**Critical Analysis of CBI and Photo Pos Pro**

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**Computer-Based-Instruction of Photo-Pos-Photo program**

 **Introduction:**

As I started planning for this assignment, I wanted to learn something that would benefit me in years ahead rather than making a short-term investment. It is irrelevant to allocate time on particular software that would be of little or no use at all in the future. I am a frequent traveler and taking photographs of nature and myself is something I adore. Hence, I decided to gain knowledge and techniques on how to ‘touch-up’ my existing photographs using Photo-Pos-Pro program. Photography provides me with the opportunity to **add more of a variety** of pictures on social network websites like Facebook and NetLog. I am an enthusiast of online forums, blogs and comments that are dedicated to photographs. It helps boost and stimulate my creativity and acts as a guide for future photographs, further adding different color and **sense of perspective**. I often challenge myself to take pictures with greater wisdom and purpose that will help open my eyes to see things in a different way including, but not limited to, patterns, depth, perspective, and texture. Capturing and editing photographs denotes us with a chance to **share and learn.** It has personally helped me understand how much daily life shapes our experience- the weather, how the seasons change, what the skies above us look like, and the landscape that surrounds us. Moreover, toting up unique ‘ingredients’ to my existing photographs would offer both, produce better results and learn to read-across for the writing process. For example, what am I editing the photograph for? The techniques are different but the answers might be similar: clarity, impact, emotion, power and resonance.

Prior to downloading Photo Pos Pro software, my intention was to get hands on experience on photo editing, learning unique techniques and ways to add the very bright light it is lacking. Though my desire to learn the basics of a photo editing software was due long before, lack of time and other household responsibilities are the prime reasons that held me back until now. This assignment acted as an initiative to **test the software** and the possibilities of exploring and experimenting through digital photography. I hoped to dive right in, test the water, and experiment the tools available to see what works and what does not work. Acknowledging the fact that I am an amateur in the field of photography, I hoped for nothing more than just picking up on the basic elements and tools of the software. One of the elements that I was keen on understanding was how to crop part of a photograph without it being detected and adding the light it deserves via various other tools. Another reason for selecting Photo Pos Pro was to learn how to merge photographs and/or create a collage. I felt it was necessary for me to learn these aspects of photography as I have hundreds of photographs randomly uploaded on social-network websites. Hence, creating a collage would allow me to share my journey and experiences with my friends and family in an organized fashion and illuminating the events sequentially.

Getting started with the program was quite a challenge by itself. With the initial few crashes (probably due to Windows Vista operating system), I was finally able to move on. I held high expectations of the program and was under the assumption that a complete video- guide is available. However, with the exception of a few, the tutorials were step-by-step written instructions. Being a first time user of a photo software and not being computer savvy, I tried to follow the instructions provided by the ‘TIPS’ program. Nonetheless, it took me considerable attempts before I understood some of the concepts related to the software. Fortunately, with some assistance offered by my younger sibling, who is very much interested in photography, I was able to identify and execute the steps desired without much difficulty.

**Short critique on Computer Based Instruction:**

 A lot of time and resources have been allocated towards the implementation of technology-based education. The face value may well provide a strong incentive for its usage as it is certain students have their own unique learning styles and preferences (Kearsley, 1998). Kearsley (1998) further states that “Computer programs can be designed to allow students to study what they want, at their own pace, in their own way” (para. Computer-Based Instruction). Computer-Based Instruction, or CBI, is an effective way of learning new software and its tools. It helps an individual to attain self-set goals within a given timeframe. It takes the stipulation of an instructor out of the equation, which in the long run, reduces costs of running the course. CBI can help students learn the important pieces of the course material via the use of tutorials. This method implicates student independence with self-learning. CBI is also characterized by involving students in learning via animation videos or running simulations and games, and finally showing that they have learned the material by taking tests. While technology may open up new opportunities, it has its limitations. It is essential that one thoroughly researches the benefits and drawbacks of a specific technology prior to its implementation.

The evolution of technology has enabled mankind to go beyond borders. CBI is no different. CBI is a positive addition in the distance education sector as it reduces “educational costs in the long run…” (Kulik, C., & Kulik, J. 1991, p. 75). CBI not only saves students time and effort but also produces a positive change in their attitudes due to the use of computers. It is also evident that a greater ratio of students’ score higher in their course tests and also successfully complete CBI courses compared to conventional classes. With the invention of newer technology- hardware and software- the effectiveness of CBI is increasing proportionately with time. Hence, Kulik and Kulik (1991) suggest that it is safe to say “…computers can teach satisfactorily while reducing time spent in instruction” (pp. 90-91). Furthermore, the degree of comfort is significantly greater in a CBI environment compared to other instructional modes. This is due to the fact that frames increase the degree of user-friendliness by presenting information in a more flexible and useful fashion, making documents more aesthetically appealing and facilitating display of different types of information side by side (Robertson & Solomon, 1997). Thus, computer-based instruction is not only a cost-effective alternative to traditional instruction but that it is far more cost-effective than such non-technological innovations as tutoring.

Conversely, education cannot be relied solely on online methods. Researchers have concluded that it cannot be for certain that CBI is generally effective. It has only positively impacted the delivery of instructions in trivial ways. Numerous tutorial programs have been developed and used in schools and universities with very little influence. Though it may allow a student to work on his or her own pace, it nonetheless, as suggested by Kearsley (1998), does not present the “kind of personal learning experience that individualized instruction ought to be, based upon the background and interests of the student at any particular moment” (para. Computer-Based Instruction).  Furthermore, students are not offered the proper support and the chance to ask questions, unlike in a traditional classroom environment where students are given the opportunity to clear a blurry picture. This leads to the absence of feedback that is essential for students’ thinking power and development. Also, the lack of human interaction experienced in an online learning environment can cause concern among instructors if in fact the material has been mastered by the student as expected (Prewitt, 1998). CBI further enforces that minimal computer literacy is essential in order to successfully complete a task. As Billings (1986) stresses, “if learners do not possess these skills, it will be necessary to have computer orientation classes” (p. 361) causing reduction in learning due to anxiety. Unfortunately, resistance to the merging of technology (i.e. computer) with education is still high which may “necessitate abandoning this method of instruction” (p. 361).

**Short Critique of ‘TIPS’ program in Photo-Pos-Pro:**

The program Photo Pos Pro allows an individual to edit photographs in various unique ways. The software is an alternative to the Photoshop software and many others available online. Not only is it more or less user-friendly and easy to navigate, but also offers assistance via its TIPS program generated within. The initial start-up of the program presents random tips on how to enhance the photographs with the different tools available at your disposal. Furthermore, the TIPS tutorial offers step-by-step instructions on how to edit photographs and enhance their current appearance. Though a little vague, it nonetheless explains the steps in an understandable format further offering additional videos for hard-to-understand concepts in order to simplify the task for the user. Moreover, besides offering a ‘search’ feature that allows the user promptly look up specific topics, TIPS displays the help-topics in alphabetical order making it convenient and accessible to browse through the topics.

Having access to the program for free is one thing, but being able to navigate and use its features hassle-free is another. Though the TIPS offered numerous options and suggestions, it failed to provide the ‘comfort-zone’ one needs to freely use its program and features. Likewise, it is surprising that TIPS did not offer a video-tour of the program to kick off the initial launch. It is dependent on written step-by-step instructions and assumes its’ users’ understand the concept without substantial hitch with limited number of video tutorials involved. Unfortunately, without any video or a substantial part of non-video tutorial offer on the table, the user may lose interest. Video has become an immense part of the education industry. According to **Vassilas** and Ho (2002), video is a powerful tool in training and education.It is on the rise and being increasingly used for educational purposes. Furthermore, they confirm that there is substantial evidence to support the superiorityof video training and teaching over traditional written teaching methods. One of the difficulties with the TIPS written instructions is it does not specify the location of some of the tools needed to perfect the job. For example, even though one may be following instructions as-is, trying to get around the curves and crop a person out of the picture maybe not as easy as it sounds. The TIPS program fails to specific the exact location of some of its tools required to accomplish the task. This on its own is a major drawback as it diverts user’s attention caused by stress and fatigue. Hence, offering a video tutorial is vital as it enhances the level of credibility of the program and boost learner’s interest.

**Conclusion:**

All in all, with advances in technology-driven delivery media, distance learning has done more than simply revolutionize the educational process. It has completely changed the strategic landscape. Institutions and programmers are no longer looking at a limited radius of a few hundred miles or the limits of state borders to measure the competition or define the market. As CBI is on the rise, distance learning institution and software programmers need to adopt a process that enables it to fix its position against threats and weaknesses while utilizing technology to its utmost advantage. A strategic tutorial- video inclusive instruction- if properly created will provide answers to the population of today. Though a great deal of attention in tutorials has been placed on how to use applications programs, it would be much beneficial if greater effort is directed towards a method that can deliver powerful learning experiences. (Kearsley, 1998). Whilst it is desirable to provide the basic instructions on the use of its tools, “it is even more important that they learn how to think, solve problems, make decisions and interact using those tools (Kearsley, 1998, para. Computer-Based-Instruction). And Photo-Pos-Pro is no exception. With some minor changes to the written instructions and further enhancement with the inclusion video tutorials, it can offer solutions to the basic needs of its customers on their finger-tips.

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