

10 Rules to Create a Visually Appealing eLearning Course



How do babies learn when they are first born? They use their senses. Adults depend on senses less than babies do for learning, but heavily rely on them for memory. Create content that appeals to the senses to help learners retain more information. Here are 10 basic rules for stimulating the sense of vision when [creating an eLearning](#) course.

Fonts

Choose round fonts when possible. Multiple research studies prove that the majority of people prefer rounder-styled fonts and shapes. Typography helps convey themes and set a tone. It may be useful to use sharper-edged fonts when a specific project calls for it.

Color

Color psychology is whole science study in and of itself. Color enhances messages. Color choice applies to backgrounds, text, headings, subheadings, borders, dividers, etc. Color combinations offer greater enhancements. The color choice comes intuitively to some, usually creative

and social type personalities. Others may not know where to begin to understand the theory of color much less the impression that various colors make on the mind.

Symmetry

Symmetry appeals to people's eyes more so than imbalance. According to a [Pacific Standard Magazine article](#), "if your goal is to get people intrigued, inspired, or involved, proportionality is your pal." Of course, if you want to make a specific point, an asymmetrical layout might be more effective.

White Space

Empty space serves a purpose. It offers time for the mind to connect ideas and reboot before moving on. In addition, it provides an easy read and allows the learner to process information. People are more focused on the content when it's simple and easy to navigate.

Symbols and Images

Symbols stand for concepts. Using them helps convey meaning more quickly and effectively. Images, like symbols, communicate much more than written text. People are more drawn to visual images than heavy text. It's been said that one picture equals a thousand words. Include images throughout your text to keep readers engaged. Be selective and purposeful with your images.

Video

[Video clips](#), like images, offer a faster means of communication because of the motion dynamic. Adopt a microlearning approach when creating video content to increase engagement and retention. Effective videos are short, clear and concise in its messaging. Content delivered in bite-sized chunks are easier to digest and process.

Order

Apparent order, like a table of content, offers an overview that primes the [brain for learning](#). It shows direction and initiates the neurological filing process. The brain's recall ability relies heavily on the proper storage of information.

Overview

View of current progress within a course or activity helps keep the mind focused on the present. Brains are wired to continuously interpret the environment. If humans sense being lost, the brain goes quickly into overdrive stringing clues together to inform the mind of location (or progress status). Optimize the learners' brainpower by offering them ability to predict how far along they are in the course. Consider using a timer or special place marker.

The "F" Test

The 3-second glance or "F" test helps with design layout. People usually scan information before delving into it. "The scan" helps the brain decipher between worthy and unworthy content. Research shows that the scan pattern looks top to bottom first and then left to right. In their eye tracking research, [Precision Dialogue](#) refers to this scan as an "F" and captures the pattern on a heat map image (see image below from Precision Dialogue publication, "10 Key Findings in Eye Tracking Research"). Strategize placement and format of content accordingly.



All of the above can be equally unappealing to the eye if applied too much, too little, or too anything. Strike a balance on each of the above aspects to optimize the brain's ability to absorb, process and file. Space your strongest takeaway points intermittently throughout a sequence.

It may seem overwhelming to take all of these rules into consideration. Just like anything else in life, it is a process to adopt new practices. The brain processes new lessons best with repetition and in small doses. Try focusing on a couple of items on the list and move on to the others once having a firm grasp on the first few. Trial and error method also helps smooth the process over time. Welcome errors and feedback because the brain achieves deeper learning and awareness from the process of fixing and redoing. Finally, have fun. Visual design exercises the brain's creative side!

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