

Calley Gessel

Optimized Engagement

Mastering Pass/Fail Scenarios in EdTech

In this project, I served as the sole content designer, focusing on crafting engaging text for a math product in the edtech industry. The work highlights the detailed approach needed to handle pass/fail scenarios, ensuring that the messaging not only maintained student engagement but also supported learning outcomes.

Company & Product Overview

This case study focuses on an edtech company that provides learning solutions across all grade levels. The product I highlight is a program designed to teach fundamental math concepts to students in grades K–8. I developed the following text for an assessment that evaluates students' comprehension and determines the next lessons they will encounter based on their performance.

Objectives

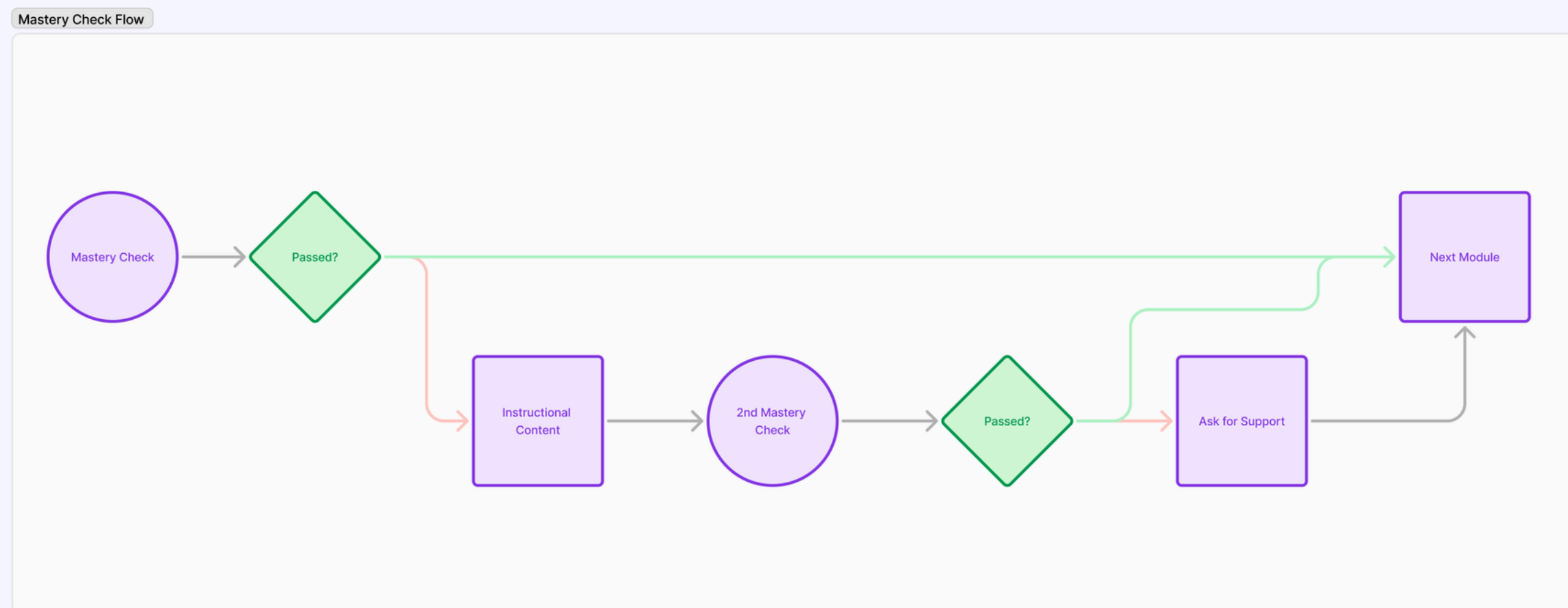
- Write UI text that introduces students to the mastery check, clearly explaining their success or failure.
- Develop three distinct sets of text, tailored for each grade band: K–2, 3–5, and 6–8.
- Use language that is positive and motivating, ensuring students feel encouraged to keep trying.
- Prompt students to seek help from their teachers if they need additional support.

Requirements

1. Ensure the language used to guide students through the mastery check is clear and straightforward.
2. Choose vocabulary and sentence structure that aligns with the lowest grade level in the set (for grades 6–8, keep it appropriate for 6th grade).
3. Keep students engaged by incorporating fun and lively language throughout the process.

User Flow

Students follow this flow when engaging with a mastery check:



Content Structure

I was responsible for writing copy for each step of the user flow, including:

- **Introduction:** Preparing students for the assessment and encouraging them to perform their best.
- **Failed Mastery Check:** Notifying students of a failed attempt while introducing the next instructional content.
- **Lesson Passed:** Informing students of their success and that they would skip the remaining lesson material.
- **Second Failure:** Communicating a second failure while encouraging students to seek offline help from their teacher.
- **Toaster Notifications:** Providing random success messages throughout the lesson to maintain motivation.

Content Structure (cont.)

For each scenario—introduction, failed mastery check, lesson passed, and second failure—both header and body copy were required.

To reduce user fatigue, I crafted multiple variations for each set of text, allowing for random selection.

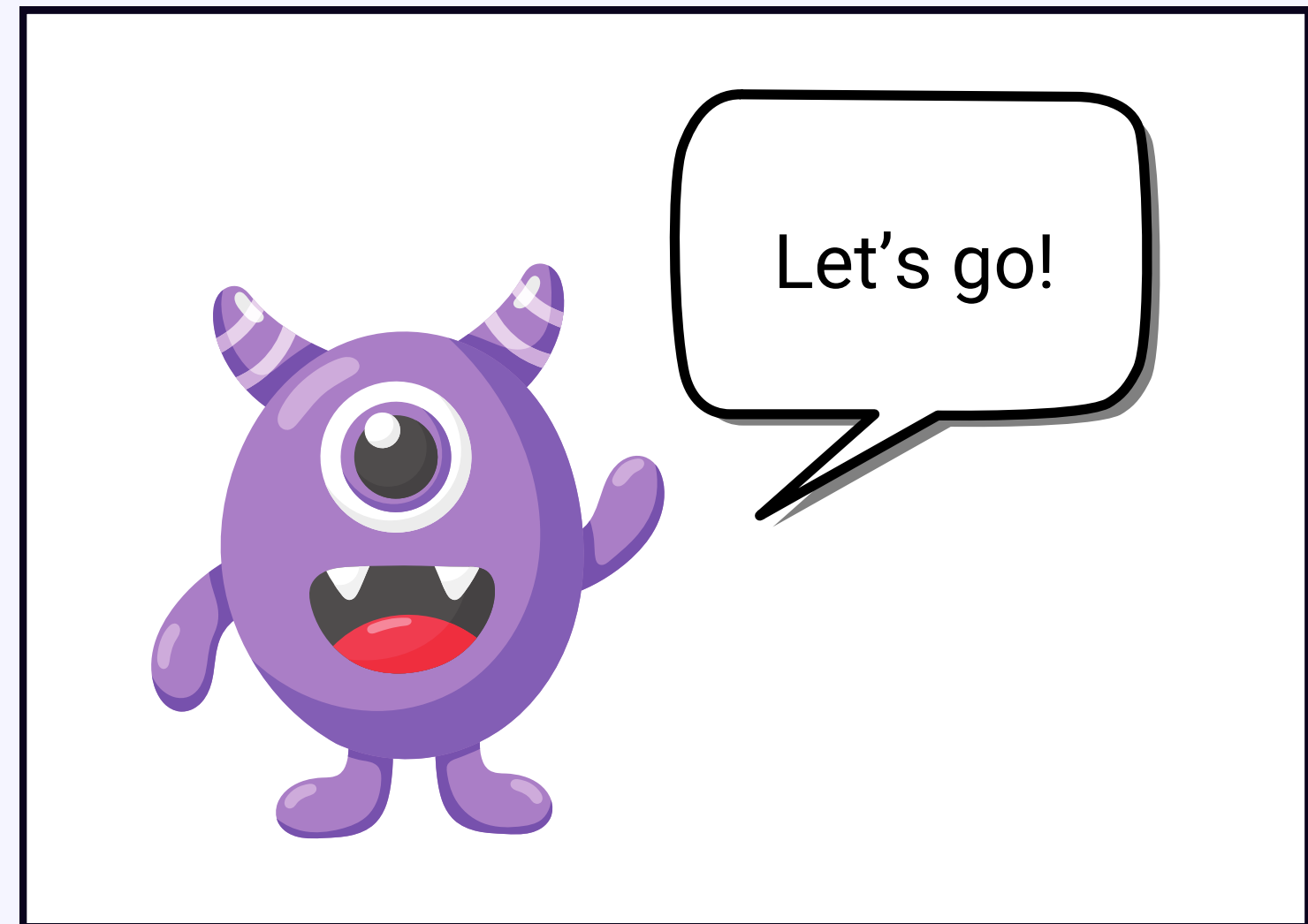
Additional Considerations

In addition to conveying lesson progress, I focused on the following areas with extra care:

- **Priming for Assessment:** Preparing students for mastery checks by explaining their purpose in a non-intimidating way.
- **Communicating Failure:** Letting students know they did not pass the mastery check while maintaining a positive, encouraging tone.
- **Encouraging Additional Support:** Prompting students to seek help from their teachers when in-product support was unavailable.

Voice and Tone

I collaborated with instructional and game design teams to develop voice and tone guidelines for the text, ensuring consistency across both onscreen text and audio. A brand character delivered the lines, while the text appeared in a speech bubble above an animated monster, adding a fun and engaging touch to the experience. We decided that the voice of the monster would be like a cheerleader for the student, watching from the sidelines and celebrating their progress.



User Interviews

To gauge how students would respond to messaging around their success and failure on a mastery check, I conducted a series of user interviews with six student participants.

Key questions I had included:

- How do you feel when you get a message saying you've done well on an assignment?
- What do you think when you see a message saying you made a mistake or didn't pass something?
- Have you ever gotten a message that made you feel like you weren't doing well? What was that like?
- What kind of message would make you feel excited to try again after getting something wrong?

User Interviews (cont.)

The key takeaways from user interviews were:

- **Reaction to a success message:** “It makes me smile, and I wanna show my teacher or my mom.”
- **Reaction to a failure message:** “It makes me not wanna do it again right away, but I know I have to.”
- **An experience with a failure message:** “It’s hard to focus after seeing it because I keep thinking about what I did wrong.”
- **What would make them keep going:** “I like when it’s kinda fun and feels like I’m just learning, not like I did something bad.”
- **What would make them keep going:** “I like when it feels encouraging but not like I’m being talked down to.”

Incorporating Feedback

Based on insights gathered from user interviews, I applied the following principles to the UI text:

- The text should celebrate student successes, much like a supportive teacher or parent would.
- Recognizing that students may hesitate to try again after a failure, it's important to reduce that hesitation with light, encouraging, or humorous text.
- Communicate that failures are a natural part of the learning journey and reassure students that they haven't done anything wrong.
- Ensure the tone meets students at their level, avoiding any language that could be perceived as condescending.

UX Writing: K–2 Intro

Header:

- Let's see what you know!
- Time for us to see what you know!
- Show us what you've got!
- Show what you know!
- Ready to show us what you can do?

Body:

- Let's answer a few questions to see what you've already learned. Pay close attention and do your best, and you'll be done in no time!
- Let's see if you can answer these questions! Pay attention and remember to do your best! You'll do great!
- Answer these questions and show what you already know. Pay close attention and try your best! We'll be cheering you on!

UX Writing: K–2 Failed Mastery Check

Header:

- Good try!
- Not bad!
- So close!
- Almost there!
- Good work!

Body:

- We still have some things to work on. Let's see what else you can learn!
- Now we can work on the things you still need to learn.
- Let's practice some more!

UX Writing: K–2 Lesson Passed

Header:

- Good try!
- Not bad!
- So close!
- Almost there!
- Good work!

Body:

- We still have some things to work on. Let's see what else you can learn!
- Now we can work on the things you still need to learn.
- Let's practice some more!

UX Writing: K–2 Second Failure

Header:

- Good try!
- Not bad!
- So close!
- Almost had it!
- Oh darn!

Body:

- We all make mistakes. Don't be afraid to ask your teacher for help!
- Your teacher can help you practice more. Don't be afraid to ask!
- Ask your teacher to help you work on this. That's what teachers are for!

UX Writing: K-2 Toaster

Toaster:

- Nice move!
- Great job!
- Way to go!
- Neat-o!
- Looking good!

UX Writing: 3–5 Intro

Header:

- Let's see what you know!
- Time for us to see what you know!
- Show us what you've got!
- Show what you know!
- Ready to show us what you can do?

Body:

- Let's answer a few questions to see what you've already learned. Pay close attention and do your best, and you'll be done in no time!
- Let's see if you can answer these questions! Pay attention and remember to do your best! You'll do great!
- Answer these questions and show what you already know. Pay close attention and try your best! We'll be cheering you on!

UX Writing: 3–5 Failed Mastery Check

Header:

- Nice effort!
- Not bad!
- So close!
- Almost had it!
- Good work!

Body:

- Mastery is within your reach! Let's see how you can improve.
- Now let's focus on what you still need to learn. You've got this!
- Let's get some more practice. You'll be an expert in no time!

UX Writing: 3–5 Lesson Passed

Header:

- That was magnificent!
- I knew you could do it!
- You made that look easy!
- Give yourself a high five!
- Impressive!

Body:

- We all make mistakes. Don't be afraid to ask your teacher for help!
- Your teacher can help you practice more. Don't be afraid to ask!
- Ask your teacher to help you work on this. That's what teachers are for!

UX Writing: 3–5 Second Failure

Header:

- Good try!
- Not bad!
- So close!
- Almost had it!
- Oh darn!

Body:

- Even experts make mistakes sometimes. Don't be afraid to ask your teacher for help when you get stuck!
- Your teacher can help you get some more practice. All you have to do is ask!
- Ask your teacher to help you work on this. That's what teachers are for!

UX Writing: 3–5 Toaster

Toaster:

- Nice move!
- Great job!
- Way to go!
- Neat-o!
- Looking good!

UX Writing: 6–8 Intro

Header:

- Ready to show what you've got?
- Let's see what you can do!
- Think you've got what it takes?
- We want to see what you can do!
- Time to show off your skills!

Body:

- Let's answer some questions to see what you already know. Do your best and you'll have nothing to fear!
- The next few questions will show what you already know. Take your time! You'll do great!
- Answer these questions to show us what you know already. If you do your best, you'll always succeed!

UX Writing: 6–8 Failed Mastery Check

Header:

- You almost had it!
- Okay, not bad!
- You were so close!
- That was a tough one!
- You'll get it next time!

Body:

- You need a little more practice. We can help you with that!
- Now that's out of the way, we can focus on building your skills!
- Let's take a look at how you can improve!

UX Writing: 6–8 Lesson Passed

Header:

- What a success!
- Brilliant!
- You handled that like a pro!
- Nicely done!
- Bravo!

Body:

- You're ready for your next challenge!
- New challenges are waiting for you!
- Let's move on to something new!

UX Writing: 6–8 Second Failure

Header:

- You almost had it!
- You were so close!
- That was a tough one!
- You'll get it next time!
- Oh darn!

Body:

- Your teacher can help you figure out what went wrong. Reach out to them!
- Don't be afraid to ask your teacher for some extra practice!
- You can always get a little more help from your teacher. Tell them what you need!

UX Writing: 6–8 Toaster

Toaster:

- Well done!
- Remarkable!
- Impressive!
- Tremendous!
- What an accomplishment!

Results

- **Enhanced User Experience:** The UI copy provided clear, concise feedback, making the assessment experience more intuitive and user-friendly, which likely led to a smoother, more enjoyable experience for students.
- **Improved Student Engagement:** By delivering engaging and informative feedback, the UI copy helped keep students motivated and focused, encouraging them to remain engaged with the assessment and continue learning.

Results (cont.)

- **Increased Confidence and Retention:** Positive reinforcement and constructive feedback were designed to boost student confidence, helping them understand mistakes and improving material retention without discouragement.
- **Alignment with Learning Objectives:** The assessment feedback was carefully crafted to align with the course's learning objectives, offering students actionable insights that supported their educational progress.