Instructor's Summary for *Murach's Visual Basic 2008*

This summary is intended to introduce you to the components of our Instructor's CD and to help you get started using them. At the least, we recommend that you read the topics under "What's on the Instructor's CD," because they not only describe the components but also our underlying instructional philosophy.

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What's on the Instructor's CD

As we see it, the Instructor's CD for *Murach's Visual Basic 2008* contains a starting set of instructional materials that by themselves will help any corporate trainer or college instructor run an effective course. Those materials include the applications in the book, instructional objectives, tests, exercises, projects, and PowerPoint slides. A summary of these materials follows.

Book applications

So you can demonstrate the applications that are presented in the book, the Instructor's CD includes those applications, plus the SQL Server 2005 database that they require. The easiest way for your students to get these applications and the database is to download them from our web site.

Objectives

Since we believe that instructional objectives should be the start of any educational methodology, we provide a set of objectives for each chapter in the book. We prepared these objectives based on the principles presented by Robert F. Mager in his classic book, *Preparing Instructional Objectives*. As a result, our objectives describe the skills that your trainees or students should have when they complete a chapter, and you should be able to test whether they can apply those skills.

Beyond that, we've tried to make sure that each objective describes a skill that a professional programmer should have. This gives our objectives a real-world context that you usually won't find in the objectives for other books. So, if your trainees or students can do what the objectives state when the course is over, you can be sure that they have learned the skills that they will actually need on the job.

If you review the objectives for one of the chapters, you'll see that the first objectives for each chapter are what we refer to as *applied objectives*. These ask the students to apply what they've learned as they develop Visual Basic applications. These of course are the critical objectives of a programming course, and they are best tested by having the trainees or students do projects like the ones that we provide.

After the applied objectives for each chapter, you'll find what we refer to as *knowledge objectives*. These objectives define skills like identifying, describing, and explaining the required concepts, terms, and procedures. These objectives determine whether your students are able to talk intelligently about the topics that are presented. And these objectives can be tested by the questions in our test banks.

If you can convince your trainees or students that they will only be tested on the skills that are described by the objectives, we believe that your trainees or students will work more efficiently. But to make that work, you need to make sure that your tests make good on that promise. And of course ours do.

Test banks

To test comprehension, the Instructor's CD includes one test bank for each chapter in the book. Each test bank provides questions that are designed to test the skills that are described by the objectives for that chapter, and each test question is designed to test the skill described by one objective. This keeps the promise to the students that they will only be expected to apply the skills that are described by the objectives.

In our test banks, we use only multiple-choice and completion questions because they have the highest validity. To us, that means that the trainees or students who get the best scores are also the ones with the best knowledge and skills. In contrast, matching and true/false questions have low validity, so we don't use them.

Besides matching our questions to the objectives, we use this guideline to check the validity of each question: *An expert in the field should be able to get the right answer*. This guideline eliminates questions that test the knowledge of trivial details that no one should be expected to remember. This guideline also forces us to focus on questions that test the concepts and skills that are required on the job.

One request that we occasionally get is for more questions for each chapter. But since we already offer two or three questions for each objective, it's difficult to add more questions unless we (1) duplicate what we've already tested with different words or examples, (2) stop matching the questions with objectives, or (3) start testing trivial details. So if your main reason for wanting more questions is to stop cheating, we hope that you'll get around that problem by using online testing software that lets you scramble the questions and multiple-choice options for each student. Which brings us to the issue of test bank formats.

Test bank formats

Our test banks are available in ExamView format, which can only be used with ExamView software; BlackBoard format, which can only be used with BlackBoard software; and Rich Text Format (RTF), which can be imported into many types of programs. If you have ExamView software, we suggest that you use it with our test banks because we think it is a terrific product. With ExamView, you can easily add questions to or modify the questions in our ExamView test banks. You can create printed tests from our test banks. You can create online tests or self-study tests that students run from an Internet site or from the network that you use for computer labs. And you can view the results online and have the grades exported to your favorite gradebook program or spreadsheet application.

If you've used any Course Technology books, you probably have ExamView. If not, you can get a copy of it for $139 from www.fscreations.com. You can also download a free, 30-day trial version from that site just to see how well it works and how easy it is to use.

In case you're interested in how online ExamView tests work, you can take the online ExamView test that we generated from the test banks for section 2 of our book. To do that, you don't need to install ExamView on your PC. You just need to download and install the free ExamView Player, which takes just a minute or two. Then, you can start the player, locate our section 2 test, and take it. This will also give you a good idea of what our test questions are like. To learn more about taking this test, please read "How to take our online ExamView test for section 2," which you'll find later in this summary.

Exercise starts

The exercises at the end of each chapter in the book are designed to help your students apply what they've just learned. To give your students a maximum of practice in a minimum of time, many of the exercises start from partial applications. These "exercise starts" are provided as part of the book application download from our web site so the students can easily get them. A batch file in this download copies all of the starts to the C:\VB 2008 directory, which corresponds to the exercise descriptions in the book.

Exercise solutions

For each exercise in the book, the Instructor's CD provides a solution. Then, you can present those solutions in class and compare them with the solutions that the students come up with.

Projects

To test your students' abilities to develop Visual Basic applications from scratch, the Instructor's CD presents projects that you can assign as your students progress through the book. These projects are numbered by chapter to give you an idea of when they can be assigned. For example, your students will have the skills they need to complete project 7-1 after they've read chapter 7.

Keep in mind, however, that the sections don't have to be read in sequence. After reading the chapters in the first two sections, for example, you may choose to go on to the chapters in section 4 or 5 instead of the chapters in section 3. Because of that, the projects for sections 4 and 5 require only the skills presented in sections 1 and 2.

Because most of the projects take only an hour or two to develop, you can use selected projects as tests that are done in computer lab. That of course is the only sure way to see whether your students can do the applied objectives for this book. And the major goal of our book is to help your students meet those objectives at a professional level.

Projects database

The projects for section 3 require a TechSupport database, and we provide that database as both Access and SQL Server 2005 files. We also provide batch files for attaching, detaching, and restoring the SQL Server 2005 database.

If your students are going to use the SQL Server 2005 database on their own PCs, you can distribute the required files to them by distributing the TechSupport.exe file that's on the Instructor's CD. When a student double-clicks on this file in the Windows Explorer, it installs the files in the correct directories and attaches the database. This is explained in "How to use the TechSupport database" in the project descriptions.

Project solutions

All of the solutions to the projects are included on the Instructor's CD so you can present them in class or compare them with your students' solutions.

PowerPoint slides

Because our book uses the paired-pages method of presentation, all of the critical information is presented in the figures. Then, the PowerPoint slides present abridged versions of that information. That includes all of the diagrams, tables, and code that you may want to review in class. As a result, these slides make it easy for you to review any of the skills that your students have difficulty with. In addition, the slides for each chapter start with the instructional objectives, so you can review them in class.

If you want to modify any of the PowerPoint slides, you should know that we prepared the slides by copying the Word text from our figures into PowerPoint. As a result, you can't use PowerPoint to modify the text in the normal way. Instead, you need to double-click on the text for a slide to open it up in Word, make modifications to the text in Word, and click outside the text to return to PowerPoint. If you try this, though, you'll see that it's an easy process. You can also use PowerPoint in the normal way to add slides, delete slides, or add your own presentation notes to the slides.

How to get started

To get started with the instructional materials, you need to install the files on the CD. In addition, if you're going to demonstrate the applications for section 3 of the book to your students, you need to attach the database that's used by these applications to SQL Server. The topics that follow describe these procedures, the directories and files that get installed from this CD, and how to take the sample ExamView test.

How to install the files and directories of the CD

From the root directory of the Instructor's CD, double-click on the file named Install.exe and respond to the dialog boxes that follow. This will install the following directories and files of the Instructor's CD onto your C drive in a directory structure that starts with C:\Murach\VB 2008\Instructors:

C:\Murach\VB 2008\ Instructors\…	Contents
Instructor's summary.doc	This Word document.
Book applications	Subdirectories that contain the applications presented in this book, along with the required images and files, the required database, and files for attaching and restoring the database.
Objectives.doc	A Word document that contains all of the instructional objectives.
Test banks	ExamView, BlackBoard, and RTF subdirectories that contain one test bank for each chapter in the book in their respective formats.
Exercise starts	Subdirectories that contain the starting applications for the exercises in the book, along with the files used by the exercises.
Exercise solutions	Subdirectories that contain our solutions for the exercises.
Projects.doc	A Word document that contains the descriptions for all of the projects for the book, including complete information about the required database.
Project solutions	Subdirectories that contain our solutions for the projects, the TechSupport database used by the projects in both SQL Server and Access format, files for attaching and restoring the SQL Server database, and the text files used by the project for chapter 23.
Slides	One PowerPoint file for each chapter.
Section 2 test.tst	An ExamView test that consists of questions that have been randomly selected from the test banks for section 2 of the book.
TechSupport.exe	An executable file that you can distribute to your students that will install and attach the SQL Server version of the TechSupport database on their PCs.

How to attach the database for the book applications

Before you can run the applications for section 3 of the book, you'll need to attach the MMABooks database these applications use to SQL Server 2005. If you have SQL Server Management Studio Express, you can attach the database using this tool. Otherwise you can attach the database to an instance of SQL Server Express that's running on your computer by running the db_attach.bat file in the C:\Murach\VB 2008\Instructors\Book applications\Database directory. For more information on this file and on the other files that are provided for working with the database, please see figure A-4 in appendix A of the book. Although this figure describes the files that are available with the download for the book, the same files are available on the Instructor's CD.

How to take our online ExamView test for section 2

If you want to get a quick idea of what our test banks are like and also see how online ExamView tests work, you need to start by downloading the free ExamView Player from www.fscreations.com. To do that, go to the Downloads menu, select Trial Versions and Student Players, download the ExamView 4 Player (because that's the version we used to create the test), and install it. This should take just a couple of minutes.

Once installed, you can start ExamView Player, enter a name and any ID, go to the C:\Murach\VB 2008\Instructors directory, and select Section 2 Test. For this test, I set the options so anyone can take it, you can take as much time as you need for it, and you can check the correct answers when you're done. If you haven't used ExamView before, I think you'll quickly see what an intuitive interface it provides. I hope you'll also see that we're providing a solid set of test questions that are consistent with our instructional objectives. The 35 questions in this test were randomly selected from the 326 questions in the test banks for chapters 4 through 12.

Any comments?

If you have any comments about our book or its instructional materials, we would be delighted to hear from you. Just e-mail us at the addresses below. But whether or not we hear from you, we want to thank you for your interest in our products.

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