DESIGN FOR THE MIND
VISUAL, UX, & GRAPHIC DESIGN FOR A NEW GENERATION OF ELEARNING
GOOD DESIGN IS THE RESULT OF CAREFUL AND ARTFUL CRAFT, BUT IT NEEDS TO BE PRECEDED BY AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE USER NEEDS, THE CONTENT THAT IS PRESENTED, THE BIGGER STRUCTURE (OR CONTEXT) IN WHICH THIS CONTENT IS PRESENTED, AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE TOUCHED BY IT.

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10 PRINCIPLES & TIPS YOU CAN START APPLYING TODAY
1 DESIGN TO MEET THE NEED

Know your audience. Design is all about perception, the perception of your learners. During the needs analysis, phase get to know your audience both from a content and design perspective by understanding the key motivators of the audience. Then, and only then, can you integrate smart, creative and UI design.

2 LOOK FOR PATTERNS

Use familiar user interface patterns that your learners are used to in the real world. For example, if designing an iPad app, it is important to first have a strong understanding of how iPad users already interact with the device. Take advantage of the native navigational elements before creating new ones that might confuse learners.

3 CONSISTENCY

Learners like consistent navigation and repeated tasks for gaining information. Help guide your learners by being consistent with your treatment of graphical assets, navigation and feedback within your interface. Variation of these elements may disengage the learner and distract from the key learning objectives.
4 VISUAL ORDER

Design is a visual translator for the world’s information. Use your design effectively to highlight key points, reinforce key concepts, and lead the learners in the order and direction you want them to go. You can do this through size, color, and location of elements utilized within your design.

5 FEEDBACK

As humans we need and crave feedback and direction. “Where should I go next?” “how did I do?” If you hear this, it is safe to say you may want to rethink your design approaches. Support your learning objectives through the use of strong visual feedback, as well as written feedback where appropriate. Simple items such as rollovers and clicks can show the learner that something has happened.

6 GIVE’EM THE RULES

Set expectations at the onset of a course so learners know what is coming. We understand from an instructional design perspective, that it is key to state the learning objectives and evaluation criteria up front. How do you use design to support this? Define and demonstrate a consistent set of “rules” on how to navigate the course. Setting these expectations up front will allow learners to easily adapt to your learning environment and increase knowledge retention.
7 **GIVE THE POWER TO THE USER**
We know from an instructional perspective that adult learners crave autonomy, and the ability to guide their own learning. Harness this power in your user interface design by allowing users to make decisions that empower and enable success in your learning engagement.

8 **SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY & SIMPLIFY**
*If your solution is not easy, fast, and fun, sadly it will not be effective.* The Law of Pragnanz states that as humans we must organize our perceptions into the simplest form for quick understanding. Have mercy on the brains of your learners by utilizing informational graphics to explain complex or dry content.

9 **TEST OUT YOUR DESIGN**
Seeing how learners interact with and perceive your design is key. This will allow you to make informed enhancements to your design which will create a stronger, more effective learning experience for your learners. Always consider conducting user testing to gauge the user experience of the audience.

10 **WHEN IN DOUBT RESEARCH**
As Picasso once said “Good artists borrow, great artists steal.” New ideas are formed by inspiration. Inspiration can be drawn from the world around you. Knowing what others have done, and seeing their results, can help you avoid unnecessary mistakes. Create a Pinterest board or Evernote notebook of inspiring creative design and instructional design. Don’t have time? Try turning off the television.