Jenna: the Backpacking Guide

Erik Harris, Rupa Patel, Cathy SooHoo
Adaptive Learning Guides
December 13, 2000
Introduction

- Target audience
  - Young adult females (16-25)
  - San Francisco Bay Area

- Learning goals
  - Confidence, knowledge, know-how

- Curriculum overview
  - Introduction and overview, trip planning, terrain types, equipment, trail tips, wildlife, review, simulation
Jenna introduces herself

- **Jenna:** Hello, and welcome to Outdoor Skills Training! My name is Jenna, and I’ll be glad to show you everything you need to know to enjoy the experience of backpacking. What’s your name?

- **User:** I’m Kristen, but I don’t know how interested I am in backpacking. I don’t think I have the skills or the stamina…

- **Jenna** takes notice of the user’s lack of self-confidence and reluctance towards backpacking and responds appropriately

- **Jenna:** Hi Kristen, glad to meet you. A lot of women don’t think they’re the “backpacking type”, but I’m here to show you how fun and rewarding it can be. I’ll teach you the basics and you’ll be ready to go! Want to get started?
Persona

- On-screen presence
- Backstory
- Knowledge
- Social interactions
- Change in personality and emotions
Jenna reveals her personality

- **User**: So where do wilderness experts like you come from?
- **Jenna**: I was born and raised in San Francisco, and I still live there now. My family was really into backpacking, so I grew up surrounded by nature lovers.
- **User**: That’s definitely not me. I grew up surrounded by tall buildings in New York City.
- **Jenna**: Oh, I love the Big Apple! I’ve always wanted to go there.
- *Jenna gets excited when the user mentions something she likes.*
Learner Model

- Classify persistent features
- Determine user’s outdoor experience
- Monitor user’s affect towards subject
Seven Intelligences

- Verbal/Linguistic
- Visual/Spatial
- Musical
- Logical/Mathematical
- Bodily/Kinesthetic
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal
Questionnaire

Rate the following activities based on how much you enjoy them (1-10), or 0 if you don’t do them.

- Watching movies
- Playing sports
- Talking with friends
- Acting in a play
- Reading books
- Listening
- Singing
- Writing in a journal
- ....
Jenna gets to know the user

- **User:** There are so many things I like doing, so I don’t know if I’d want to go backpacking. I don’t even have time to do everything I need to do!

- **Jenna:** Getting in touch with nature helps me when I’m most stressed. I have time to slow down and think things through. Have you ever gone camping before?

- **Jenna realizes that Kristen is a highly intrapersonal learner who needs logical reasons to go backpacking. She also goes on to profile Kristen’s outdoors experience.**

- **User:** Nope. Wouldn’t have the slightest idea how to pitch a tent.
Curriculum Model

Layered linear structure based on modules:

- Overview and intro
- Trip planning
- Terrain types
- Equipment
- Trail Tips
- Wildlife
- Review and Questions
- Simulated Hike
Jenna introduces an exploratory module

- **Jenna:** Ok, are you ready to learn about the different types of terrain people backpack in? Each type of terrain presents a special challenge, and they all have their own unique beauty.
- **User:** Sure, let’s go.
- **Jenna:** Great! Well, here’s the different types of terrain I’ve gone backpacking in.

*The terrain module pops open onscreen with scenic photos of the different terrains: Mountains, foothills, snow, beach, marsh, desert, and forest.*

- **Jenna:** Go ahead and pick one of them you’d like to hear about! <grins>
Jenna guides the user through a sub-topic task and provides gentle guidance

- **Jenna:** Usually when I plan backpacking trips, I try to do it well in advance so I have time to prepare. The longer the trip, the longer in advance I try to have it planned. Now, what do you suppose is a good amount of planning time for a three day trip? I’ll give you three guesses.

- **User:** I don’t know, maybe a week?

- **Jenna:** You’d have to be really organized and experienced to plan a three day trip in a week. It usually takes me a little longer...
Pedagogical Model

- Role - camp counselor
- Strategy and tactics
  - Advice, stories, demonstrations, Q&A
- Adaptation to the learner
  - Persistent and dynamic features
- Assessment
  - Virtual backpacking trip
Jenna uses storytelling to illustrate a point

- **Jenna:** Another important thing to remember while on the trip is to store your food properly. Do you want to hear about the time when bears got to our food?

- **User:** Sure

- **Jenna:** The first time I went to Yosemite with my friends, Samantha and Maria, we left some of our food out while we were on a day hike. We figured we would only be gone an hour or two. On the way back, we saw a well-fed bear lazily sitting in a grove two miles away from our camp. We immediately knew we had made a mistake by leaving the food out. When we got back our food was gone! Bear tracks were all over the camp. Luckily we had stored and hung the rest of our food in stout, waterproofed stuff sacks. That’s a lesson I’ll never forget!
Jenna assesses the user’s skills

- Jenna: It’s such a beautiful day today. Look at all the wildlife around here! What’s that rattling sound over there?
- User: Let’s go take a look.
- Jenna: Looks like an injured snake. What should we do?
- User: Let’s bring it back to the ranger’s station.
- Jenna gently corrects the user on the appropriate strategy to take in this situation.
- Jenna: “I don’t know if that’s a good idea. That snake has diamonds on its back, and I think it's poisonous. We better leave it alone.
Evaluation

Based on:

- Assessment of user’s self image and confidence after completing the modules
- Completion of course material and thoroughness in exploring exploratory modules
- Continued contact and commitment to take a backpacking trip
Jenna asks the user for a self assessment

- **Jenna:** Wow, wasn’t that great? You did an awesome job out there. Now that was just a simulation, but all the skills you applied there apply to backpacking in the real world. So do you feel ready to go out on a real backpacking trip?
- **User:** Yeah, a short one maybe. I’d like to start slow.
- *Jenna registers the response as slightly positive, and with a slight increase in self confidence. This is an improvement of the negative and unsure initial self assessment.*
Jenna gets the user’s commitment to go on a backpacking trip

- **Jenna**: I know you’ll love it. It’s good to take it easy at first though. Why don’t you plan a one day beach trip like the one you just went on in the simulation? You could invite a few friends and have a bonfire!

- *Jenna uses the user’s simulated trip to try to inspire the user’s confidence and get the user to make a commitment to go backpacking.*

- **User**: Hey, that’s a good idea! That could be fun.

- *Jenna registers the enthusiastic response and registers the commitment as being made.*