***Leap Frog Toys***

 **“Pooh Gets Stuck” Activities**

**Usability Evaluation Plan**

*Lynn Rosener*

***Usability Evaluations Disclaimer***

A common misunderstanding about what can be obtained from a usability evaluation is that it will validate specific features or provide some insight into the future success of the product. Unfortunately, a usability evaluation is not the type of activity which can be used to confirm that any particular feature or function is working adequately. Rather, this process of bringing in representative users to perform representative tasks can only be used to identify major problems in the product’s user interface.

This distinction is subtle, but important to understand. This type of evaluation cannot be used to predict anything about how well the product is working or will work ... or how well users will be able to perform a particular task. Rather, it can only help you locate things that need to be fixed. Although you may be able to gleam from your observations that the user interface seems to be working fine in certain areas, since you are using such a small number of people, the only thing you can state definitively, or feel comfortable with, is that you have located major obstacles to users for the tasks you asked them to perform. (This assumes, of course, that you designed and conducted the evaluation properly.)

***Evaluation of “Pooh Gets Stuck” Activities***

This usability evaluation is being conducted to determine whether users, ages 5-6, can understand the objectives of and play four of the activities under development for the book “Pooh Gets Stuck”. This evaluation will also provide useful information about specific problems users may encounter with these activities.

This evaluation will not provide answers as to whether or not these activities will contribute to the success of the Leap Pad in the marketplace.

Products and Components Used in the Evaluation

The four activities, “Poohnerisms”, Pass the Honey”, “How Much Honey”, and “Mind Readers” will be evaluated. They will be evaluated using paper representations of the activity only. I will mock up the “Pooh Gets Stuck” book. The audio portions of the product (introduction, activity components, and narrator and character responses) will be spoken by the evaluation administrator.

Usability Objectives

1. Identify whether or not the children can develop a working conceptual model for each of the activities, i.e., do the children understand what the point of the activity is.

Measurement Strategy: Observation of children’s performances while playing the activities. Qualitative analysis of children’s behavior patterns. Qualitative analysis of post-evaluation interview.

2. Obtain feedback on specific problems children have while playing the activities. Specifically, problems with the instructions, problems with the task content, problems performing the task, and problems with the feedback.

Measurement Strategy: Observation of children’s performance while playing the activities. Qualitative analysis of children’s behavior patterns. Qualitative analysis of post-evaluation interview.

3. Identify unexpected, critical usability issues which may affect, both adversely and favorably; preference, ease of learning, and performance.

Measurement Strategy: Observation of children’s performance while playing the activities. Qualitative analysis of children’s behavior patterns. Qualitative analysis of post-evaluation interview.

4. Provide specific feedback to XXX. Recommend design alternatives.

Measurement Strategy: Informal discussions with XXX (and other team members if she determines appropriate) as soon as evaluation is complete. Written document containing evaluation results and recommendations.

Evaluation Details

**Evaluation Design.** The evaluation design is a qualitative, observational study.

**Participants.** Six children will be used. An attempt will be made to select three five- and three six-year-olds. In addition, an attempt will be made to balance the group by gender as well.

**Procedures.** Each session will last about one hour in length (including a brief orientation and post-evaluation interview). All children will spend about 10 minutes playing each of the four activities.

*Orientation Activities:* Children will be welcomed (activities include verification of qualifications, e.g., age, brief reading experience, and signing of the non-disclosure agreement by the parent) and given a brief orientation to the evaluation session (an explanation of what they will be doing, and what the administrator will be doing).

*Evaluation Session Activities:* All children will be presented with the book and told that they can play on the pages which have been specially marked at the bottom. They will be told that they can begin playing by touching that same mark at the bottom of the page. Once 55 minutes has elapsed, a post-evaluation interview will be conducted and then the child will be thanked for participating.

**Evaluation Schedule**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date**  | **Milestone Activity** |
| **Mar. 8** | Evaluation plan delivered |
| **Mar. 9** | Evaluation plan accepted. Pre-evaluation activities are completed: and data collection preparation completed. Participant recruitment begins. |
| **Mar. 10** | Data collection begins. |
| **Mar. 13** | Data collection completed. |
| **Mar. 14** | Results analyzed. Informal discussion with XXX. |
| **Mar. 16** | Final report delivered |

**Dependencies**

1. Get authorization to proceed from XXX.
2. Obtain two books from XXX and any other materials which may facilitate the creation of evaluation materials.
3. Successful pilot.
4. Availability of children.