

5 SIMPLE STEPS TO

Decrease Cognitive Load in Online Courses

MSU Week7 Module 2 Week 2 10/12 -10/18
 Posted on: Friday, October 14, 2016 11:20:07 AM EDT
 Greetings Students: As you know, **Module 2 Week 1 10/5 -10/11 has ended.**
 In the Module 1 Announcement you were told to go to Course Content Modules for the week's work. This is what you are there:
Module 2 Week 1

Read Garthwait Chap 5
Watch YouTube video:
 Social Work Initial Assessment With a Client

Dear Jan'Pine - Akmal 11/12/16

You were told to read Chapter 5 and watch the YouTube video.
 In our next Seminar (SEMINAR THREE), we will discuss what you learned from this Video, so I hope you took notes as you watched. In that session you will say how this video may help you in your field placement work with clients. You do not have to submit any work for the past week. YIPPEE!

These were problems accessing the Study Mate Activity that have not been resolved. Note that this Activity will be incorporated into next semester's work.

Now to WEEK 2 of Module 2 10/12 -10/18
 The information copied below is found in your syllabus on page 19. Always refer to your syllabus.
 I placed you in groups in Seminar 2 for this Assignment.
 Group Partners:
 1. Danielle and Genecee 2. Dominique and Shawanda; 3. Sakia and Jemuel; 4. Brittany and Sensee; 5. Kayonnoh, Sammasia, and Saidah.

WK2: MODULE 1

Homework

1. Read Textbook: Garthwait Chapter 5
2. Watch Video: [Social Work Initial Client Assessment](#)

Seminar 3 Discussion
 In Seminar 3, we will discuss what you learned from this Video, so I hope you took notes as you watched. In that session you will say how this video may help you in your field placement work with clients. You do not have to submit any work for the past week. YIPPEE!

Update: Problems accessing the Study Mate Activity that have not been resolved. Note that this Activity will be incorporated into next semester's work.

Upcoming
 WK 2 of Module 2 10/12 - 10/18

The information copied below is found in your syllabus on page 19. Always refer to your syllabus. I placed you in groups in Seminar 2 for this Assignment.

Group Partners

1. Danielle and Genecee
2. Dominique and Shawanda;
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Whether it's graphic design, multimedia development, or instructional design the focus is always designing for ease of understanding, readability, and visual cleanliness. Basic graphic design principles are the cornerstone of effective communications and they span these three disciplines.

As in visual communications, a first rule of instructional design is Less is More; meaning that a minimalist approach to layout design is always more effective.

This is also the basis of the Cognitive Load Theory of Learning. To put it plainly, the theory states that the more disparate, combating elements on a page, the less likely a learner is to grasp the full meaning of the content. With more simplified design, a more uniform the presentation, the content is much easier to comprehend.

In the above example the instructor wanted to call out various parts of the text content to ensure students did not ignore them. However, the multiple colors, text sizes and weights work to confuse learners. It is not immediately evident what the important content is, versus second-most, or less important content.

Below, the educator used built-in formatting to organize the type cleanly and succinctly; the use of headings, paragraph-style text, and numbered lists dictate hierarchy and help to lend gravity to the various text areas in the module.

'Less is More' is a useful rule in graphic design, multimedia and instructional design. Top: Example of no hierarchy, and multiple styles. Below: Example of using built-in formatting to create a clear hierarchy.



Simplify Content & Increase Readability

Text Contrast

The most readable text is simple black text on a white background. It offers the greatest accessibility for learners using assistive technologies. It is the MOST readable color combination, and it works.

Resist the urge to add more colors to your course, if you must select another dark color that offers a high contrast to the white background. Sticking to these guidelines you'll find there is no need ever to use the color Red, extra-bold, 20pt fonts, and exclamation points to catch your students' attention.

Font Sizes & Text Decoration

Hierarchy dictates importance in the written word. Use it to your advantage!

Stick to one size/style for body text, headings, subheadings, and lists. Don't rely on ever-increasing sizes of text to add emphasis. You may find that it causes more confusion than it alleviates.

Fortunately, the Learner Management System (we use Blackboard) already includes distinctive preset styles for these various hierarchical text elements. There is little or no need to then introduce extraneous colors sizes and weights to the text. Using the existing styles, and then breaking up your text content will increase readability across the entire course.

Paragraphs

Large blocks of text are difficult to read. So are long lines of text that span from the far left to far right of the screen. Likewise are too short columns of text.

Simply stated, text is easiest to read when you deliver it in short paragraphs – ideally, no more than a few sentences each. Relevant images add interest and break up visually dense columns of text. Use images sparingly, and be sure that they are properly placed---not distracting. We've all seen sites where text and images are butted up against one another; it tends to decrease readability and your credibility, sorry to say.

White Space

If your eLearning design consists of wall-to-wall text, I guarantee no one is going to read through it all. Use margins around your text blocks, and try two line breaks between paragraphs, instead of one—to distinguish paragraphs more clearly.

Ideal Alignment

Left-Aligned type is the easiest for us to read (*in American culture*)

Centered & Right-Aligned text is more difficult to read.

Justified text is also more difficult to read on screens—because the algorithms that allow for that spacing can move letters extremely close together or uncomfortably far apart, to keep the line widths consistent; resulting in uneven gutters of white space.