

Visual Impact

If you are in the curriculum classroom, design of a project will be far less important than content. However, design affects our ability to communicate information and share our ideas effectively. Visual and media literacy are important 21st century skills, and involve skill not only in decoding media, but in communicating effectively through it.

Once your students have a basic skill level with a technology tool, you can introduce them to some basic design concepts, that will help them better communicate their ideas and understanding. Using planning tools, such as a vision and storyboard, will help them also maintain a focus on the content of their projects, not just the glitz.

KISS - Keep It Super Simple

It is easy to want to add too much information or too many examples. Doing so will make your presentation or document appear cluttered and appear as if you, the author, do not understand what is most important. This is true for fonts, transitions, graphics, and animation.

White Space

The best designs use white space, or empty space, as a visual element. "White" space can be any solid color. Do not view white space as space to be filled. Try to leave half of your page or screen open as white space.

Eye Path

As your eye moves across the page or screen it naturally follows a "Z" shape and lingers at each corner. The upper left and lower right of your screen should be reserved for important information or navigation.

Organization

Establishing a grid or columns can help you stay organized. If you



are dividing up a screen or page, divide it into an odd number of columns. You can use an even number of columns, but it is easier to create a good design with an odd number of columns.

Consistency and Repetition

If your project has multiple pages or screens, you will want to maintain consistency between them. Repetition of the basic elements is a good strategy to use to achieve this. Try to give your project a rhythm. For example:

Navigation. Your navigation should look the same and be in the same location on each screen.

Fonts. You should use the same fonts for all of the headings throughout your project. The same is true for your body text. Many programs will have "styles" you can use to help you maintain this consistency.

Position. Repeat your placement of graphics and text on the screen or page. It is okay to use different layouts, just make sure that not every layout is unique.

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