Barry S. Kramer

Information Sources

Information for this tutorial is used by permission of Margaret Riel, Ph.D. and can be found on the Learning Circles Web site - www.iearn.org/circles/.

The Learning Circles Web site and project is administered by Margaret Riel, Ph.D. a visiting faculty member of the Graduate School of Education at Pepperdine University, in Malibu, California. Dr. Riel developed the Learning Circles model and has been administering this Web site for iEARN since 1996.

Currently, the International Education And Resource Network (iEARN - www.iearn.org) provides support for iEARN Learning Circles out of its office in New York City. Learning Circles is listed as one of their high profile, ongoing collaborative projects.

Development of Product

All graphics, text, and programming used in this tutorial were created by Barry S. Kramer in December 2003 as a project for the graduate course EdT 404 Interactive Multimedia Programming at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA.

Next Area of Development

The next major area to be developed for this project would be to include a section on the "Educational Benefits" of Learning Circles. I was actually able to begin this process and included an extra informational screen and embedded it on the Educational Benefits of Learning Circles in my final project.

Another component that should be developed would be to give examples of student work in the area of the three Learning Circles themes. Also, the users should be able to sign up for Learning Circles directly from the tutorial. All of these items are currently available in html format on the Learning Circles Web site.

Future goals for this project would be to develop specific tutorials for each of the phases of Learning Circles. Ideally it would be best to have a tutorial that addressed all the areas covered in the Learning Circles online Teacher Handbook. Online tutorials with embedded items would provide potential participants with an interactive format to learn the information they need to participate in a Learning Circle project.

The next major goal for this product would be to have it featured on the Learning Circles Web page. Before this it would be reviewed and critiqued by Margaret Riel, Ph.D., as well as the administrative staff at iEARN-US in New York City.

Time Structure

My project has four major sections to it. These were outlined in the "Scope" section of my original project plan. These same four sections are featured in the final project -

1. Learning Circles Background Information
2. The Learning Circle Concept and Model
3. Phases of a Learning Circle
4. Learning Circle Themes

Frame 1 contains a preloader for potential users who will be accessing the tutorial using slow download speeds.

The next two frames contain the "Learning Circles Background Information." Frame 2 is an introductory movie and frame 3 is the main menu that is used to access the remaining three sections.

The "The Learning Circle Concept and Model" section contains 4 frames.

Frame 4 contains background information on the "The Learning Circle Concept and Model." Frame 5 contains an embedded item on "The Learning Circle Concept and Model."

Frame 6 contains background information on the "The Educational Benefits of Learning Circles." Frame 7 contains an embedded item on "The Educational Benefits of Learning Circles."

The "Phases of a Learning Circle" section contains 2 frames.

Frame 8 contains background information on the "Phases of a Learning Circle." Frame 9 contains an embedded item on "Phases of a Learning Circle."

The "Learning Circle Themes" section contains 2 frames.

Frame 10 contains background information on the "Learning Circle Themes." Frame 11 contains an embedded item on "Learning Circle Themes."

Lastly, a Credits page is also featured on frame 12. The link to this page is from the Menu page. The return link form the Credits page takes the user back to the Menu page.

Naming Conventions

Naming conventions were used for the development of this product that closely labeled layers and items according to their function and/or location. Multiple words were renamed as one word using the convention of beginning the first word with a lower case letter and then beginning each successive word with an upper case letter even if it was not a proper noun. An example of this would be the layer "dropTarget".

In the project these layer names indicate the following -

actions   - all actions and variables for the tutorial
preloader   - the graphics and action script needed for the preloading sequence
activeButtons   - all buttons that have actions applied to them except for the bottom
                           navigation buttons
draggleItems   - all draggable movie clips that have action script applied to them
dropTarget   - all drop target movie clips that have action script applied to them
text   - all static text items
dynamicText   - all dynamic text displayed in the dedicated areas
graphicsDedArea   - all graphics items that are not associated with any actions and all
                           backgrounds behind the dynamic text
navNextScreen   - all bottom navigation buttons used to advance to the next screen. The text
                           on these buttons changes from frame to frame
navPrevMainMenu - all bottom navigation buttons used to move to the previous frame or the
                           main learning Circles menu. The text remains the same on these buttons
background   - all basic background colors

In the library all graphics, movie clips, and buttons use naming conventions that indicate their function. These items are grouped in the library according to their function.

All bottom navigation items are grouped in a folder named "subNav". They are named according to their function, color, and frame location.

Important Variables

The variables identified below are found in the actions layer. Frame 1 identifies variables used primarily for the "Sub navigation" buttons. The remaining variables are identified in the frames where they are used.

Frame 1 -

menuPage	-	The Main Learning Circles Menu page
conceptPage	-	The beginning of the "The Learning Circle Concept and Model" section
phasesPage	-	The beginning of the "Phases of a Learning Circle" section
themesPage	-	The beginning of the "Learning Circle Themes" section
creditsPage	-	The page that contains credits about the tutorial

Frame 6 -

topClip = integratesComputerMC	-	This variable is used to identify the top movie clip

Frame 8 -

topClip = goodbyeMC	-	This variable is used to identify the top movie clip

Frame 9 -

topClip = publishingMC	-	This variable is used to identify the top movie clip
phase1draggable = true	-	These variables are used to make these items draggable. When the user clicks on the item it remains draggable until it is placed on the correct drop target. At that time it snaps into place and is no longer draggable.
phase2draggable = true		
phase3draggable = true		
phase4draggable = true		
phase5draggable = true		
phase6draggable = true		

Frame 11 -

topClip = mindWorksMC	-	This variable is used to identify the top movie clip

Explanation of Critical Code Segments

The majority of the action script code is used to for basic navigation movements, draggable items, and the revealing of text in Dedicated Areas. The basic actions that are used are mouse overs, mouse clicks, and click and drag.

Frames that contain draggable items have a need to make the clicked-on image the top image so that it is not accidentally dragged underneath other items. Screens 6, 8, 9, and 11 contain code to make the clicked on image the top image. In these frames it was necessary to add action script to the frames as well to set up variables so that the top image could be identified.

In frames 8 and 9 there is a need for the users to actually view the name of the draggable items. For this reason, the users receive the item name when they mouse over the item. That name remains when they click and drag.

In frames 6, 8, and 11 the draggable items have code that makes them disappear when they reach the drop target. Frame 7 has items that also disappear when the user clicks on a correct response.

In frame 9 the draggable items have code to snap them into place when they reach the correct drop target.

The embedded items on frames 6, 8, 9, and 11 contain code that provides instructive feedback when the items are dropped on an incorrect response. All draggable items have code that returns them to their original position if they are incorrectly dropped on a position that is not a drop target.

Html code was used in most of the dynamic text fields.

Known Bugs

No known bugs at this time.

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Flow Chart

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │      Frame 1        │
                    │     Preloader       │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │      Frame 2        │
                    │  An Introduction to │
                    │   Learning Circles  │
                    │  Main Entry - Movie │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
      ┌─────────────────────┐         ┌──────────────┐
      │      Frame 3        │────────▶│   Frame 12   │
      │ Learning Circles    │         │   Credits    │
      │ Menu Links to Each  │         │    Page      │
      │     Section         │         └──────────────┘
      └─────────────────────┘
```

Frame 4	Frame 8	Frame 10
The Learning Circle Concept and Model	Phases of a Learning Circle	Learning Circle Themes

Frame 5	Frame 9	Frame 11
Embedded Item	Embedded Item	Embedded Item

Frame 6
Educational Benefits of Learning Circles

Frame 7
Embedded Item