



Developing a Prototype ACT Website for Distressed College Students with Qualtrics Survey Software

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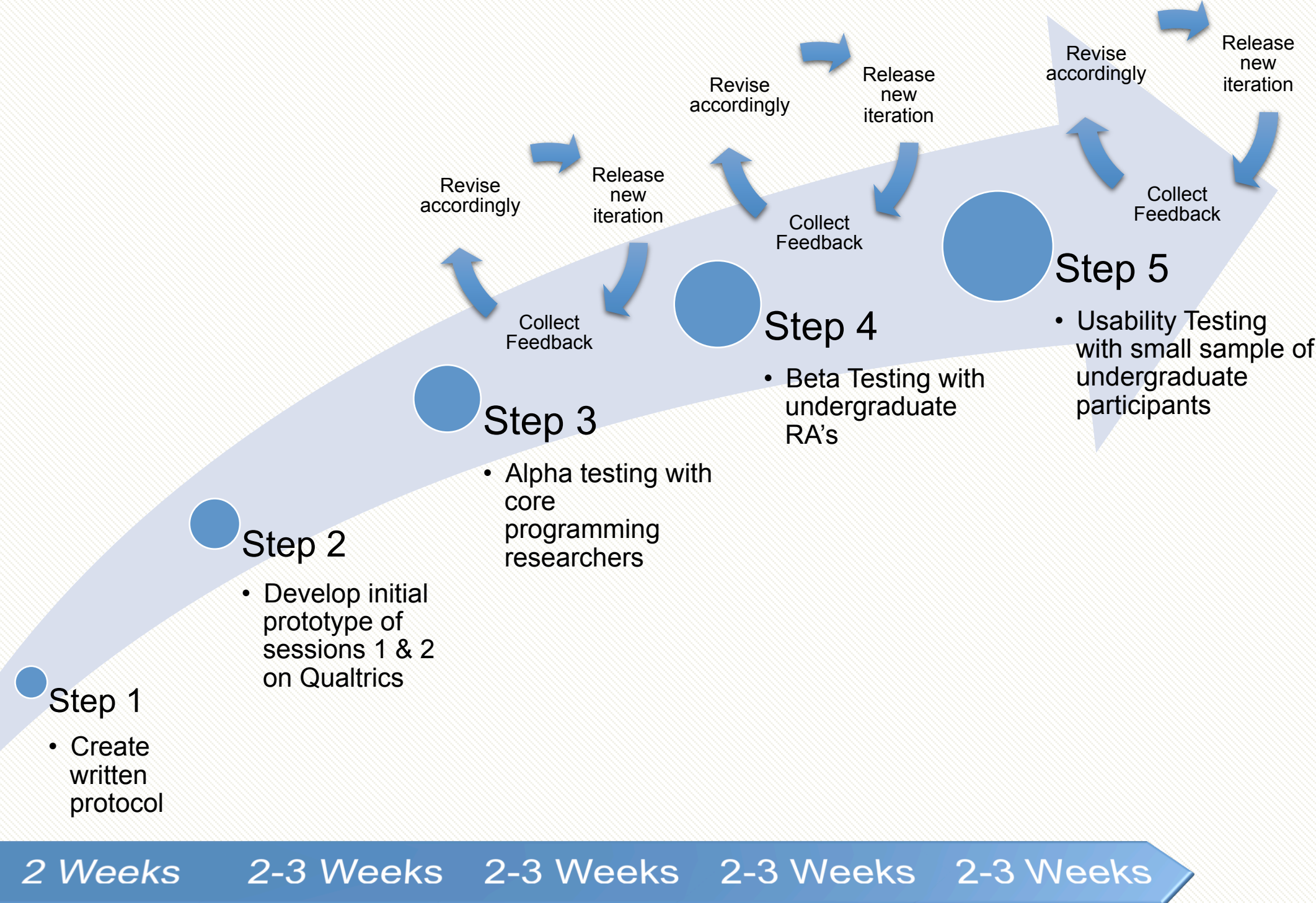
Introduction

Mental health problems are prevalent among college students with almost 50% having a diagnosable disorder in a given year (Blanco et al., 2008). College counseling centers struggle to meet current demands for services, while many students who would benefit from therapy do not seek treatment due to perceived stigma and logistical barriers. Web-based self-help is a cost effective method to provide treatment to students who may not otherwise seek help while reducing demands placed on counseling centers. Although successful web-based interventions are becoming more prevalent, those seeking to develop new interventions often encounter significant barriers, including high development costs, relatively slow pace of grant-funded projects, and communication issues/delays with developers. These barriers may hinder innovations in web-based treatments, initial prototype development/testing, and iterative program development. This presentation describes the development and usability testing of a prototype transdiagnostic ACT website for distressed college students using Qualtrics – an online survey program that many U.S. universities subscribe to and make freely-available to students and faculty.

Why Qualtrics?

- In use by 1,300 colleges and universities worldwide, including every major university in the U.S. As well as 50% of Fortune 100 companies.
- Easy point and click design, with a variety of item types.
- HTML coding available for more complex actions.
- Secure & confidential data handling – easily export results to SPSS
- No software to download, allowing for easy development across a variety of OS's and devices.

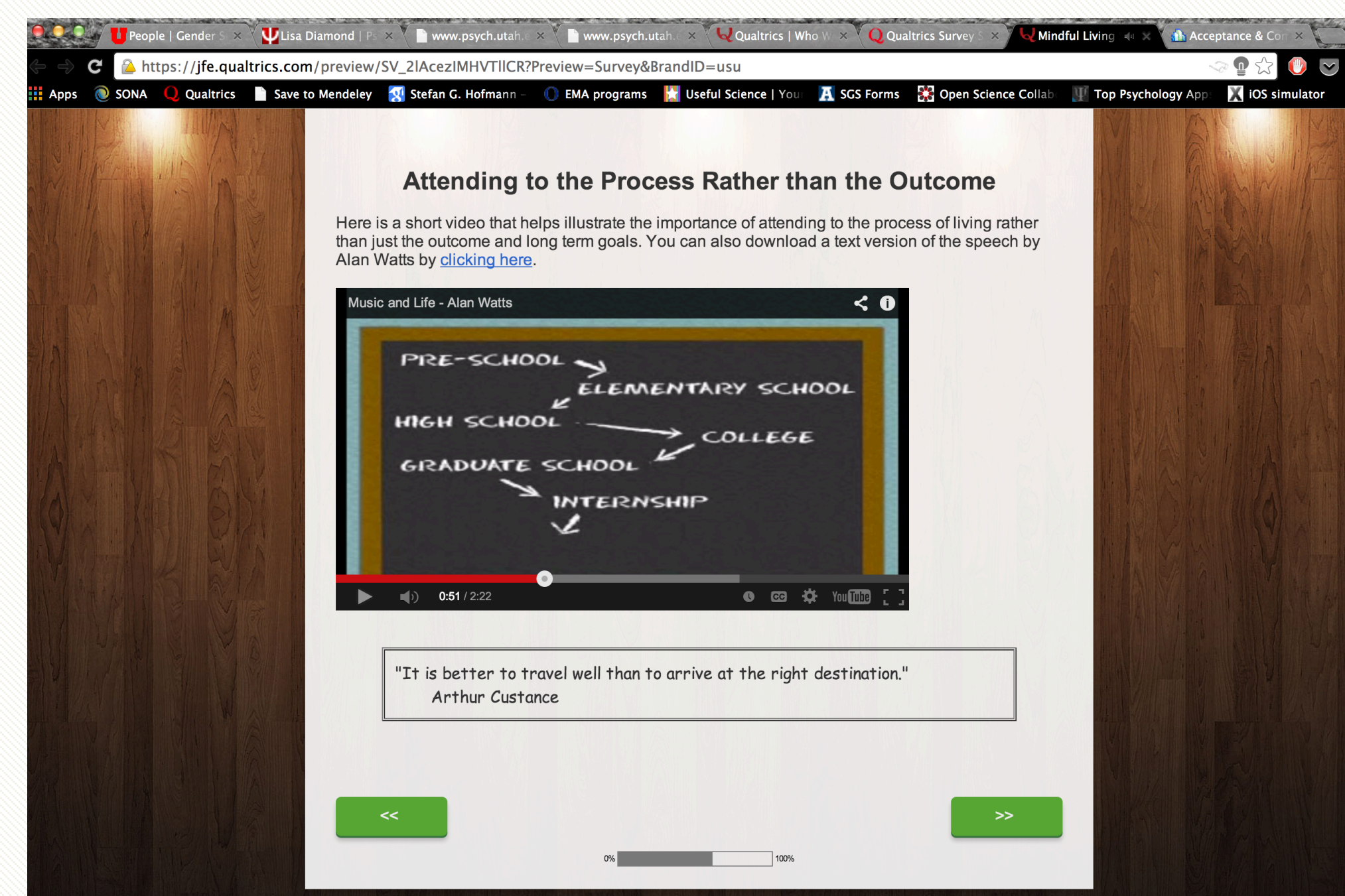
Iterative Program Development



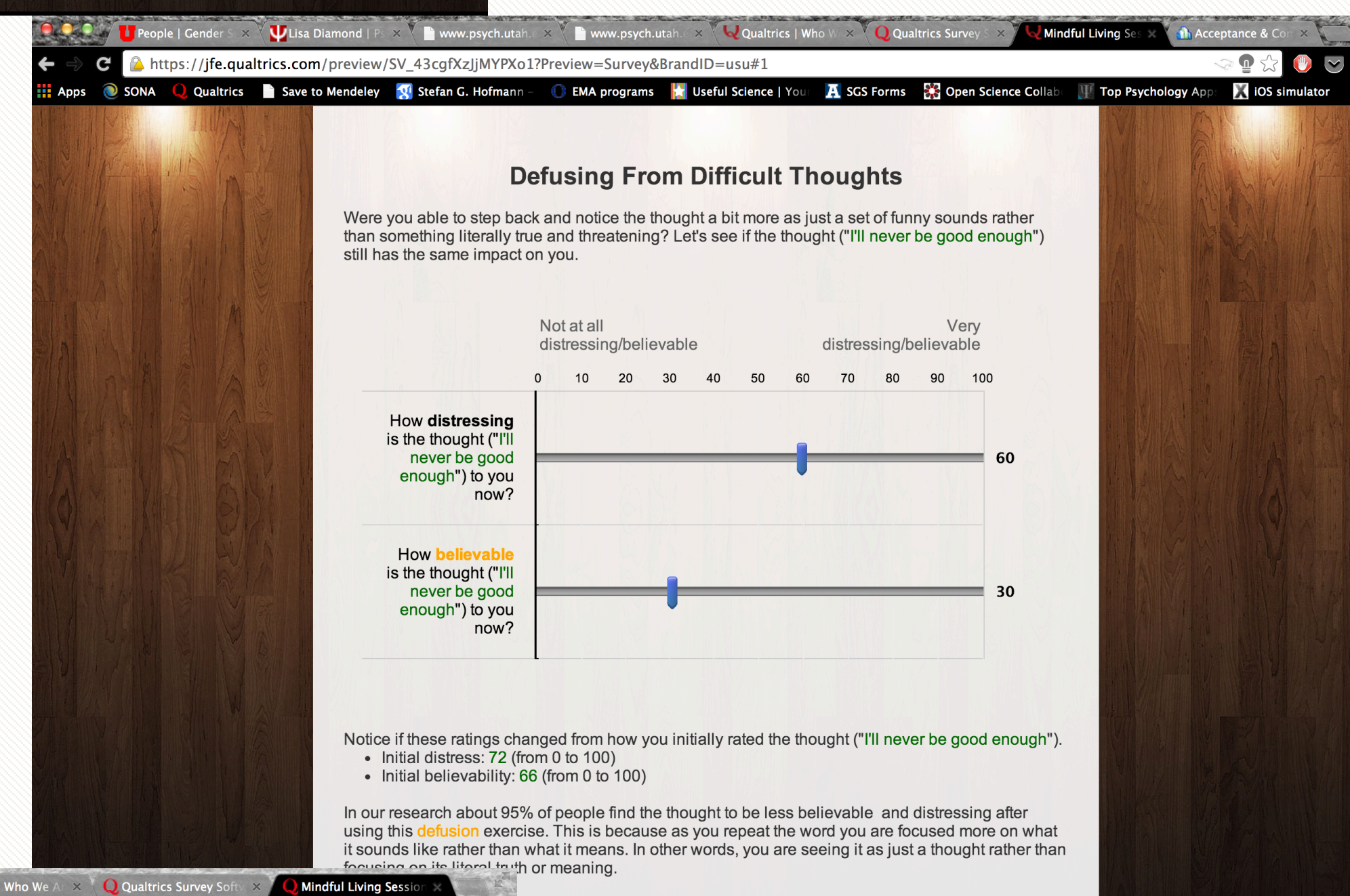
Key Website Features

- Transdiagnostic self-help program consists of a series of 30-minute sessions to be completed in a sequential format and covering each of the primary components of ACT (acceptance, defusion, present moment awareness, self, values, and committed action).
- All sessions follow a standard ACT protocol involving use of metaphors, experiential exercises, and minimal didactic content.
- Text-based format that makes heavy use of multimedia (images, audio recordings for experiential exercises), and interactive features (e.g., worksheets, assessments with tailored feedback, expandable text/popup features for examples, interactive metaphors, drag & drop ratings).
- Custom data carried forward from earlier on in the session, as well as skip and display logic to tailor content to the participant's responses (within sessions).
- Summary print-outs of each session and reviews of previous sessions, along with downloadable experiential exercise recordings and homework assignments between sessions.

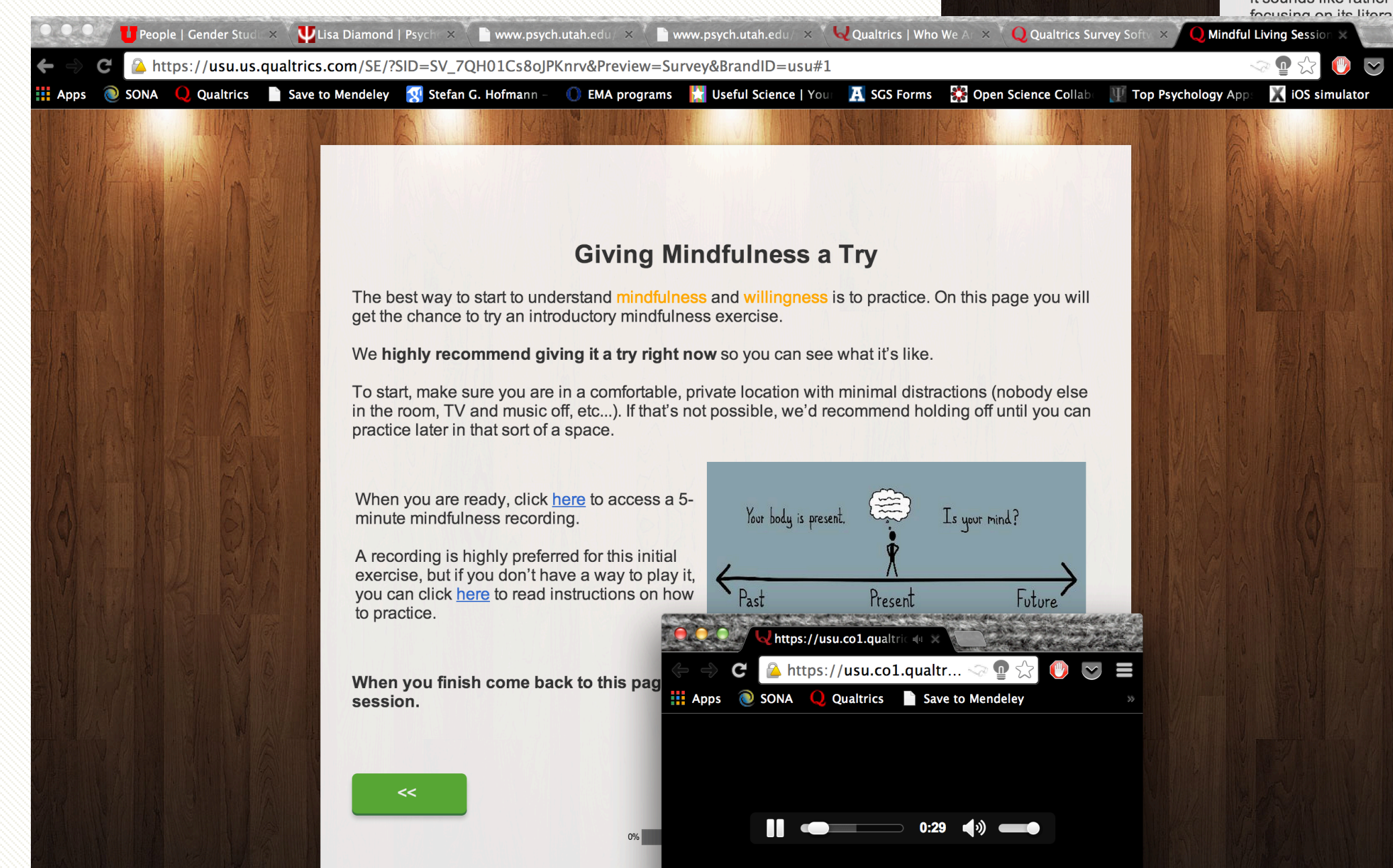
Website Screenshots



- YouTube video integration (attending to the process of living vs. outcome)



- Use of rating scales and carry-over responses from previous page focused on fusion



- Audio recording integration (5-minute mindfulness exercise)

Usability Testing Results

- A sample of 5 USU college students were recruited to assess the first 2 sessions of the program in a lab setting through a "think aloud" procedure, 10-item System Usability Scale (SUS; Tullis & Albert, 2008), and overall feedback gathering session with the researcher. Participant comments were aggregated and reviewed for each of the program sessions to identify areas needing revision, and descriptive statistics from the SUS provided overall program usability ratings.
- 90% SUS rating (within the "excellent" range).
- All 5 participants reported that the program held their interest, and stated that they would recommend this program to a friend who was struggling in college. 4/5 participants stated that they would use it on their own if they were distressed.
- *Common "think aloud" comments:* participants enjoyed the audio-led exercises, comics, quotes, carry-over data (that tailored the experience) and the overall simple/straightforward nature of the website.

Conclusions

(related to developing with Qualtrics)

Positive	Negative
Zero cost to the researcher (avoiding the timely and sometimes unpredictable grant process)	No ability to carry-over data across surveys (although data can be carried forward within surveys)
Minimal training required, and due to Qualtrics' popularity, numerous user-created training resources are freely available online.	Minimal skip and display logic complexity, which limits the program to a tunneled approach.
Qualtrics worked on numerous browsers running on various computer & mobile platforms without requiring specialized coding/formatting.	As a result, no Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA)-type functionality, which could allow for contextually aware/intelligent branching and tailoring between a group of surveys.
Allowed for rapid iterative development over a much shorter timespan than is usually expected for web-based treatment development in this field.	Minimal coding complexity – no ability to create animations or question types that are not pre-defined by Qualtrics
Allowed for enough complexity and multimedia integration to hold the participants' interest while still being deemed "simple" and rated as "excellent" in terms of usability.	
Unexpected benefit of browser metadata and page timer metrics (first & last click, page submit, & click count) collection.	

- Overall, it appears that Qualtrics is a capable and sufficient platform for prototype web-based self-help program development.

Next Steps: Phase II of the Study

- Finalize the development of the last 4 sessions and refine based on comments made in usability testing (alpha and beta testing prior to Fall)
- Begin recruiting & running participants in a RCT with all 6 sessions of the ACT website during the Fall 2014 semester (RCT will compare the ACT program to a waitlist condition).

References

Blanco, C., Okuda, M., Wright, C., Hasin, D.S., Grant, B.F., et al. (2008). Mental health of college students and their non-college-attending peers: Results from the national epidemiologic study on alcohol related conditions. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 65, 1429-1437.

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Tullis, T, Albert W. (2008). *Measuring the user experience*. San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufmann.