

Preamble

Why finally an instructor's guide?

FIFTEEN YEARS IN THE MAKING!

First, thanks for choosing (or *thinking* about choosing) *Don't Make Me Think!*

The truth is, when I wrote it back in 2000 it never occurred to me that it would be used in classrooms—mostly because at the time hardly anyone was teaching (or studying) usability.

As time went on, though, a lot of people began telling me that they'd discovered the book when it was assigned to them in a course. And eventually people started telling me that they'd ended up with a career in UX because they'd read the book for a course.

Nowadays there are courses about usability (or UX, as the whole field has since come to be known) everywhere you look. And the book gets used even in courses that aren't primarily about UX: Web design courses, computer science courses, and even graphic design and writing courses. (Though none in animal husbandry or forensics, as far as I know.)

For years, my publisher has been after me (gently) to do an instructor's guide, but I always resisted. Even though I'd taught the material myself hundreds of times in day-long workshops, I'd never taught it in an actual *course*, so I wasn't sure what a guide would be like, or how it might help. Eventually, though, I “got” it: Creating a course is hard work, and if a lot of instructors were going to be using the book, they shouldn't each have to start from scratch. So here we are.

Naturally, it turned out to be harder than it seemed

One problem with figuring out how to approach this guide was that the book gets used in so many different ways, in so many different contexts:

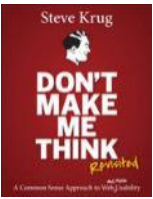
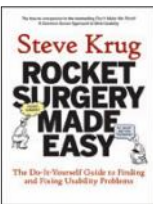
- At different educational levels, from high school to grad school (with stops along the way at adult ed, trade schools, community colleges, etc.)
- For different lengths of time, from one-week units to entire semesters
- Using the whole book or just selected chapters (and sometimes even its companion how-to volume, *Rocket Surgery Made Easy*).

So what we decided to do was to try to offer a range of discussion topics, assignments, and projects that you could pick and choose from to fit your needs.

Is this the right book for you?

Some instructors have asked me whether they should be using this book or *Rocket Surgery Made Easy* in their course. And the answer—as is so often the case with questions about usability—is “It depends.”¹

Here’s the difference between the two:

	What it is:	It’s more appropriate for:
	Introduction to concepts of usability and UX	Introductory UX class Web design class
	Instructions for conducting do-it-yourself usability tests	Class specifically about usability, usability testing, or UX methods More advanced students

Each chapter² has...

Key points

The main concepts from each chapter.

Key points

- People tend to confuse focus groups (which are about asking people for opinions) with usability tests (which are about watching people try to use things).
- Testing early in a project is much better than testing later.
- Testing a smaller number of users but doing it more often is more important than including a lot of participants in each round of testing.
- Anyone can learn to do simple, affordable usability testing that provides valuable insights that will improve whatever you’re building.

Key terms

Key terms are definitions of words and phrases used in the chapter that students might not be familiar with.

Key terms

Focus group: A session in which a moderator asks a group of people their opinions about products or concepts (often used for marketing research, and best done before designing or building a product).

Do-it-yourself usability testing: A faster and cheaper approach than traditional usability testing, with fewer participants, less equipment, and more efficient processing of the results.

¹ “The answer is ‘It depends’” is a longstanding running joke in the usability profession. But it makes a serious point, explained on page 7 of *Don’t Make Me Think*.

² Well, *almost* each chapter. A few are so short that it didn’t make sense to include all the moving parts.

Discussion questions

Discussion questions are meant for use in class.

Discussion questions

1. Of the “Top five plausible reasons for not testing web sites” on page 141, which one do you think is hardest to overcome? Do you think the author’s counterarguments are persuasive? If not, why not?
2. Can you think of examples where do-it-yourself usability testing isn’t appropriate?

Instructor: Professional test design, facilitation, and analysis using larger samples (more participants and more rounds of testing) is a necessity when usability failures can result in physical harm. Examples include medical devices, smoke alarms, automobile and airplane controls, nuclear power plants, etc.

Quiz questions

Quizzes are obviously intended to determine whether the student read (and perhaps even—with any luck—understood and retained) the main points of a given chapter.

The correct answers are in **red**.

They’re offered as a starting point and time saver, but of course you can mix and match, reword them, and add your own (and perhaps even send them along to us to add to a later edition).

Quiz questions

1. Usability testing:
 - a. settles all internal debates
 - b. should be used only at the end of the product design process
 - c. **often reveals problems that are more significant than the issues the test was supposed to resolve**
2. What is the author’s recommended test plan?
 - a. **Three users, once a month**
 - b. Five users at each major milestone
 - c. Enough to provide statistical significance

Assignments and Projects

Assignments are exercises that students can do individually or in groups, either in class or as homework.

Projects are longer and more complex than assignments, and are often suitable for doing in groups as homework and presenting to the class.

Assignments

1. Watch the demo usability test video at youtu.be/Qck1zHC99Xc and keep a list of the most serious usability problems you see. Stop watching the video when you see the slide (at 20:16) that asks “What were the top three usability problems that you observed?”

Instructor: In class, lead a discussion of the three most serious usability problems that the students observed. Then play the end of the video where the author gives his conclusions and discuss whether the students agree with him.

Projects

1. Conduct a complete round of usability testing on an existing site or app.

Instructor: You can assign groups or let the students form their own. The minimum team size is two (a facilitator and observer), but the maximum size is up to you.

Tell them to do the following:

- You are going to do a round of usability tests with three participants. Each session will last an hour.
- Pick a Web site or app to test.

Additional resources

We’ve compiled a short list of relevant books (including the ones mentioned in the chapter), articles, and Web sites. You may want to assign some of them as readings, or just mention them in class.

Additional resources

Nielsen Norman Group article “Search Is Not Enough: Synergy Between Navigation and Search,” <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/search-not-enough/>

Brothers Grimm story *Hansel and Gretel*, <http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/HanGre.shtml>

Which chapters to use

If your students won't be reading the entire book, this list may help you decide which chapters you want them to focus on.

Topic or course type:	Which chapter(s):
Web Design User Experience Design	Intro, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7
Usability testing ³	Ch. 8, 9, 10 (Mobile)
Navigation Information architecture	Ch. 6
Writing for the Web	Ch. 5
Accessibility	Ch. 12
Product marketing or management	Ch. 11, 13

Thanks!

We'd like to express our gratitude to everyone who shared some of their teaching materials with us or offered to help review this Guide.

We hope you find it useful, and would welcome any feedback. You can reach us at skrug@sensible.com.

Enjoy!

We love teaching people about usability, and we hope you do, too.

Steve Krug⁴
Elisabeth Bayle

³ If you're teaching usability testing, you should definitely check out the free remote usability tests that you and your students can get from UserTesting. See page 48 of this guide for details.

⁴ Pronounced "kroog", in case you were wondering.