

TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS

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Experience can be defined as the accumulation of knowledge or skill that results from direct participation in events or activities, the content of direct observation or participation in an event. Experience is to go or live through, have firsthand knowledge of states, situations, emotions, or sensations and to undergo an emotional sensation or be in a particular state of mind. Anything that is communicated visually carries an experience with it. People who acquire an understanding of the visually communicated message are the users. The message is built and communicated for the users. As the users are acquiring some knowledge through the communication, their experience is called as learning experience. It is important to study the principles of superior learning experiences in Visual Communications as they help in designing user friendly products.

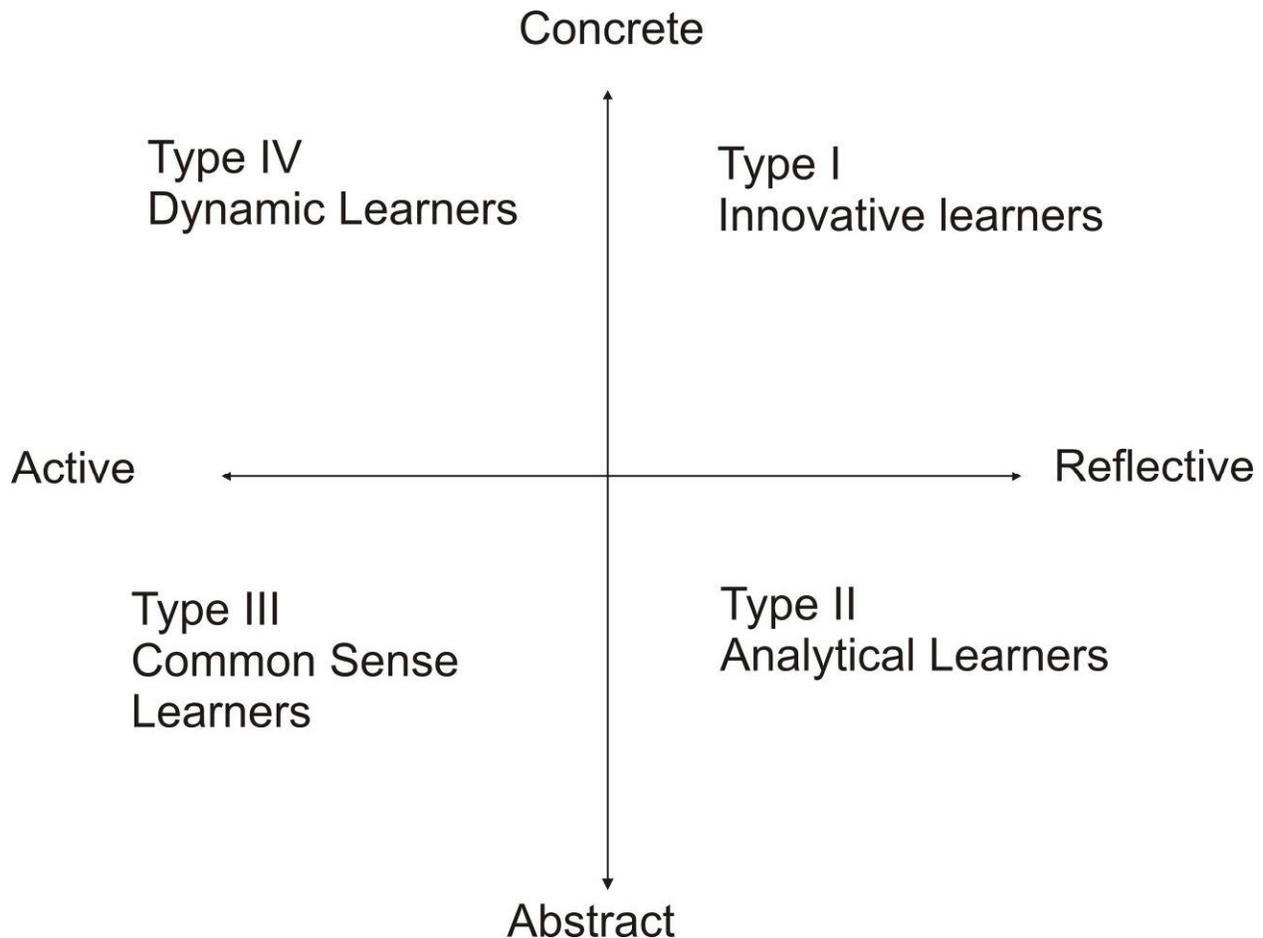
Here we first learn the different types of learners, design process, and finally the principles, facts and tips that make a learning experience.

As we all know that the users play a major role in the learning experience in visual communication, it is important to understand different types of learners. Learning is perceiving and processing information. Learning enables learners to feel and think. It also enables learners to reflect and act. This cycle of learning is based on a number of premises. First, different individuals perceive and process experience in different preferred ways. These preferences comprise our unique learning styles. Essential to quality learning is an awareness in the learner of his/her own preferred mode, becoming comfortable with his/her own best ways of learning, and being helped to develop a learning repertoire, through experience with alternative modes. Learning is the making of meaning. Hence the learning should aim at making learners to believe in excellence.

There are four types of learners according to Dr. Bernice McCarthy. They are divided into these types based on Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation. **Type I Learners** fall under Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation and are called Innovative Learners. **Type II Learners** fall under Reflective observation and Abstract conceptualization and are called Analytical Learners. **Type III Learners** fall under Abstract Conceptualization and Active Conceptualization and are called Common sense learners. **Type IV Learners** fall under Active Experimentation and Concrete Experience and are called Dynamic learners. The fact that a learner may have a preferred, most-comfortable mode

does not mean she/he cannot function effectively in others. In fact, the learner who has the flexibility to move easily from one mode to another to fit the requirements of the situation is at a definite advantage over those who limit themselves to only one style of thinking and learning.

Here is a diagrammatic representation of the four types of learners.



Type 1: Innovative Learners are primarily interested in personal meaning. They need to have reasons for learning--ideally, reasons that connect new information with personal experience and establish that information's usefulness in daily life. Some of the many instructional modes effective with this learner type are cooperative learning, brainstorming, and integration of content areas

Type 2: Analytic Learners are primarily interested in acquiring facts in order to deepen their understanding of concepts and processes. They are capable of learning effectively from lectures, and enjoy independent research, analysis of data, and hearing what "the experts" have to say.

Type 3: Common Sense Learners are primarily interested in how things work; they want to "get in and try it." Concrete, experiential learning activities work best for them-- using manipulatives, hands-on tasks, kinesthetic experience, etc.

Type 4: Dynamic Learners are primarily interested in self-directed discovery. They rely heavily on their own intuition, and seek to teach both themselves and others. Any type of independent study is effective for these learners. They also enjoy simulations, role play, and games.

Learning is the making of meaning. According to the scientists left brain is used for serial understanding. Right brain is used for Global understanding. We should encourage greater right mode participation for better learning.

Type I learners are also called Divergers and they learn by sensing or feeling. Type II learners are also called Assimilators and they learn by watching. Type III learners are also called convergers and they learn by thinking. Type IV learners are also called accommodators and they learn by doing.

Here are some favorite questions of all the four types of learners.

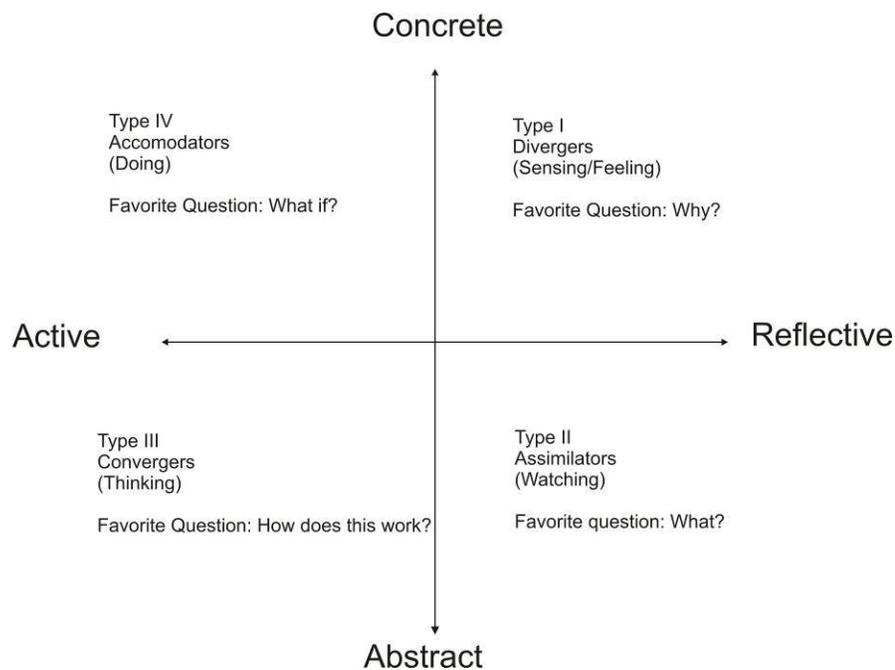
Type I Favorite Question: "Why?"

Type II Favorite Question: "What?"

Type III Favorite Question: "How does this work?"

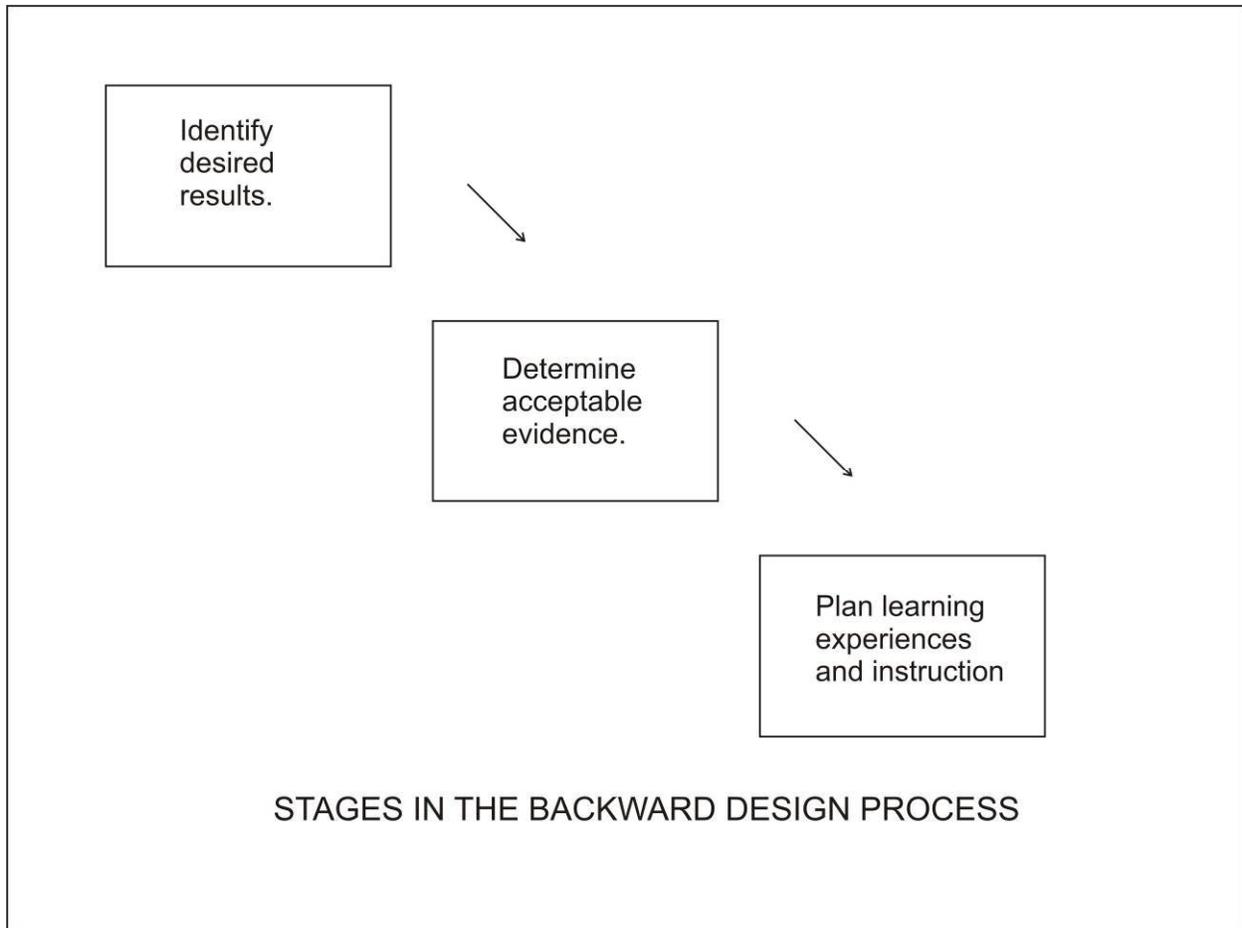
Type IV Favorite Question: "What if?"

Here is the diagrammatic representation of the four types of users, their activities and favorite questions:



After getting a thorough understanding of the type of learners and their styles of understanding it is important to learn how to design. The purpose of the design is to create great coherence among desired results, key performances, and learning experience of any message communicated visually. Backward design process helps in achieving a greater coherence among all the features mentioned above. The three stages of the backward design process are: To identify desired results, determine acceptable evidence and plan learning experiences and instruction.

Diagrammatic Representation of Backward Design Process:



After deciding on the design process it is important to understand several concepts of **experience design**. The most important concept to grasp is that all experiences are important and that we can learn from them whether they are traditional, physical or offline experiences or whether they are digital, online, or other technological experiences. The developer of an experience should understand what makes a good experience than letting the technology dictate the form of experience.

Here are some facts, principles and tips that make good learning experiences:

- At the very least an experience should have an attraction, engagement and conclusion. The attraction is to initiate the experience. The engagement is the experience itself. The conclusion is to give satisfaction to the audience.
- While all experiences are not created equally, all must compete for the attention of the audience and participants. It is not enough to insist upon the necessity of experience, nor even of activity in experience. Everything depends on the quality of the experience.
- One way to understand the secret behind successful experiences is to build taxonomies of some experiences that we can identify. This allows us to explore what makes various experiences distinct and what makes them special. The best ways to explore our own opinions and insights about experiences is to expand this chart ourselves.
- **Information design** is transforming information into something more valuable by building context around it so that it becomes understandable. It is important to learn that structure itself has meaning in information design. Insight is the most valuable product of all in information design. Information is the data endowed with relevance and purpose and is the beginning of the meaning.
- The most important aspect of any design is how it is understood in the minds of the audience. New cognitive models can often revolutionize an audience's understanding of data, information, or an experience by helping them understand and reorganize things they previously understood in a way that illuminates the topic or experience.
- The presentation of an experience or design is separate from its organization. Often, the presentation itself affects our understanding so much that we can misunderstand or misinterpret data.
- Since everyone has different skills and experience, no one way of organizing data is capable of creating understanding for everyone.
- Interface design is only one of many terms used for the design of experience.
- Experiences should, ultimately, change and modify themselves to be more appropriate for users.
- People find meaning in experiences and things based on a wide variety of personal values. That people find meaning in things is, perhaps, the only constant that can be relied upon.
- What is important is not the technology but the people served by it.
- Interactivity is not much a definable thing as it is a nebulous concept. It is a spectrum from passive to interactive; and there is no distinct point along the continuum where an experience switches from passive to interactive. In fact, it's probably only possible to compare experiences as being more or less interactive, rather than interactive in and of themselves. Interactivity is the differentiable advantage of interactive media.



These are the features of the interactivity. If all the features are high then the experience is active while if all the features are low the experience is passive.

- Humans are inherently creative creatures and when we have a chance to create we feel more satisfied and valuable.
- People have an inherent need to express themselves.
- Stories can be used not just as entertainment but as a way to make difficult concepts, information, or instructions more accessible.
- One of the most creative experiences you can ever know- or witness- is improvisational theater. These experiences require actors or participants to develop consistent, cogent, and interesting stories without rehearsing. They must do so immediately and often, using random elements from the audience. Most online experiences must perform similarly- often dealing with random inputs .

Hence a learning experience has to be designed by keeping in mind of the types of learners and some facts, principles and tips of good learning experiences related to the learning experience being created.

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