Contents lists available at IJAHCI
International Journal of Advanced Human Computer Interaction
Journal Homepage: http://www.ijahci.com/
Volume 5, No. 5, 2026

Evaluating Usability of Program-of-Thought Models in Educational Software

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 05/17/2026
Revised: 06/13/2026
Accepted: 06/11/2026

Keywords:
Usability, Program-of-Thought Models, Educational Software, Human-Computer Interaction, Cognitive Load, User Experience, Learning Analytics

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the usability of Program-of-Thought (PoT) models in the context of educational software, with a focus on their potential to enhance learning experiences through intelligent tutoring systems. Program-of-Thought models, which integrate cognitive mechanisms with software algorithms, offer a novel approach to simulating human-like problem-solving processes. By embedding these models within educational tools, it becomes possible to tailor learning experiences to individual cognitive styles, thereby potentially increasing engagement and learning efficacy.

Our research employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data from user interaction logs with qualitative feedback obtained through structured interviews with educators and learners. This dual approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how PoT models can be operationalized within educational software and the extent to which they facilitate adaptive learning. The study's findings suggest that these models significantly enhance the adaptability of educational content, allowing for real-time adjustments based on user input and demonstrated understanding.

A key component of our analysis involves the examination of the PoT models' algorithms, specifically their ability to map complex cognitive tasks into computational procedures. Through this lens, the study assesses the models' effectiveness in providing personalized feedback and scaffolding, which are critical features for fostering a supportive learning environment. Furthermore, we explore the implications of these models on the cognitive load experienced by users, aiming to optimize the balance between challenge and skill level.

The results indicate that implementing Program-of-Thought models in educational software can substantially improve user engagement and learning outcomes. However, the integration of these sophisticated models necessitates careful consideration of ethical and technical challenges, particularly concerning data privacy and algorithmic transparency. These insights contribute to the ongoing discourse on the role of artificial intelligence in education, underscoring the importance of designing user-centric educational technologies.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has catalyzed transformative changes across numerous sectors, including education. In particular, the integration of Program-of-Thought (PoT) models in educational software represents a significant leap forward in the development of intelligent learning environments. These models, which simulate human-like cognitive processes, have the potential to enhance the usability and efficacy of educational tools by providing personalized and adaptive learning experiences [2, 10]. However, the true impact of these models on the overall usability of educational software remains an area ripe for exploration and analysis.

The present study seeks to evaluate the usability of Program-of-Thought models within educational software, focusing on their capacity to support diverse learning needs and improve educational outcomes. By examining the intersection of cognitive modeling and educational usability, this research aims to provide a comprehensive framework that educators and developers can use to enhance learning environments [1, 6]. To achieve this goal, the study will address several key questions: How do these models influence user engagement and learning efficiency? What are the cognitive and technical challenges associated with their implementation? And to what extent do they align with existing usability standards in educational technologies?

1.1. Background on Program-of-Thought Models

Program-of-Thought models are designed to mimic the human thought process, enabling machines to perform tasks that require reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making [3, 11]. These models are built upon cognitive architectures that incorporate elements such as memory, perception, and learning, facilitating a more nuanced interaction between machines and users [17, 21]. In the context of educational software, PoT models serve to personalize learning experiences by adapting content and instructional strategies based on individual learner profiles [4, 22].

1.2. Usability in Educational Software

Usability is a critical factor in the effectiveness of educational software, encompassing aspects such as intuitiveness, accessibility, and user satisfaction [15, 16]. A tool that is difficult to navigate or understand can hinder learning and disengage users, thereby negating its educational benefits [5, 18]. As educational technologies evolve, the demand for software that not only meets pedagogical goals but also maintains high usability standards continues to grow [14, 24].

1.3. Impact of PoT Models on Usability

The integration of PoT models into educational software presents unique opportunities and challenges for usability. These models can significantly enhance user interaction by providing real-time feedback, adaptive learning paths, and scaffolding techniques tailored to individual learners [12, 25]. However, the complexity of these models may also introduce usability challenges, such as increased cognitive load and the need for sophisticated interface designs [9, 19]. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective educational tools that leverage the full potential of PoT models [20, 23].

1.4. Research Objectives and Methodology

This study aims to systematically evaluate the usability of Program-of-Thought models in educational software by combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. Through user testing, surveys, and expert interviews, the research will assess the models' impact on user engagement, learning outcomes, and overall satisfaction [13, 26]. Additionally, the study will explore the technical and cognitive barriers to implementing PoT models, providing insights into best practices for developers and educators [7, 8].

By addressing these objectives, the research seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding AI in education, offering evidence-based recommendations for enhancing the usability and effectiveness of educational technologies.

2. Related Work

In recent years, the integration of program-of-thought models into educational software has garnered significant attention. These models, which leverage cognitive principles to facilitate learning, promise to enhance the usability and effectiveness of educational tools. As the educational landscape increasingly incorporates technology, understanding the usability of these models becomes paramount for educators and developers alike. This section reviews existing literature on the usability of program-of-thought models, focusing on their application within educational software.

Usability, as defined in the context of educational software, involves the ease with which learners can interact with and benefit from digital educational tools. The core components of usability include learnability, efficiency, memorability, error reduction, and user satisfaction [15]. Program-of-thought models specifically aim to support these components by aligning software design with cognitive processes [2]. This section will explore prior research across several dimensions:

cognitive foundations, evaluation methodologies, and the impact on learning outcomes.

2.1. Cognitive Foundations of Program-of-Thought Models

The theoretical underpinnings of program-of-thought models derive from cognitive science, emphasizing how learners process information and solve problems. These models are inspired by theories of cognitive load and schema development, which suggest that educational tools should minimize extraneous cognitive load while promoting schema acquisition [17]. Smith et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of aligning software interfaces with cognitive processes to enhance usability and learning efficiency [10].

Research by Brown (2022) further elaborated on the necessity of designing educational software that accommodates different cognitive styles and abilities, proposing adaptive interfaces that tailor content to individual user needs [11]. This adaptability is crucial for fostering an inclusive learning environment, as supported by Hernandez et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of adaptive educational technologies in catering to diverse learner profiles [4].

2.2. Evaluation Methodologies for Usability

Evaluating the usability of educational software incorporating program-of-thought models involves a variety of methodologies. Traditional usability testing, heuristic evaluation, and cognitive walkthroughs are commonly employed to assess user interaction and satisfaction [24]. Jones (2021) proposed a comprehensive framework for evaluating educational software that integrates both qualitative and quantitative measures to assess usability [18].

Recent studies, such as those by Phillips (2023), have introduced novel approaches to usability assessment, incorporating eye-tracking and neurophysiological measures to gain deeper insights into user engagement and cognitive load during interaction with educational tools [19]. These advancements in evaluation techniques provide a more nuanced understanding of how program-of-thought models impact usability.

2.3. Impact on Learning Outcomes

The integration of program-of-thought models into educational software has been shown to positively influence learning outcomes. Research indicates that these models can enhance critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and knowledge retention by providing learners with tools that align closely with their cognitive processes [12]. Evans (2022) demonstrated that learners using software designed with program-of-thought principles exhibited improved performance in complex problem-solving tasks compared to those using traditional software [25].

Moreover, Mitchell (2023) found that the use of program-of-thought models in educational software enhances student engagement and motivation, leading to more sustained and effective learning experiences [13]. Turner (2024) highlighted the potential for these models to facilitate personalized learning paths, further supporting student autonomy and mastery of content [26].

In conclusion, the body of literature underscores the potential of program-of-thought models to transform educational software usability and efficacy. As research continues to evolve, it is essential to develop and refine methodologies for evaluating these models' impact on learning outcomes, ensuring that technological advancements in education remain aligned with cognitive and pedagogical principles.

3. Methodology

In this section, we delineate the comprehensive methodology employed to evaluate the usability of program-of-thought models in educational software. The study is governed by a structured research design that integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a robust analysis of usability aspects. Our methodology is grounded in established usability evaluation frameworks, ensuring relevance and rigor in our examination of educational software interfaces [10, 12, 15].

The primary objective of this study is to assess the usability of program-of-thought models which are increasingly being integrated into educational software to enhance cognitive interaction and user engagement [13, 17]. By leveraging these models, educational tools aim to facilitate more intuitive learning experiences, thus necessitating a thorough investigation of their usability across diverse educational contexts [1, 11].

3.1. Research Design

The research design is structured to accommodate the complexities inherent in educational software usability evaluations. We employed a mixed-methods approach, which involves quantitative data collection through user testing and surveys, complemented by qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups [19, 24].

3.1..1 Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data were gathered through controlled experiments where participants interacted with the educational software embedded with program-of-thought models. We utilized usability metrics such as task completion time, error rates, and user satisfaction scores

as primary indicators [4, 21]. These metrics were analyzed using statistical methods to identify patterns and correlations in usability performance [25].

3.1..2 Qualitative Data Collection

To enrich our understanding, qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Participants were encouraged to articulate their thoughts on the usability of the program-of-thought models, providing insights into cognitive load and user experience [18, 23]. The qualitative responses were thematically analyzed to uncover deeper insights into user interactions with the software [22].

3.2. Sampling and Participants

The study involved a purposive sample of educators and students from various educational institutions. This sampling strategy was selected to ensure that the participant pool adequately reflects the diversity of potential end-users of educational software [3, 5]. Participants were selected based on their familiarity with digital learning tools and their willingness to engage with innovative educational technologies [6].

3.3. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using a combination of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics for quantitative data, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data [2, 16]. Statistical analysis software was utilized to perform regression analyses and ANOVA tests to evaluate the significance of usability metrics [14, 20].

Qualitative data were analyzed using NVivo software, enabling the coding and categorization of themes that emerged from participant narratives [1, 26]. This dual approach to data analysis ensured a comprehensive understanding of both the numerical and experiential dimensions of usability evaluation.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their awareness of the study's objectives and their rights as participants [9]. Data confidentiality and anonymity were maintained in accordance with standard ethical guidelines in educational research [7, 8].

In summary, this methodology section outlines the rigorous and multifaceted approach taken to evaluate the usability of program-of-thought models in educational software. By integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, we aim to provide a holistic view of how these models contribute to enhancing educational experiences and outcomes.

4. Results

The evaluation of the usability of Program-of-Thought (PoT) models in educational software has emerged as a critical area of research, primarily due to the increasing reliance on artificial intelligence to enhance learning environments. PoT models, which integrate cognitive processes into computational frameworks, have been posited to improve the adaptability and personalization of educational tools [10, 18]. This study aims to empirically assess the usability of these models, focusing on their applicability and effectiveness in real-world educational scenarios.

Research has shown that the use of cognitive modeling in educational software can significantly impact student engagement and learning outcomes [22, 23]. However, while theoretical advantages have been extensively documented, empirical evaluations are needed to substantiate these claims through practical implementation [11, 15]. This section presents the findings of our study, which was designed to rigorously evaluate the usability of PoT models across various educational settings.

4.1. User Interface and Interaction Design

The first aspect of evaluation centered on the user interface and interaction design of educational software utilizing PoT models. A key finding was that interfaces leveraging these models demonstrated enhanced adaptability to user input, leading to a more intuitive learning experience [5, 9]. Participants reported increased satisfaction with the software's ability to anticipate and respond to their learning needs, supporting previous assertions about the dynamic nature of PoT-driven interfaces [1, 16]. Metrics such as task completion time and error rates were significantly improved, corroborating evidence from similar studies [19, 24].

4.2. Cognitive Load and User Experience

Another critical factor examined was the cognitive load imposed on users by the educational software. Our analysis indicated that PoT models effectively reduced extraneous cognitive load by tailoring content complexity to the user's current understanding level [2, 17]. This adaptability was linked to improved user experience and learning efficiency, aligning with findings from previous research [3, 25]. The reduction in cognitive load was quantified using standard measures such as the NASA-TLX, which showed statistically significant improvements compared to non-PoT counterparts [4, 21].

4.3. Learning Outcomes and Effectiveness

The analysis of learning outcomes revealed that educational software incorporating PoT models was more effective in enhancing student performance across diverse subjects [12, 13]. The personalized feedback mechanisms embedded within PoT models facilitated deeper understanding and retention of material, as evidenced by higher test scores and improved skill acquisition [6, 14]. These results support the hypothesis that PoT models can offer significant pedagogical advantages over traditional, static educational software solutions [8, 20].

4.4. Limitations and Challenges

Despite the promising results, several limitations and challenges were identified. The complexity of implementing PoT models in existing educational software frameworks poses significant technical and logistical hurdles [15, 26]. Additionally, while the models are designed to adapt to individual learning preferences, there is a risk of overfitting to specific user profiles, potentially limiting the generalizability of the software's applications [1]. These challenges highlight the need for ongoing research and development to optimize the integration of PoT models in educational contexts [7, 24].

In conclusion, the empirical evaluation of the usability of Program-of-Thought models in educational software suggests substantial benefits in terms of user engagement, cognitive load reduction, and learning outcomes. However, addressing the identified challenges will be crucial for realizing the full potential of these models in educational technology.

5. Discussion

The integration of Program-of-Thought (PoT) models in educational software has emerged as a significant advancement in enhancing learning outcomes. These models, which are designed to simulate human-like reasoning and problem-solving, offer the potential to transform traditional educational paradigms by providing personalized and adaptive learning experiences. However, evaluating their usability remains a complex challenge that requires a multifaceted approach. This discussion aims to explore the usability of PoT models in educational software, with a focus on their effectiveness, adaptability, and cognitive impact. By drawing on existing literature, this section seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing the usability of PoT models and their implications for future educational technologies.

The usability of PoT models is critical to their success in educational contexts, as it directly impacts user engagement and learning efficacy. Usability, in this context, encompasses the ease of use, accessibility, and the ability of the software to meet educational objectives. Various studies have highlighted the importance of usability in educational technologies, underscoring its role in enhancing student motivation and learning outcomes [5, 10, 15]. This discussion will delve into the core components of usability, examining how PoT models are currently evaluated and the challenges that arise in this process.

5.1. Effectiveness of Program-of-Thought Models

The effectiveness of PoT models in educational settings is a paramount consideration, as it determines the extent to which these models can facilitate meaningful learning experiences. Effectiveness is often measured by the model's ability to improve learning outcomes, foster critical thinking, and support problem-solving skills [11, 12, 18]. Studies have shown that PoT models can enhance educational software by providing real-time feedback and personalized learning paths, thereby catering to the diverse needs of students [1, 13].

However, the effectiveness of these models is contingent upon several factors, including the quality of the underlying algorithms, the contextual relevance of the content, and the alignment with educational goals. For instance, poorly designed models may lead to cognitive overload or frustration, thereby diminishing their educational value [17, 21]. As such, ongoing assessment and refinement of PoT models are essential to ensure their continued effectiveness in dynamic educational environments.

5.2. Adaptability and Personalization

Adaptability is a key feature of PoT models, enabling them to provide personalized learning experiences that are tailored to individual student needs. This adaptability is achieved through the use of advanced algorithms that analyze student interactions and learning patterns, subsequently adjusting the content and instructional strategies [4, 23]. Personalization not only enhances student engagement but also promotes deeper understanding and retention of knowledge [16, 25].

The challenge, however, lies in developing models that are sufficiently flexible to accommodate a wide range of learning styles and preferences while maintaining a coherent educational framework [14, 24]. Additionally, ethical considerations related to data privacy and the potential for algorithmic bias must be addressed to ensure that personalization efforts are equitable and transparent [2, 20].

5.3. Cognitive Impact and User Engagement

The cognitive impact of PoT models is a critical area of investigation, as these models are designed to emulate human cognitive processes and enhance learning through interaction [3, 22]. Research has shown that well-designed PoT models can positively influence cognitive engagement by promoting active learning and critical thinking skills [19, 21]. By simulating realistic problem-solving scenarios, PoT models can also help students develop practical skills that are transferable to real-world contexts.

However, the cognitive load imposed by these models must be carefully managed to avoid overwhelming students and detracting from the learning experience [6, 26]. Strategies such as scaffolding and phased learning can be employed to gradually introduce complex concepts, allowing students to build their understanding incrementally [8, 9].

In summary, the discussion of PoT models in educational software highlights the intricate interplay between usability, effectiveness, adaptability, and cognitive impact. As educational technologies continue to evolve, further research is needed to optimize the design and implementation of PoT models, ensuring that they fulfill their potential to revolutionize learning and teaching practices.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we have rigorously examined the usability of program-of-thought models within educational software environments. Our findings underscore the potential of these models to revolutionize how educational content is delivered and interacted with, thereby enhancing learning experiences and outcomes. By integrating cognitive and computational frameworks, program-of-thought models offer a novel approach to personalizing education, facilitating deeper engagement, and fostering adaptive learning environments [10, 11, 18]. The implications of these models extend beyond traditional usability metrics, as they encapsulate a holistic view of learner interaction and cognitive development [2, 17].

The research presented here builds upon a substantial body of literature that explores the intersection of technology and education, particularly focusing on how programmatic approaches can be leveraged to optimize user experiences and learning efficacy [1, 16]. By analyzing current implementations and theoretical underpinnings, we have identified critical success factors and challenges that must be addressed to maximize the impact of program-of-thought models in educational contexts [6, 12].

6.1. Implications for Educational Software Design

The results of our study have significant implications for the design of educational software. The incorporation of program-of-thought models necessitates a shift in design paradigms, focusing on user-centered interfaces that adapt dynamically to the cognitive states and learning trajectories of students [13, 15]. This calls for an integrative approach that blends educational theory with advanced computational techniques, enabling the creation of environments that are both intuitive and pedagogically sound [8, 22].

Moreover, our findings suggest that designers should prioritize the seamless integration of adaptive feedback mechanisms, which are critical for maintaining student engagement and motivation [3, 5]. These mechanisms should be underpinned by robust data analytics and machine learning algorithms, capable of tailoring content and challenges in real-time [4, 20].

6.2. Challenges and Future Directions

While the potential benefits of program-of-thought models are substantial, several challenges remain. Ensuring data privacy and security, particularly when dealing with sensitive educational data, is paramount [9, 21]. Additionally, there is a need for comprehensive frameworks to assess the efficacy of these models in diverse educational contexts, taking into account the varying needs and capabilities of learners [23, 26].

Future research should continue to explore the development of standardized metrics for evaluating the success of program-of-thought models, as well as the long-term impacts on student learning and cognitive development [19, 24]. Collaborative efforts between educators, technologists, and cognitive scientists will be essential in driving innovation and addressing the complex challenges associated with these models [14, 25].

6.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, program-of-thought models represent a promising frontier in educational technology, with the potential to significantly enhance learning experiences through personalized and adaptive software solutions [7]. The integration of these models into educational software design holds the promise of more engaging, effective, and inclusive learning environments. As the field progresses, it will be crucial to maintain a focus on empirical validation and iterative development, ensuring that these technologies deliver meaningful educational outcomes [14, 24].

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