

Analysis and Recommendations for the Exploring Life Interface

Ward Mitchell Cates, Ed.D. (ward.cates@lehigh.edu)
College of Education, Lehigh University

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1. On the **Welcome** page, it would help to make the **Begin** button more attractive of learner attention. It gets lost a bit now. There are two approaches one could use to draw attention to it more directly:
 - One would be to try to align it with the images above (the three buttons) and thereby allow learner eyes to scan down to it.
 - A second approach would be to use it as text art and to wrap around the bottom of the rock on the left. In that case the open white space would draw attention to it and the fact that was to the left with the illustration would make it very clear that this was the object one was to click on to get started. This is the approach I suggest we employ.
2. The **unit** buttons (circles) are currently the same color as the **chapter** buttons. This could lead to confusion about where one is in the program. To alleviate this, consider making the unit buttons **dark brown with white numbers** on them. You can then leave the chapter buttons as they are now.
3. In general, you need larger spots for things that are being dragged-and-dropped. For instance, take a look at 7.2's marshmallow-dragging activity.
4. Currently you have at least three separate navigation schemes: one on the top, one on the left side in a column format, and one of the bottom. In some cases they are redundant, duplicating the same features. In other cases, they are contradictory, leading the learner to skip activities. Regardless, one loses track of where one is fairly easily.

I suggest that you count the left navigation column as the major form a navigation for the chapter. This means that it should contain all of the activities (concepts, labs, explorations, and the like) in its list. In addition, it should **show the pages** within each activity. To keep it manageable, you might wish to make it so that one can expand or collapse this column listing using a plus or minus symbol as is employed in the Windows interface. Regardless, I suggest that you not put a **next concept** on the navigation at the top. Instead use such **page** navigation solely for pages. This would mean the message at the bottom when one had finished a series of pages under a concept or lab would direct one to click on something in the left navigation column in order to move to the next major block. This would be more logically consistent and would lead the learner to know that clicking on anything in the top and bottom navigation on the right kept you within whatever major section had been selected in the navigation column on the left. The navigation column on the left would include not only the major concepts, but also all components and could serve as the sole

navigation for all activities. That would make it not only more consistent, but more powerful than any other form of navigation.

5. In order for the pages in activity to be listed, one would need to think of descriptive names to give to those pages. For example, with the *Sunlight Powers Life* activity, you might divide the pages as follows:

Sunlight Powers Life: Overview	/1
Sunlight Powers Life: Photosynthesis	/2
Sunlight Powers Life: Questions	/3

6. On the bottom navigation on 7.3.1, there is a spelling error (*copleted*) and the navigation takes one to the next page, a function that duplicates top navigation here and feels inconsistent (see notes above).
7. We should try to make what we are supposed to click on more obvious in the prompt. For example, look at 7.5.1. We could use the word **GREEN** in all capital letters and in the color green to help draw and focus attention on what is to follow. Globally, what we should consider doing is using descriptive words throughout for instructions or controls. These descriptive words could include **colors** (for example *red, green*), **shape** (for example, *oval, square*), and/or **location** (for example *below, on the right, at the bottom*).
8. On 7.5.2, the prompt on how to start the pinball game is too pale. It doesn't stand out enough.
9. Lab 7.2 doesn't make clear what the learner is to do. It is also an example of an inconsistent numbering scheme. By that, I mean that 7.5.2 comes before 7.2. Despite the fact that they are different types of things (concept vs. lab), logically they should come in mathematical order. So, it seems logical that one would use **unit.chapter.section/activity.page** as the numbering system. You'll need to give some thought to making this more logical and predictable. As is, the present inconsistent numbering invites students to skip things unintentionally or lose track of where they are.
10. On concept 8.1.3, the instruction "*Click on the light microscope control buttons and...*" is unclear.
11. On concept 8.2, it is unclear where the **play** button is located. Here is an example of where a locational word would have helped.
12. Quiz 8.4 has no interactivity. After so much interactivity, it felt very strange to have none suddenly. This made its feel non-parallel to the other activities in this chapter. Think about ways to improve this.