assignments. This demographic consists of domestic undergraduate students at UW with varying specialties.

Our Four Participants

Participant 1: Our first participant is a freshman at the University of Washington whose intended major is informatics. She is an international student from China and her first language is Mandarin. This is her first time studying in the U.S. and she has no prior experience using a peer tutoring system to help her with formal English writing.

Participant 2: Our second participant is a freshman at the University of Washington and is an intended pre-science major. She is an international student from China whose first language is Mandarin. She has visited the Odegaard undergraduate writing center a few times, but remarked that the writing center is often very busy.

Participant 3: Our third participant is a junior at the University of Washington majoring in Psychology. She was born in the United States and her first language is English. She likes reading through essays and helping others with their English writings.

Participant 4: Our fourth participant is a junior at the University of Washington majoring in biology. He is an international student from Korea whose first language is Korean. He has been to CLUE writing center a few times but does not find it to be that helpful because he always has to wait in line.

Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

Purpose: The purpose of this evaluation is to test the usability of our platform's paper prototype. With the aim of helping undergraduate international students overcome and alleviate the pressures of challenges associated with formal English writing, our project will help international students find peer helpers to edit essays with more efficiency than traditional in-person tutoring services. By observing and collecting feedback from both potential ESL users and peer helpers, we hope to uncover some of the shortcomings of our platform as well as features and aspects that we can add or

improve upon in order to most effectively meet the needs of Undergraduate International ESL students.

Method: We did our evaluations with four different participants. Three of our participants assumed the role of ESL international students who seek peer helpers help in formal English writing. The other participant assumed the role of the peer helper who gets the requests from the ESL students. Each team member had a role during the evaluations. We had a facilitator who walked through the tasks with each participant and asked the pre and post questions. In addition, we had a system operator who changed the screens based on the participant's interactions with the paper prototype. We also had a note taker who recorded each participant's answers and their interactions with the prototype. Lastly, one team member made sure to take pictures of participants going through the system for our own reference. Our participant evaluations were conducted in 3 parts:

1. Pre-Observation Interview:

We asked the following questions before beginning the testing in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of our user demographic. The interview consisted of the following questions:

- a. What is your major?
- b. What year are you?
- c. Are you an international student?
- d. What is your first language?
- e. Have you ever used a tutoring system to help with your English writing proficiency? CLUE? Odegaard Writing Center?

2. Task Completion and Observations:

In this phase of the usability test each participant completed all three tasks assuming various roles (ESL student or peer tutor). We wanted to provide as little guidance and instruction as possible so that we could better analyze our platform's intuitiveness, missing features, and places of confusion.

3. Post-Observation Interview:

This phase of the usability test gave the participants an opportunity to voice their opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of our platform. The interview consisted of the following questions:

- a. How do you see yourself using this platform (As a peer helper or as a student seeking help)?
- b. What would keep you from using this platform?
- c. What were some things about the platform that were confusing to you?
- d. What were some things that you liked about the platform?
- e. Are there any additional features that you would like to see in the platform?

Part II: Simple Evaluation

Finding 1: Picking time and date for live session is confusing. Multiple users mentioned that the calendar on the request page is a little bit confusing and that there were not sure how to schedule meetings if times available are not shown. They mentioned that the pop up screen of times after selecting a day might not be as intuitive since they did not know that it was coming right after selecting a date. Also because there was no key that corresponded to the calendar popup it was difficult to discern which dates were available and which dates were already booked.

Suggestion 1: We plan on changing the structure of the calendar to make it more intuitive by having dates on the top of the page and the times on the left side. The peer helper would be able to block out their availability every week on the calendar so the ESL student is able to mark which day and time they would like to schedule a meeting. The other sessions that were scheduled with other students will also be blocked out on the calendar. We were also thinking of adding an “add to calendar” feature once the request is accepted by the peer helper.

Finding 2: Two of our participants mentioned that there was not enough confirmation after actions are completed, “...after sometime, the user clicks on ‘Confirm Request’ button. The user has completed the task and the Request pop-up goes away. User ask ‘did it confirm?’” (ie requesting a tutor, or confirming a pending student request). Thus, they sometimes were not aware if they completed their task or not, because there was no pop-up, notification, or reaction to their interaction with the interface.

Suggestion 2: In order to address this issue we think that a pop-up screen would be helpful after a user submits, cancels, reschedules, accepts, or declines a request or meeting. Something that would also work to address this finding would be to have a

separate page/tab at the top of our platform that shows users past, pending, and coming requests and meetings. This tab could be called “my sessions”.

Finding 3: Currently the system provides no way to cancel or reschedule a request or a meeting from the student’s side or the Peer Helper’s side. During a usability test a participant miss clicked on a time for the meeting and submitted the request. There was no way available for the participant to change the time after the request was sent.

Suggestion 3: To address this problem our new design will add a cancel/ reschedule functions to each request on the “My Sessions” page for both ESL student and Peer Helper perspectives. Therefore, both the student and Peer Helper can cancel or reschedule a request on their own terms.

Finding 4: There is no easy way to see your past, pending and upcoming requests and sessions from home page. One of our users mentioned that he does not care about notifications piling and he would have never checked the notifications to check pending requests. He said that he wishes there was another page for it that he would just constantly check to make sure he does not have any pending requests.

Suggestion 4: We will address this issue by adding a tab on top called “My Sessions” that will include past, upcoming, and pending requests for tutors to help them easily find it. Some people do not notice or care about notifications piling up and it would be helpful to have a page that displayed all of this information in one place.

Finding 5: Peer helper’s can only see the content of the student’s essay, the needed essay type, and some very basic information.. But in order to give ESL students more useful suggestions and edits, peer helpers may need more specific requirements of essays. So in addition to uploading their essay, students should also be able to upload

the prompt or rubric of their essay, so that the peer helper can know exactly what students need.

Suggestion 5: To give the Peer Helper more context about the essay, along with the standard essay uploader, we will add a “Prompt/ rubric” file uploaded with “*” to require the student user upload the prompt/ rubric. Therefore, the Peer Helper will know exactly what the student needs to have in their essay and can better help them.

Finding 6: For users to be able to do a live session via Google Docs our platform sent a Google Docs shared link through its built-in messaging system. However, this link was confusing to users as it got lost within the stream of message communication between the user and the tutor. Nor, did the message contain any wording that stated it was a Google Docs link to the shared essay between the student and Peer Helper.

Suggestion 6: To address this confusion we are placing a fixed link at the bottom of the built-in messaging next to the video call icon. This link would be in the form of a button that would say “click to go to shared Google Docs”, this way our users would be easily able to navigate to the shared Google Docs without scrolling to the top of their messages every time.

Strengths: Our participants felt that our overall platform idea was really useful, and that they would all benefit from using our platform. Our participants also noted that the feature of being able to do a live edit session via google docs and that being able to do this would save them a lot of time and streamline the essay review process. Our user participants also mentioned that the filtering system we created was very useful because they were able to that way find a peer helper that suited their needs without looking through all the peer helper’s profiles. Another thing that our participants found

helpful was our platform's reviews and ratings system and that this really helped them to decide on what tutor to request a session from.