Evaluation Report for Shakespeare 101: *Romeo and Juliet* – A Critical Reading

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Abstract

This is an evaluation report of the learning artifact that I designed for IDT 8030. It is a three-module course on Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. Based on the recommendations for formative assessment by Dick and Carey (2015), the evaluation plan comprises of a one-to-one evaluation by an SME and IT expert, and small-group evaluation and focus group discussions with a test group of seven learners. The evaluation included analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaires provided to the SME, IT expert and learners. This was supplemented by the qualitative data analysis from the focus group discussions. This paper goes over the findings for the suitability of the learning artifact for the asynchronous learning environment, effectiveness of content delivery, usability, and the affective impact artifact on the target learners (motivation, interest, engagement, immersion). This paper also includes the changes I will make to the artifact based on these findings.

Background

"Shakes-phobia" is real. This term may have been coined in jest by T.A Conroy (2003) in *Presenting Shakespeare's Life and Times for Young People: An Outline Using Midsummer Night's Dream and Susan Cooper's King of Shadows*, but I have seen it in students whenever I mention Shakespeare in class. This dislike, phobia or whatever you may call it stems from the disconnect they experience with his works. The main reason for this perceived disconnect, this inability to find relevance, is his language, which students find difficult to understand. This underlines the students' lack of motivation and disinterest in Shakespeare (Lewellen, 2019). Moreover, the way Shakespeare is traditionally taught in schools does not help in eliciting interest in students. Conroy (2003) lists four main reasons as to why the traditional methods of teaching Shakespeare is not a hit with students. The first is that teachers tend to focus primarily on the plays as textual works, and limit interactions to the printed page, something that I have been guilty of as well till I changed up the instructional strategy to allow for better learner engagement. The second reason is the choice of plays, where it is the tragedies that find their way into the curriculum more than the comedies. Then, of course, comes the language, the prose and verse mix that Shakespeare uses so skillfully is difficult even for many adults, let alone teenagers. The fourth reason is that students are given little to no information about the cultural and literary conventions of the times which adds to their lack of understanding and overall disinterest. Lewellen (2019) adds another point, that of the standard run of the mill assessments that in no way measure how much students have grappled with the language, their comprehension of plot, theme, and characters, and the connections they made with the characters.

This is one of the reasons why I decided to design a learning artifact on Shakespeare for IDT 8030. I wanted to design and create content that would be interesting, relevant, and current that would motivate students to read and most importantly, understand and enjoy Shakespeare. The other reason is that I was intrigued by the idea of designing an asynchronous course for Shakespeare since my experience has only been with teaching Shakespeare in a traditional classroom setting. With the pandemic, remote and asynchronous learning became the need of the hour, and this also served as an impetus for the learning artifact. As I researched and did a needs analysis for the course, I realized two things need to be kept in mind while designing an asynchronous course. One is that sustaining student engagement and motivation becomes even more important and perhaps more difficult in an online learning environment, where the role of the instructor becomes that of a facilitator. It is even possible that the instructor may be absent for the delivery of instruction. In that case, it becomes crucial that the instructional methods, materials, media, resources, assessments, etc. are all complete and self-contained. Then there are other logistical challenges of designing in an asynchronous environment like lack of pedagogical support, prior IT, instructional design (Giese, 2021). The second thing is to be considered is how to effectively use the more than abundant digital resources available. There are YouTube videos, web-educational materials, mobile apps, Shakespeare-themed video games and so much more to choose from, that it is easy to get carried away. Casey (2019) warns us about using digital resources wisely, considering their feasibility for the learning environment. Giese (2019) also stresses the need for “less is more” (p.161) while referring to limiting digital resources and assignments in an asynchronous environment. This will help reduce cognitive load and result in better student engagement and performance.

Keller's ARCS

My main goal in designing this artifact was to address the challenge that most teachers face while teaching Shakespeare, of keeping the students motivated and engaged and ensuring that their learning experience is a meaningful one. Also, sustaining student engagement and motivation is even more difficult in an asynchronous environment. I centered the design structure of this artifact on Keller's ARCS instructional model that focuses on motivation. The ARCS model has four components, Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction.

1. Attention refers to the importance of capturing and holding the learners' attention and interest.
2. Relevance refers to the usefulness of the learning content so that the learners can perceive value in the learning experience.
3. Confidence focuses on heightening learners self-efficacy and success expectation which is correlated to learner motivation.
4. Satisfaction refers to the need for learner satisfaction during the learning process.

These four components/categories represent the set of conditions that are crucial for learner motivation.

Rather than addressing each of these categories/components separately and explain how I incorporated them in the artifact, it will be easier to break it down module-wise to demonstrate how the structure and content are designed around multiple ARCS strategies. Shakespeare makes a lot of students anxious, and I wanted the introductory parts of the course and each of the modules to be encouraging. The Home page has a Welcome announcement which welcomes the students

to the course and also directs students what to do next. The syllabus page has the course information- topic, duration, course structure, expectations, assessments, and outcomes. The Home page is designed around the Confidence and Relevance strategies, ensuring that students are familiar with the course objectives and expectations, there are clear directions on how to navigate the course, which instils confidence that they will be able to complete the course successfully. I also used Attention and Confidence in the welcome video which is animated and will hook the learners' attention, and it also reassures them that they can always come to the instructor in case of difficulties. Similarly, I used Attention and Relevance in the ice-breaker activity. This activity begins with a "did you know" hook that incorporates a fact that points to the relevance of Shakespeare in the current times too. The modules have a similar structure overall with a Module Overview page (Confidence and Relevance) which lists module outcomes, activities, and expectations clearly and the lessons in a logical order.

The choice of materials from YouTube videos, newspaper and journal articles to the media lessons have been designed around multiple ARCS strategies. To give a few examples, I used Attention and Relevance in the podcasts in Module 1 and 2, which introduce certain key concepts with either a hook (Module 1) or an interesting fun fact (Module 3). This will ensure student engagement and interest in the lessons. The lessons also become relevant since they make connections with the current times, emphasizing the timelessness of Shakespearean themes. The video and screencast lessons in all three modules use the Confidence and Satisfaction strategies, where they are not just about giving students necessary information, but also demonstrate techniques and strategies through embedded activities that will aid students in completing assignments. This instils confidence in students that they will be able to complete the assignments

and gives them a sense of achievement and satisfaction when they do so. Module 3 is especially designed on the Relevance strategy because it examines the relevance of the play today, why the play continues to spawn adaptations across mediums. The readings and media used in the module are geared towards encouraging students to make connections between the play and the current times.

I based the assessments (quizzes, discussion boards, the Critical Analysis paper) on Confidence and Satisfaction. Some of them allow the students to choose their topics which gives them a sense of autonomy over their learning process and performance. A very good example of this is the final project which is a culmination of the course and provides the learners with a unique and creative way to demonstrate what they have learned.

Evaluation Methodology

The main goal of the evaluation is to evaluate the affective impact of the learning artifact on the target learners. Tying in with the ARCS model, I wanted to assess whether the artifact engaged learner interest and motivated them to remain invested in the learning experience, if they found the lessons relevant and valuable. I also wanted to assess the suitability of the artifact to the asynchronous learning environment. I used Dick and Carey's (2015) formative evaluation design to assess the effectiveness and feasibility of the artifact. Formative evaluation is "the collection of data information during the development of instruction that can be used to improve the effectiveness of the instruction (Dick and Carey, 2015, p.283). I used one-to-one and small-group evaluations and supplemented these with a focus group discussion. According to Kreuger, 1994, "a focus group is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (p.6). It is a good resource for collecting

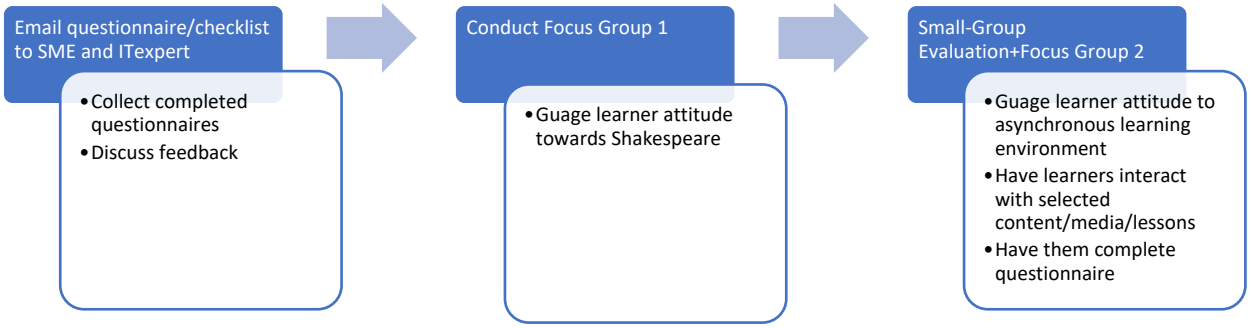
qualitative data especially from a small group of participants. The one-to-one evaluations were done with the SME and the IT expert, whereas the small-group evaluations and the focus group were conducted with the test group of learners. Scott Gibbons, my instructor for IDT 8010, agreed to be the SME. His expertise, not only in the subject matter but also in Instructional Design was a reliable and valuable source of feedback on design aspects, content accuracy, currency, and feasibility of the artifact. Asha Antony, an IT executive, and Quality Control Manager provided input on the usability features of the course. The test group comprised of seven students, five high school learners and two undergraduate juniors. According to Dick and Carey (2015), it is important to select learners carefully, who "represent the range of ability" (p. 288) of the target group. Some of the test group learners were new to Shakespeare, whereas the others had studied some of his plays in school. The new learners provided feedback on the clarity of instruction, ease of comprehension and the motivational elements, whereas those who were familiar with Shakespeare provided feedback comparing the instruction in the course to that they received in school, in addition to the motivational aspects.

I chose Presence and Engagement, Emotion and Usability as the main constructs of the questionnaires provided to the test group learners. I used items from Witmer and Singer (1998) Presence Questionnaire (to measure how meaningful the learning experience was to the students, and how did the learning environment contribute to that meaningfulness), Pekhrun et al.'s (2011) Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (achievement emotions - emotions that students experience in achievement and academic contexts, like boredom, enjoyment, anxiety, shame, etc.) and Chang's (1999) Web-Based Learning Environment Inventory (WEBLEI) instrument (to gauge the ease of learning and the ease of using the learning artifact). Some of the questions/items were

modified to suit the purpose of the questionnaire. In addition, I also used UW La Crosse, Colorado State University and SREB's online course evaluation guidelines for the questionnaire and checklist to be given to the SME and IT expert respectively.

Figure 1

Step-by Step Evaluation Process



Data Analysis and Results

This evaluation was done to assess the suitability of the learning artifact for an asynchronous environment, effectiveness of content delivery, usability, and affective impact of the artifact on the learners. Following the evaluation plan, I analyzed the data from the questionnaires given to the SME, IT expert and test group learners. I coded the responses/comments from the small-group evaluation and focus group discussions and linked those to the results of the questionnaires to get an overall analysis of the impact of the learning artifact on learner motivation.

Learners

Questionnaire Analysis and Small Group Evaluation

The first step in the analysis process was to create an Excel spreadsheet with the data from the questionnaires of the seven target learners. The target learner questionnaire used a 5-point Likert

scale, 1- Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3- Neutral, 4- Disagree, 5- Strongly Disagree (for all questions except questions 5 and 6). For questions 5 and 6, 1- Completely natural, 2- Natural, 3- Neutral, 4- Unnatural, 5- Completely unnatural. I then looked for areas of concern, I highlighted any question that had a mean greater than 2, where the ideal answer would be Strongly Agree/Agree. Similarly, I highlighted any question below a mean of 4, where the ideal answer would be Strongly Disagree/Disagree. I then calculated the mean, standard deviation, and variance for each of the 36 questions. They are descriptive statistics that measure variability around a mean for continuous data. The greater the standard deviation and variance of a particular set of scores, the more spread out the observations (or data points) are around the mean. This evaluation requires low standard deviation and variance values to account for a positive affective impact. The results for this questionnaire are in Tables 1.1 -1.3.

Presence and Engagement. Only Q.7- How much did your experiences in the virtual environment seem consistent with your real-world experiences? (*M* =2.29, 0.29 above ideal) was problematic in this section. This indicates that some learners did not feel that their experiences of learning in an asynchronous environment did not match or seem consistent with their real-world experience which negatively impacts motivation. All other questions in this section had a mean of less than 2 and the standard deviation and variance values also indicates that the asynchronous environment had a positive impact on learner motivation.

Table 1.1

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance for Presence and Engagement section of Questionnaire

Presence and Engagement	1. I can access the course and learning activities/lessons at times convenient to me.	2. I am allowed to work at my own pace to achieve learning objectives.	3. The flexibility allows me to meet my learning goals.	4. The asynchronous nature of the interactions enables me to reflect and respond when I had formulated an	5. How natural did your interactions with the learning environment and the course seem?	6. How completely were all of your senses engaged?	7. How much did your experiences in the virtual environment seem consistent with your real-world experiences?
Mean	1.14	1.14	1.29	1.43	1.71	2.00	2.29
Standard Deviation	0.38	0.38	0.49	0.53	0.76	0.58	0.49
Variance	0.14	0.14	0.24	0.29	0.57	0.33	0.24

Usability and Appearance. Q.13- The links provided are reliable i.e., no inactive links (*M* =3.14, 1.14 above ideal) was an area of concern in this section. This indicates that a majority of the learners found that some links in the modules did not work. Inactive or erroneous links negatively impact learner motivation especially in an asynchronous environment. All other questions in this section had a mean below 2, and low standard deviation and variance values that indicated that except for the inactive links, the appearance and course structure had a positive impact on learner motivation.

Table1.2

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance for Usability and Appearance section of Questionnaire

Usability and Appearance	1. The Course begins with a motivational Welcome message that includes instructions on how to get started.	2. The syllabus is current and comprehensive, describing course objectives and description, topics, policies, expectations	3. The Course content is clearly presented and structured in a logical, consistent, and uncluttered manner	4. The learning objectives are clearly stated in each lesson.	5. The organization of each lesson is easy to follow.	6. The structure of the overall course and the individual lessons in the modules keeps me focused on what is to be learned.	7. Expectations of assignments and grading policies are clearly stated in my subject.	8. There are clearly stated instructions to learners that clarify how assignments and assessments are to be completed	9. The presentation of the subject content is clear and follows a logical sequence.	10. The multimedia technology (eg animation, graphics, sound, video) contributes to the affective appeal of the learning material.	11. The links provided in the material are clearly visible and logical.	12. The links provided are relevant and appropriate to the document	13. The links provided are reliable i.e no inactive links.	14. I had no difficulty using the technology
Mean	1.29	1.14	1.29	1.14	1.14	1.57	1.14	1.14	1.29	2.00	1.43	1.43	2.14	1.29
StdDev	0.49	0.38	0.49	0.38	0.38	0.79	0.38	0.38	0.49	1.15	0.79	1.13	1.07	0.76
Variance	0.24	0.14	0.24	0.14	0.14	0.62	0.14	0.14	0.24	1.33	0.62	1.29	1.14	0.57
COV	0.38	0.33	0.38	0.33	0.33	0.50	0.33	0.33	0.38	0.58	0.55	0.79	0.50	0.59

Motivational Design. For this section all questions except Q.10 required a mean of below 2 to indicate a positive impact on learner motivation. Q.10 - I felt a sense of boredom as I went

through the course material and lessons required a mean of above 4 since the ideal answer would be Strongly Disagree/Agree. However, this question was concerning (*M* =3, 1 below ideal). Since all other questions had a mean below 2 which was ideal, it can be inferred that the motivational design had a positive impact on learner motivation.

Table 1.3

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance for Motivational Design section of Questionnaire

Motivational Design	1. I enjoy the challenge of learning the material in a new learning environment	2. I have an optimistic view toward studying in this environment	3. I am confident because I understand the material.	4. Being confident that I will understand the material motivates me to learn.	5. I have no problems going through the materials on my own.	6. I had no difficulty using the technology	7. I was in control of my progress as I moved through the material.	8. The web based learning environment held my interest throughout the course.	9. I felt a sense of satisfaction and achievement about this learning environment	10. I felt a sense of boredom as I went through the course material and lessons.
Mean	1.57	1.57	1.29	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.00	1.71	1.14	3.00
StdDev	0.53	0.53	0.49	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.00	0.76	0.38	1.15
Variance	0.29	0.29	0.24	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.00	0.57	0.14	1.33

Next, I coded the responses to the open-ended questions. All three sections had a question where the learners had to comment if they had given a score of 3 or above for all questions except Q. 10 in the Motivational Design section, where they had to comment if they had given a score of 3 or below. This was to get qualitative feedback for making improvements. There were two questions at the end of the questionnaire where the learners had to comment on the areas of excellence and improvement respectively. For each of the open response, I grouped together similar responses to get an overview of the most common or standout comments, positive and negative. I chose to categorize the comments in the last section of the questionnaire on areas of overall excellence and weakness under the main sections of the questionnaire they pertained to.

In analyzing the open response question for Presence and Engagement section, the positive comments were about the pace, flexibility, and ease of access of the artifact. The area of concern was about the virtual learning experience not being as consistent with real-world experiences. The most common comments (5 out of 7) were about how the video lessons, for instance, would benefit from the instructor's presence in the video.

For the open response question for Usability and Appearance section, the positive comments were about the layout and structure of the course, that it was uncluttered, divided into modules which made it easier to navigate. The area of concern was that there were some links that were inactive, and a few which led to wrong pages (7 out of 7 respondents). This could lead to learner frustration and is a crucial area for revision.

Analyzing the open response for Motivational Design, the positive comments were about the good affective impact of the learning environment and the artifact, for instance, the course was interesting and fulfilling. The area of concern was that some learners experienced a loss of focus during some lessons. This was mainly during some of the lengthier lessons, not because of the content, but because there was no instructor presence, especially in the videos. The suggestion was to include the instructor in the videos. Table 2 outlines the comments and suggestions for improvement for the three questionnaire sections. As seen in Table 2, the learning artifact has a positive impact on learner motivation and engagement, which will be further enhanced by incorporating the suggestions for improvement.

Table 2
Open Responses for Questionnaire Sections

Presence and Engagement

		Excellent	Suggestions for Improvement	
Row1	Ease of access	6 comments	Include instructor presence in video lessons for a better connect between the instructor and learners and to make it real-world like.	5 comments
Row 2	Flexibility	5 comments		
Row 3	Pace	4 comments		
Usability and Appearance				
		Excellent	**Suggestions for Improvement**	
Row 4	Clear organization of modules	6 comments	Repair inactive/erroneous links	7 comments
Row 5	Ease of navigation	5 comments		
Motivational Design				
		Excellent	**Suggestions for Improvement**	
Row 6	Creativity of lessons and assignments	6 comments	Include instructor presence in video lessons to address loss of focus and "zoning out"	5 comments
Row 7	Confidence and satisfaction (interesting and fulfilling)	6 comments		

For the small-group evaluation, the seven learners were instructed to go through the course module by module and engage with some of the lessons and activities. They were asked to comment on course structure and appearance, content delivery, engagement, and motivation. I

directed the discussions around the questionnaire items because I thought that the qualitative data would be a good validation for the data from the questionnaires. I coded the comments by grouping similar comments under two headings 'Excellent' and 'Needs Improvement'. For instance, there were 5 comments on how they liked the animated video because they thought it was a unique way to introduce the course. I coded that as a positive comment. However, there were 6 comments about how the speed on the video needed to be slowed down a little, since they found it a little difficult to keep up with the text as the scenes changed. I coded this under 'Needs Improvement' and will consider revising. While choosing the lessons/media/activities, I made sure that the learners are exposed to representative content from each module such that they get an in-depth idea of the course even though they did not go through its entirety. The most common positive comments were about the creativity of the course content. Some of the noteworthy comments and suggestions are outlined in Table 3. I chose to include codes which had 4 or more comments for each category. As seen in Table 3, the data validates the findings of the open responses on the questionnaires which supports the positive affective impact of the artifact.

Table 3

Small Group Evaluation Responses to Select Lessons and Activities

	Excellent		**Suggestions for Improvement**	
Row1	Clear organization of modules	5 comments	Repair inactive/erroneous links	7 comments
Row 2	Ease of navigation	4 comments	Speed of welcome video to be slowed down	6 comments
Row 3	Welcome video	5 comments	Include instructor presence in video lessons	5 comments
Row 4	Creativity of lessons and assignments	6 comments		

Row 5	Clear and easy to comprehend presentation of content	5 comments
Row 6	Added relevance and made Shakespeare relatable	6 comments

(See Appendix for a complete list of the lessons and the activities they engaged with, and the coded comments).

Focus Group Discussion

There were two focus group meetings, one to gauge learner familiarity and knowledge about Shakespeare as well as their attitudes towards studying his plays. The second one was to gauge their familiarity and attitude to an asynchronous learning environment and its affective impact on learner motivation. Each meeting was about 45 minutes. The meetings were recorded, and I took notes. I transcribed the recordings and coded the comments. For both meetings, I first categorized the comments under broad headings 'Positive' and 'Negative'. I then combed through the responses and comments and coded for context (interest, relevance, boredom), frequency and specificity of responses (how many times did they mention key words like 'engaging', 'easy', 'hard/difficult', etc. and the activities or course elements they were referring to). I also coded for internal consistency, specifically looking for shifts in opinion over the two meetings, for instance, one of the learners felt that she was intimidated by Shakespeare because she heard from her peers that he was difficult to understand and was boring, and that assignments were tough. After she went through some of the lessons, she responded that he didn't "seem too bad" and some of the lessons and assignments were "fun and interesting". Once this process was done, I found it easy

to spot emerging themes that I could use for revisions and improvements. Since the meetings were in person, I also coded for emotion, as I observed them engaging with the lessons, and during our discussions, what lessons excited them the most, what aspects of the course they found lacking or were disinterested in. For instance, they were very enthusiastic while going through Module 3, with comments like "I would absolutely love to do the final project". "This looks like a fun activity". "I want to take the quiz now to see what character I am". On the other hand, they were frustrated when some of the links did not work. "I hate it when the links do not work". "Oh, this is so frustrating." Table 4 outlines the focus group questions and comments. This provides support for the rationale behind the creation of this artifact to address and improve learner attitude towards Shakespeare.

Table 4
Noteworthy comments to Focus Group Questions

	Question Categories	Comments
Row 1	Familiarity with Shakespeare	"I know only that much as what I did in school."
Row 2	Attitude towards studying Shakespeare	"I don't understand how he is relevant to us". "I confess I did not understand much but managed to get a decent grade". I found the language funny and difficult to understand". "I haven't studied him in school yet, but I'm sure I'll be to handle it". "I hated it." "The annotated notes made it better."
Row 3	Familiarity and Attitude to Asynchronous Learning Environment	"Some of the classes during the pandemic were asynchronous." "I like the flexibility it

		give me." "I think it's very easy to fall behind if one's not careful." "Instructors are difficult to get hold of. It's frustrating."
Row 4	Learning Artifact	"It looks interesting, even though I don't know anything about Shakespeare." "The video lessons should have the instructor in them. I found myself losing focus, especially in the parts where complex concepts were being explained." "I love Module 3. All the activities and lessons look very interesting and engaging." "Module 3 is excellent to make Shakespeare relevant and interesting to us." "Shakespeare doesn't seem too bad."

(See Appendix B for emerging themes for both focus group meetings).

Subject Matter Expert

The SME questionnaire used a 4-point Likert scale, 4 – Excellent, 3 – Good, 2 – Satisfactory, 1 – Need Improvement (for sections I-IV). For section V, 4 – Strongly Agree, 3 – Agree, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree. Comments were required on any items checked as Needs Improvement and Strongly Disagree/Disagree. The questionnaire also allowed for comments on any of the items if the SME wished to make any. The questionnaire had two open

response questions at the end, where the SME was asked to comment on areas of excellence and weakness and make suggestions for improvement.

There were no questions that were checked as Needs Improvement and Strongly Disagree/Disagree. As I went through the comments on each of the items, I felt that the questions that were checked as satisfactory had some very valid rationale and could be used to improve the course during revision. Though the SME's feedback was very positive and encouraging about the overall course structure and organization, currency, relevance, and feasibility, he made several valid suggestions for improvement. The most noteworthy among them was to create a clear and dedicated space for student feedback, and the need for opportunities for more collaborative work for students. (See Appendix C for a complete list of comments and recommendations).

IT Expert

The IT expert was given a questionnaire that had a 3-point Likert scale, 1 – Meets criteria, 2 – Partially meets criteria, 3 – Does not meet criteria. The items checked as 2 and 3 required comments. There were several items that were given 2, and none of the items were given 3. There is one open response question at the end which asked for suggestions for improvement. Since I enlisted only one IT expert, I recorded all feedback and comments in a table. (See Appendix D for a complete list of comments and recommendations). While the comments learner accessibility and support were positive, there were suggestions to improve usability by providing links to course pages such that learners can navigate the course with fewer clicks.

Recommendations

There are several changes that I propose to make based on the recommendations of the SME, IT expert and the test group learners to increase the affective impact on the target learners. I have categorized them according to revisions planned for content/media and usability.

Content/Media lessons

I plan to re-record some of the video lessons with me in the video. This was one of the predominantly occurring comments in the questionnaires and the small-group evaluations by the test learners. The rationale for this revision as suggested by the learners was that it accounted for a connect with the instructor in an asynchronous environment. According to Stull et al. (2021), when instructors used their presence in a video lesson, it increased learner engagement, allowed for a more effective integration of instructional materials, and lead to better post-test performances. Another revision that I propose to make based on the recommendation of the SME is that I will include annotated notes for some of the more complex and difficult to understand concepts in the lessons, for instance in the video lesson on the sonnet forms, I will provide annotated notes on key structural features of each of the sonnet forms. I will also revise the worksheet based on the audio lesson in Module 1. Many of the learners felt that instead of a worksheet that they will complete at the end of the lesson, they would prefer to have a graphic organizer that will allow them to take notes while listening to the podcast. This will help them in better retention of key terms and features of Shakespearean tragedy.

One of the comments by the SME was that there were limited opportunities for collaborative work apart from the final project and a few assignments in the modules. After looking at the activities in the modules, one change that I will try and make is to include Hypothesis, a

collaborative digital annotation tool that allows learners to highlight, add comments to a shared digital document (PDF, an article on the web, etc.). They can also reply to other learners' annotations, comments, or notes. From what I have read, Canvas supports the tool, and it would not be difficult to add. The other proposed action is to add missing rubrics to certain assignments and make sure that they are visible to the students. In addition to these, an important area that I neglected to include in the course, that was pointed out by the SME, was a dedicated space for students to provide feedback. I plan to include a feedback page along the lines of a bulletin board for each of the modules where the students will be encouraged to post appropriate comments, suggestions for improvements, and grievances, if any, without fear and inhibitions.

Usability

The most common comments for Usability for the course across the board from the SME to the IT expert and test learners were about some of the inactive and erroneous links. I plan to repair them and ensure that they work and lead to the proper pages. One suggestion made by both the IT expert and the SME was to include links to various pages in the course on the Home page which would allow the learners to navigate the course with fewer clicks. This is a good revision that I will incorporate to improve usability. Another suggestion by the SME was to make the pages more appealing to the target learners by adding some images to the pages in the modules. This is a good suggestion that would appeal to high school students. The IT expert made a recommendation to make the Home Page look less crowded by removing the Announcements section. I am not in favor of this change since I feel that there will be less chances of students missing important announcements since the first page when they access the sandbox is the Home Page. It may be possible to make the Announcements the first page, though

I am not sure of the visual impact of doing so. With these changes, the learning artifact should have a greater positive affective impact on the learners.

Reflections

I am pleased with how the evaluation process went for the learning artifact. The positive comments that I received from the SME and the learners especially gave a sense of satisfaction and validated the rationale behind creating the course. For instance, during the focus group discussions, one of the predominant reasons the learners gave for their disinterest in Shakespeare was that they found the instruction and lessons boring because they did not find value and relevance in what they were learning. They were unable to connect with the characters and the language made it even more difficult. After going through the course and some of the lessons, especially Module 3, they found the content interesting and relevant. This validated the design choices and instructional model that I based my course on.

This evaluation exercise also cemented the importance of formative assessments as outlined by Dick and Carey (2015). All that I learned in IDT 8010, I was able to apply and understand its validity and rationale. I expected the SME's and the IT expert's feedback to be valuable and reliable, but I was surprised by the astute observations and suggestions of the test learners. For instance, their suggestions to make the ice-breaker activity more student-centric, and their suggestions to include instructor presence were on point, and they presented clear and valid rationales for their suggestions. This cemented the importance of including them in formative assessments for me.

Another huge learning for me with this evaluation exercise is the presentation of the findings from the data collected. Data collection and analysis, though time consuming did not pose difficulties for me, as much as finding a way to present the findings in a clear, logical, and easily comprehensible manner did. It took me a long while to put it in a satisfactory format that would ensure that one does not get lost amidst all that data.

The recommendations and suggestions for improvement will definitely help to make the artifact more effective and relevant. One thing that I realized with the asynchronous learning environment and student engagement and interest is that while extrinsic motivation works in the form of interesting content, feedback, etc. the learners also need to be intrinsically motivated to be responsible and take control of their learning, making sure that they maintain a good pace, complete assignments and deadline and produce quality work.

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Appendix A

Codes for Small-Group Evaluation Discussion

Content/Media/Activities	Excellent codes	Needs Improvement codes
Course Overview (Syllabus, Module Organization, Ease of Navigation	• Uncluttered look • Clear organization of modules • Easy to navigate through course	• Some inactive or erroneous links
Welcome video (Home Page)	• Unique and fun way of introducing the course	• Adjust speed as it was difficult to keep up with text as scenes changed
Ice-Breaker Activity	• Created curiosity about Shakespeare • Makes Shakespeare more relevant and current	• Ask students about their interests, what they believe they are good at as far as language arts is concerned
Module 1 Audio lesson (Shakespearean Tragedy)	• Informative • Relevant and current	• Make accompanying worksheet more like a graphic organizer • Provide annotated notes
Module 1 Video lesson (Themes and Motifs)	• Content presented in a visually appealing manner • Concepts explained in an easy-to-understand manner	• Include instructor in the video to make it seem more consistent with real-world experience
Module 2 Screencast lesson (Shakespearean Vs. Petrarchan Sonnet form)	• Easy to follow • Good demonstration on how to differentiate between the two sonnet forms	
Module 3 Fun Activity (Which Romeo & Juliet character are you?)	• Interesting and fun	

	• Creative way to analyze and understand characters
Module 3 Activity (A Day in the like of Romeo & Juliet via Social Media)	• Very creative • Current, and connects well with modern day technology • Makes Romeo and Juliet relatable to present-day learners
Final Project Overview	• Very creative • An interesting and unique way to demonstrate what has been learned in the course • Much better than regular assessments

Appendix B

Emerging themes for Focus Group 1(Familiarity with Shakespeare)

Experienced learners

- Limited to no exposure to Shakespeare outside school
- Did not particularly enjoy studying Shakespeare in school
    - Reasons:
        - Boring lessons
        - Bad choice of plays (tragedies)
        - Unfamiliar and difficult language
        - Difficult assignments and tests
        - Did not find Shakespeare relevant in the current times

New learners

- Only heard about Shakespeare
- Some anxiety, but may find the challenge enjoyable if the way it is taught is interesting

Emerging Themes for Focus Group 2

Learning Environment

- Have some experience with asynchronous learning environments
    - Favorable
        - Flexibility
        - Self-paced
        - Can go back to the lessons any number of times
    - Unfavorable
        - Very easy to fall behind
        - Difficult to contact instructor for clarifications
        - Sometimes assignments/workload not proportional to time given

Learning Artifact

- Course Overview and Structure
    - Clear, uncluttered
    - Easy to navigate
    - Clear organization of content into modules
    - Some inactive and erroneous links
- Content/Lessons/Media
    - Interesting and creative lessons and assignments
    - Could improve video lessons by including instructor

    - Made Shakespeare relevant and current through Module 3
    - Module 3 and the Final Project were the most interesting, will enjoy completing the assignments
- Motivation and Engagement
    - Experience confidence and satisfaction
    - Course content and activities are unique and exciting to remain invested and engaged in learning

Appendix C

Noteworthy Comments and Recommendations from SME

Questionnaire Sections	Areas of Excellence	Areas for Improvement
Course Overview/Information	• Course introduction • Alignment of syllabus to learning objectives • Clearly defined modules	• Needs clearer instructions on how to navigate course • Easy to find links • Some inactive/erroneous links
Course Content & Delivery	• Clear, logical, and in-depth presentation of content • Adequate scaffolding of student learning	• Some lessons would benefit from supplemental notes • Limited opportunities for collaborative work
Assessment & Feedback	• Variety of creative assignments	• Missing rubrics for some assignments • No clearly defined space for student feedback
Learner Accessibility & Support	• Intentional implementation of UDL standards	
Presence, Engagement, and Emotion	• Suitable for an asynchronous learning environment • Allows learners flexibility, autonomy • Positive impact on student motivation (confidence, satisfaction)	• Could be more visually appealing to high school students

Recommendations

- Make the course and module pages more visually appealing to the target learners by adding imagery.
- Repair inactive/erroneous links and also make it easy to find on some pages.
- Refine some assignments to allow for more collaboration among the learners.

- Ensure rubrics are available for all assignments
- Create a clear space for student feedback.
- Add annotated notes for difficult/complex ideas in video lessons.

Appendix D

Noteworthy Comments and Recommendations by IT Expert

Questionnaire Sections	Areas of Excellence	Areas for Improvement
Course Organization & Navigation	• All pertinent information included (syllabus, learning objectives, expectations, instructor information)	• Links to different course information to be included on the Home page • Organization of Home page could be better • Inactive/erroneous links • Opportunities to connect with students • Better organization of modules
Learner Accessibility & Support	• Excellent implementation of UDL standards	

Recommendations

- Personalize Welcome video with instructor for better learner motivation
- Organize modules according to weeks
- Repair inactive/erroneous links and also make it easy to find on some pages.
- Improve Home page appearance by using designated space for announcements.
- Include easy to find links on the Home page that will allow learners to access course elements and modules with fewer clicks.