

Sam's Online Tools Evaluation Checklist

This questionnaire is designed for instructional designers, faculty, or educational support staff who are evaluating the usability of an educational technology tool used in a higher education setting.

Please complete this questionnaire after you've had some hands-on experience with the tool. For example, using it in a course, developing materials, piloting it, or exploring its features in depth.

This questionnaire focuses specifically on usability factors, like feedback, consistency, language clarity, and interface design. Some questions may not apply to every tool; please respond based on your experience and skip any items that do not apply.

The criteria is based on Jakob Nielsen's 10 general principles for interaction design. [10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design](#)

Scoring

High scores indicate poor usability. The lower the score, the better the usability.

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

Usability Questions

1. Does the tool provide feedback when you complete actions like submitting assignments or clicking buttons?

Example: When you click the "Submit" button on D2L, do you see a message telling you that your assignment was submitted successfully?

Options:

- 0 - Always

- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

2. Are there indicators like a progress bar or spinning icon when the tool is working, such as when loading or processing data?

Example: When you click to open a quiz in D2L, does it show a loading indicator until the quiz loads completely?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

3. Does the tool let you know when tasks are finished or if something goes wrong?

Example: When you submit a grade in D2L, does it show a message confirming that the grade was submitted or indicate if there was an error?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

4. Is the feedback given quickly, without unnecessary waiting?

Example: When you click "Submit" for an assignment in D2L, do you receive confirmation immediately, or does it take a long time?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

5. Does the tool notify you about changes or important actions that need your attention?

Example: Does iClicker notify you when a student submits an answer or when their participation score changes?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

6. Does the tool use easy-to-understand language without too much technical jargon?

Example: When viewing a grade report on D2L, are the terms clear (e.g., "grade" vs. "evaluation score")?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently

- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

7. Are buttons, icons, and labels easy to understand without needing extra explanations?

Example: In iClicker, is the "Submit" button clearly labeled so you know it's for submitting answers?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

8. Is the tool organized in a way that makes sense, similar to how other apps or websites are set up?

Example: In D2L, is it easy to find the course content, grades, and assignments, like you would expect on a website?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

9. Does the tool follow a natural flow that matches what you expect based on your previous experiences?

Example: In iClicker, does the sequence of actions, like starting a poll or reviewing **results, feel logical and easy to follow?**

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

10. Does the tool use familiar designs and conventions that you're used to in other apps?

Example: In D2L, do the layout and features match what you expect from other online learning platforms, like Moodle or Blackboard?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

11. Are interactive elements like buttons and menus in familiar locations to make them easy to find?

Example: In iClicker, is the "Start Poll" button always in the same spot, so you know where to click each time?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

12. Can you undo or redo actions if you make a mistake, like deleting or re-entering information?

Example: If you accidentally delete a question in iClicker, can you undo the action and get it back?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

13. Are there options to cancel ongoing processes, like submitting an assignment, without finishing it?

Example: If you start to submit an assignment on D2L but change your mind, can you cancel the process before it's finalized?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never

0 - Not Applicable

14. Does the tool use the same terms consistently throughout, such as "Submit" instead of switching between different words for the same action?

Example: Does D2L consistently use the word "Assignment" across different pages, instead of switching to "Task" or "Project"?

Options:

0 - Always

1 - Frequently

2 - Rarely

3 - Never

0 - Not Applicable

15. Are the fonts, colors, and icons used the same way in different parts of the tool?

Example: Does D2L use the same color for buttons and the same icon for notifications across all sections?

Options:

0 - Always

1 - Frequently

2 - Rarely

3 - Never

0 - Not Applicable

16. Does the tool follow design rules that are common in other educational tools?

Example: In iClicker, do the layout and features match what you expect from other online learning platforms, like TopHat?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

17. Are familiar icons, like a magnifying glass for search or a trash can for delete, used appropriately?

Example: In iClicker, is the trash can icon used for deleting questions or answers, as you would expect?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never
- 0 - Not Applicable

18. Does the tool provide clear options to undo or redo actions, allowing you to correct mistakes or revisit previous steps?

Example: If you accidentally delete a question in iClicker, can you undo the action and get it back?

Options:

- 0 - Always
- 1 - Frequently
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Never

0 - Not Applicable

19. Are there options to cancel ongoing processes, like submitting an assignment, without finishing it?

Example: If you start submitting an assignment on D2L but change your mind, can you cancel the process before it's finalized?

Options:

0 - Always

1 - Frequently

2 - Rarely

3 - Never

0 - Not Applicable

20. Does the tool use the same terms consistently throughout, such as "Submit" instead of switching between different words for the same action?

Example: Does D2L consistently use the word "Assignment" across different pages, instead of switching to "Task" or "Project"?

Options:

0 - Always

1 - Frequently

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0 - Not Applicable