

Professional Learning Meeting Agenda – 9/8

- MEVA Mission and Vision.
- Introduction to MEVA's Performance Framework (Continued).
- Post October 1st Retention.
- Win over the student initiative.
- Annual Compliance Training Update – Stephanie Emery.
- Reminders – Dr. Christina O'Grady.
- Professional Learning Brightspace Design – Nicole Hart.
- Guidance Update – Dan Pierce and Heather Tyler.
- Professional Learning Book Study – Dr. Christina O'Grady.
- Other and next Process Improvement Meeting on Monday, September 15th, 3:00 pm.

MEVA Mission and Vision

School Mission:

Maine Virtual Academy's (MEVA) mission is to develop **each** student's full potential with learner-centered instruction, research-based curriculum and educational tools and resources to provide a high-quality learning experience for **grade 7-12 students who are in need of alternative educational options**. MEVA will develop an **Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)** with specific learning goals to meet each student's needs. MEVA's rigorous curriculum is **aligned** to the eight Maine content areas, the **Maine Learning Results, the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards**.

School Vision:

MEVA will be a leading 21st century public charter school in Maine and will improve student learning outcomes through **individualized instruction**, as evidenced by **student academic proficiency, student academic growth, post-secondary readiness, and the demonstration of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and self-direction**. MEVA will empower students to acquire the academic and life skills needed to succeed in **post-secondary education and career opportunities**. Our graduates will be **prepared** for college or other postsecondary career training opportunities

MEVA's Performance Framework

- As a public charter school, MEVA has a performance framework that measures our progress and outcomes in key areas.
- These include Student Achievement; School Climate and Family Engagement; Organizational Sustainability; Financial Management and Viability; School Mission and Student Persistence; and School Customization.
- **SY-2025/2026 is the first year in MEVA's third renewal cycle**, since our founding in 2015.
- The MEVA faculty works towards meeting/exceeding our performance measures each school year.

Post – October 1st Retention

- We work towards retaining all our students.
- However, our Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) retention performance measure focuses on retaining students who are enrolled on October 1st.
- Students who graduate and/or move out of state are excluded from the calculation.
- MEVA usually exceeds 90% post-October 1st retention, which is exceeding expectations.
- We are always aiming to improve upon our excellent performance in the student persistence (framework) area.

Win Over the Student!

Thoughtful and consistent communication is the foundation on building successful rapport with our families and students.

Immediate intervention has been recognized as the most effective method in student retention. Every role within the school plays an important part in this effort.

Without our Students there would be no MEVA!

Win Over & Rapport

- **Win Over**: is a proactive approach/mindset. Win “back” is more reactive and is also needed in some cases, like in progress withdrawals as an example.
- **Rapport Definition**:
 - The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Rapport as; *a friendly, harmonious relationship especially: a relationship characterized by agreement, mutual understanding, or empathy that makes communication possible or easy.*
- **Google Dictionary - Examples of Further Meaning**;
 - 1. Rapport is a good sense of understanding and trust.
 - 2. A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well. Example, *"she was able to establish a good rapport with the children"*

Communication

- In ALL Cases;
 - Communication should always exhibit compassion, empathy and kindness.
 - Be an effective communicator, timely and responsive.
 - Exhibit a willingness to help and serve our families well.
 - Never forget to share the vast opportunities we have at MEVA to support our students!

Withdrawal Mitigation Process

- **Ask why?** - Use phrases like, “*Before* you withdraw, tell me about your reason. There may be something we can do for you.”
- **Listen for keywords;** lack of support, socialization, motivation challenges, tech or navigation challenges and so forth.
- **As you listen, empathize** - Understand their position and their feelings. Many times, families or students have been thinking about withdrawal for a while.
- **Advocate for MEVA’s programs** - Share information on our clubs, self-paced options, and student support opportunities. See if they are willing to have a team meeting to talk over work credit options, early college opportunities, and so much more. Some students may qualify for early graduation.
- **Document, document, document** - your mitigation efforts in contact logs within Infinite Campus, then *submit a “Rapid Response” form below*. Familiarize yourself with the form selections to be aware of the kinds of barriers that lead to withdrawals.
- **Link to the form:** [24-25 Rapid Response \(Intervention\) Form](#)



Vector Trainings

Faculty Training Compliances

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Congrats, you all receive an A for 100% training completion!

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Giveaways will be done at the end of September for MEVA swag!

State Assessment Planning



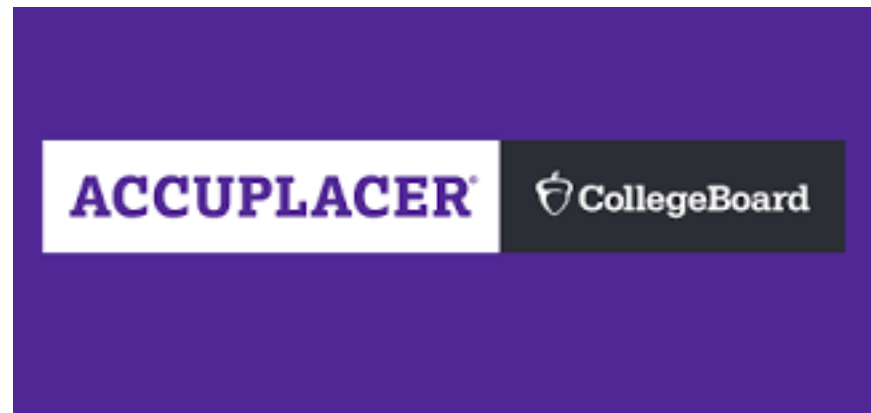


Things to watch for and be aware of in the coming weeks...

- See Friday's email sent at 3:50pm, subject line: "Travel Team – State Testing" and complete the form - [Travel Proctor Task Force Survey](#)
 - Proctor Assignments – DocuSign's will go out on Sept 15th-16th, you will need to sign off on the document agreeing to the terms. Testing locations begin the week of October 6th.
 - Proctor Trainings – To be released the week of 9/15 along with the student/site testing schedules.
 - Testing Kits – Pick up date is on Friday, October 3rd. Kits are to be returned immediately following the closure of a testing location. (Travel Proctors are the exception)
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NWEA & ACCUPLACER is Coming!!

- Please review the vector NWEA & ACCUPLACER training and be sure to sign off on the Google form acknowledging that you reviewed it, can access the resources, and let me know if you have any questions.



Curriculum Map Review

We will be reviewing the elective course maps this year.

(Consumer Math is carried over from last year.)

Course Name	Committee Review	Committee Approval	Board Review
Consumer Math	September 9/24 (Tentative)	October 10/8 (Tentative)	October Board Meeting
Oceanography	October 10/8 (Tentative)	November 11/5 (Tentative)	November Board Meeting
Spanish I	October 10/8 (Tentative)	November 11/5 (Tentative)	November Board Meeting
Early/Late Medieval History	October 10/8 (Tentative)	November 11/5 (Tentative)	November Board Meeting
Maine History	November 11/5 (Tentative)	December 12/3 (Tentative)	December Board Meeting
SP MS Physical Education	November 11/5 (Tentative)	December 12/3 (Tentative)	December Board Meeting
Spanish II	December 12/3 (Tentative)	January 1/6 (Tentative)	January Board Meeting
7 Art	January 1/6 (Tentative)	February 2/3 (Tentative)	February Board Meeting
8 Art	January 1/6 (Tentative)	February 2/3 (Tentative)	February Board Meeting
Intro to Art	January 1/6 (Tentative)	February 2/3 (Tentative)	February Board Meeting
Contemporary Art	February 2/3 (Tentative)	March 3/3 (Tentative)	March Board Meeting
Photography	February 2/3 (Tentative)	March 3/3 (Tentative)	March Board Meeting
Digital Art	February 2/3 (Tentative)	March 3/3 (Tentative)	March Board Meeting
Marine Biology	February 2/3 (Tentative)	March 3/3 (Tentative)	March Board Meeting

Criteria	Needs Improvement (1)	Developing (2)	Proficient (3)	Exemplary (4)
Unit Summary	Summary is vague or missing. Learning expectations are unclear or not stated.	Brief summary provided, but lacks detail. Learning expectations are partially stated.	Clear summary of the unit provided. Most learning expectations are stated.	Comprehensive summary of the unit. All learning expectations are clearly and concisely stated.
Scope & Sequence (Timeline)	No scope and sequence provided, or it's incomplete.	Basic scope and sequence provided, but lacks detail or clear sequencing.	Detailed scope and sequence provided with clear sequencing.	Comprehensive scope and sequence with clear, logical sequencing.
Assessment Description	Assessment descriptions are vague or missing. No clear connection to standards.	Basic description of assessments provided. Some connection to standards, but not clearly articulated.	Clear description of assessments with evident connection to standards. Most parents/students would understand what's being assessed.	Detailed, clear assessment descriptions with explicit connections to standards. All parents/students would easily understand what's being assessed and how.
Pacing (Per Unit)	No pacing information provided, or it's severely inadequate.	Basic pacing information provided, but lacks detail or clarity. Not clearly indicated on the platform or scope and sequence.	Clear pacing information provided for each unit. Indicated on the platform and scope and sequence. Provides a general expectation of time required.	Comprehensive, flexible pacing information provided for each unit. Clearly indicated on both the platform and scope and sequence. Provides detailed time expectations with notes on potential adjustments.
Standards Alignment	No clear alignment with educational standards, or standards are missing entirely.	Some attempt at aligning with standards, but connections are weak or inconsistent. Many relevant standards are missing.	Most content is aligned with appropriate educational standards. Some minor gaps or inconsistencies may exist.	All content is clearly and consistently aligned with appropriate educational standards. Alignment is explicit, comprehensive, and enhances the curriculum.
Ease of Understand and Completeness	Curriculum is difficult to understand or follow. Many essential elements are missing or poorly explained.	Some parts of the curriculum are clear, but others are confusing. Some essential elements are present, but there are significant gaps.	Most of the curriculum is easy to understand. Most essential elements are present and well-explained, with only minor omissions.	Entire curriculum is clear, logical, and easy to follow. All essential elements are present, thoroughly explained, and well-organized.

This is the rubric we will use to evaluate each map. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or need any help navigating the Chalk platform.

Building Community through Brightspace Design

- Nicole Hart presents how to build community (student connection) using Brightspace design elements.

Instructional Design: Building Belonging in E-Learning

☀️ Training Goal

Equip MEVA teachers with strategies to:

- Address the 5 e-learning challenges
- Apply instructional & visual design principles
- Foster belonging and student connection

POLL: Using your ZOOM REACTIONS
How do you feel about these Goals?





Problem Statement

At **MEVA**, students face multiple barriers to successful eLearning, including limited technology access, feelings of isolation, difficulties with self-regulation, and screen fatigue. While instructional design ensures content meets learning goals, and visual design makes materials clear and engaging, these alone are not enough.

Without intentional attention to **belonging**, students may disengage, feel unsupported, or fall further behind. The absence of community-centered, accessible design exacerbates challenges such as the digital divide, multitasking, and inconsistent teacher readiness — leaving some students disconnected both academically and socially

How Might We..

How might we design eLearning at MEVA that is instructionally sound, visually effective, and fosters belonging so every learner feels supported?

🔗 Alignment to MEVA's Five E-Learning Challenges

Digital Divide & Tech Access → Low-bandwidth, accessible design signals that *all* students belong, even with poor connectivity.

Engagement & Isolation → Visual + instructional strategies should create social presence (breakouts, peer tasks) that build community.

Self-Regulation & Organization → Consistent course structures and clear design reduce stress and help students feel confident.

Teacher Preparedness → Equipping teachers with design principles ensures equitable access and builds student trust.

Screen Fatigue → Blending on/off-screen tasks honors students' well-being and reinforces that their needs matter





Learning Objectives





By the end of this training, teachers will be able to:

1. **Define instructional design in eLearning** and explain why content—not appearance—should drive design decisions, ensuring lessons are accessible and aligned to UDL principles.
2. **Apply visual design principles** (alignment, hierarchy, color/contrast, etc.) to create materials that support learner focus, reduce barriers, and help students feel included and capable.
3. **Recognize and avoid common design pitfalls** (clutter, random layouts, irrelevant visuals) by explaining how they can hinder learning and reduce students' sense of belonging.

Defining Instructional Design

Instructional Design = the practice of planning, structuring, and delivering learning experiences that meet specific goals.

In **e-Learning**, this means:

-  Defining **objectives**
-  Organizing content into a logical flow
-  Selecting the right format (lesson, game, simulation, etc.)
-  Aligning with how people learn best (cognitive principles)

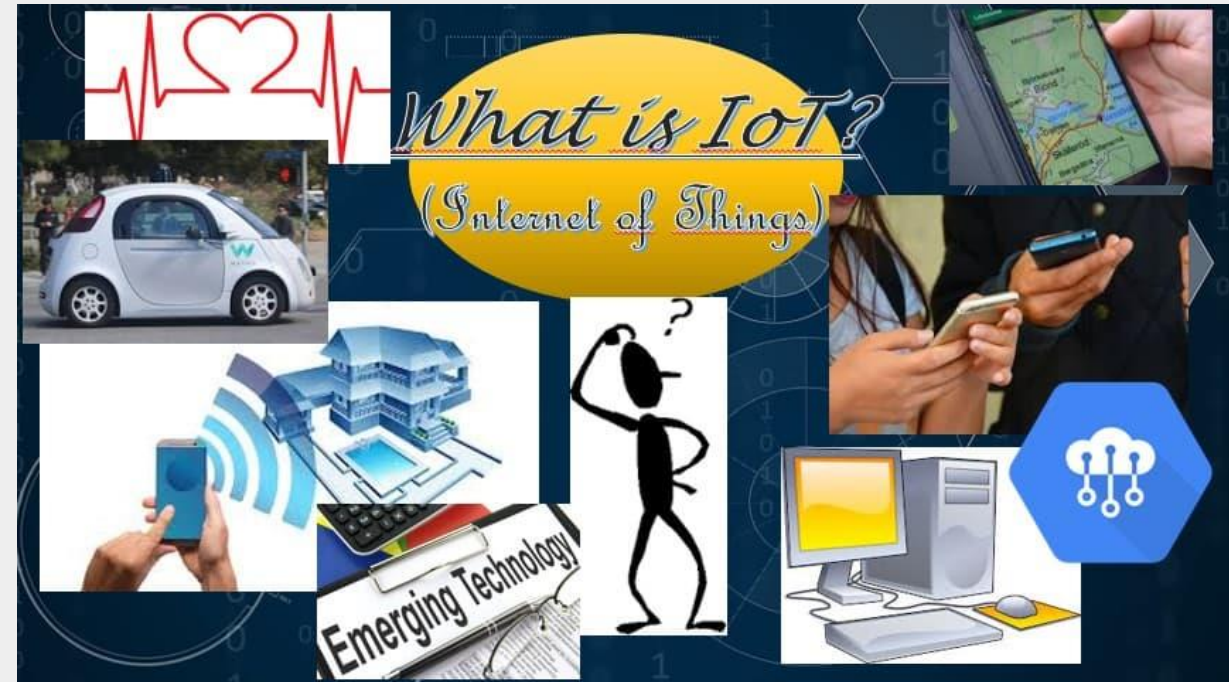
 *“Content should drive design, not the other way around.” – Rose*


Defining Visual Design

Visual Design = shaping the look and feel so learners can focus, understand, and stay engaged.

In **eLearning**, this means:

- Using **alignment** (grids, consistent structure)
- ≡ Establishing **visual hierarchy** (size, color, contrast, placement)
- ⊘ Avoiding clutter & distractions
- ✓ Ensuring visuals **support—not overpower—content**








 *“The visual design has to be aligned with the audience, content, environment, and instructional strategies.”* – Malamed



Why Visual Design Matters

Visual design should align with:

-  **Audience** – learners' age, needs, preferences
-  **Content** – complexity and subject matter
-  **Environment** – online platform, devices, distractions
-  **Instructional strategy** – methods (discussion, practice, simulation)
-  A beautiful design that ignores **how the brain processes information** will not lead to learning success.







“The visual design has to be aligned with the audience, content, environment, and instructional strategies.” – Malamed



Alignment: The Foundation of Clean Design

Alignment:

-  Creates **order and readability**
-  Uses **grids & consistent anchors** (left, right, top, bottom)
-  Avoids “random placement” that looks messy and reduces credibility
-  *“Alignment is the invisible glue that organizes content and creates harmony.”* – Adapted from DesignMantic



 “When looking at this alignment example, how might consistent placement of content help your students feel more organized and less overwhelmed?”

Visual Hierarchy in eLearning: Guiding Learner Attention

What Is Visual Hierarchy?

- A method for directing learners through content—from most to least important.
- Typically organized in **three levels of importance** (primary, secondary, tertiary)

Why It Matters

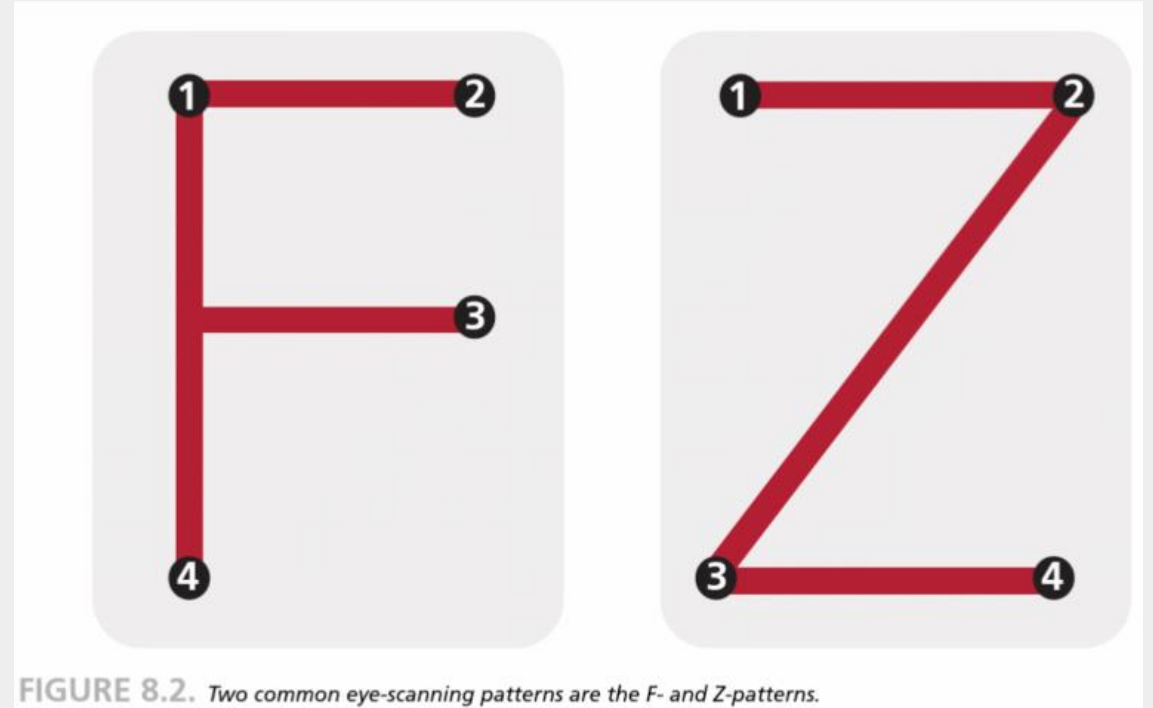
- Without hierarchy, screens are cluttered and confusing—learners don't know where to look first.
- Strong hierarchy clarifies your message and improves comprehension

 *“Visual hierarchy = instructional hierarchy.” If something is instructionally important, its visual treatment should reflect that priority.*

👁️ Designing with Reading Patterns in Mind

📌 Alignment: *Position Matters*

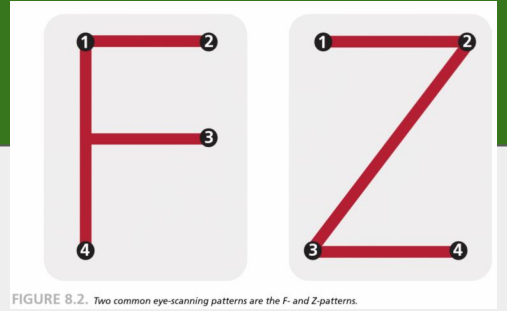
- Learners notice what's “above the fold” (top of screen) first
- Left-to-right reading patterns influence scanning
- Place priority content where eyes land naturally



📌 “When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, *The eLearning Coach*

👁️ Designing with Reading Patterns in Mind

The TechCrunch example below follows this pattern, using both color and positioning. For most viewers, the colored title text at the top establishes the primary hierarchy. Then immediately below that is the second level. Articles in the column on the right create the third level.



The screenshot shows a TechCrunch article layout. At the top, the event name 'TechCrunch Disrupt 2021' is highlighted in green. Below it, the main article title 'Announcing the Startup Battlefield companies pitching at TechCrunch Disrupt 2021' is in a large, bold, black font. To the right, a column of three smaller article teasers is displayed, each with a green header and black text. The layout follows the F-pattern, with the main title and event name forming the top bar, the main article title forming the middle bar, and the column of teasers forming the right side.

👉 “When you see this reading pattern example, what parts of your own lessons could be rearranged to match how students naturally scan for information?”



Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy



Using Imagery to Guide Attention

- Large or isolated images attract immediate focus
- Use images to reinforce, not distract from, content
- Avoid irrelevant “decorative” pictures that compete with learning



*“When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, *The eLearning Coach**

👁️ Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy

Isolation is a factor in the visual hierarchy. The ample white space around the illustration makes it stand out.



👉 *“How do you currently use images in your lessons, and what changes could you make to ensure images support learning rather than distract from it?”*



Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy



Color & Contrast Create Emphasis

- Bright, bold, and contrasting colors draw attention
- Muted tones recede into the background
- Use contrast to highlight *only what matters*



“When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, *The eLearning Coach*

👁️ Visual Hierarchy: *The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy*

In the example from the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the bright squares of color create the primary level of the visual hierarchy. The photographs of the exhibits are more muted and secondary.



👉 *“When you look at this color/contrast example, how could using color more intentionally help students engage and feel included in your lessons?”*



Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy



Size Signals Importance

- Larger = more important
- Smaller = supporting detail
- Keep scale proportional to the instructional priority



“When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, The eLearning Coach

👁️ Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy

In this example from a personal website of musician Benjamin Righetti, the scale of the text purposely overpowers the small photo.



👉 *“In your own lessons, how might adjusting text or object size help highlight what matters most for your students?”*



Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy



Typography Directs the Eye

- Bold, italics, and weight levels signal hierarchy
- Limit font styles (2-3 max) for clarity
- Consistent use builds trust and readability



“When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, The eLearning Coach



Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy



Typography Directs the Eye

A 7 STEP **TYPOGRAPHY** LESSON
FOR FIRST-TIME
ELEARNING DEVELOPERS

1 Know the different font classifications

- Serif
- Sans-serif
- Script
- Decorative

2 Get used to online typography etiquette

- Underline** is hard to read
should be avoided except in foreign words → **Italics**
- Bold** is great for significant words
should be used very sparingly → **Color**
- Midsentence Capitalization** signals significance, but also slows down reading
makes people feel yelled at → **ALL CAPS**
- Centered large text** makes content very hard to read

***And don't make lines too long!
the whole text space should fit in a field of vision.



“When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, *The eLearning Coach*




Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy






Typography Directs the Eye

3 Experiment with font size




Use it to create natural hierarchy and structure

4 Be consistent

-  Same font color #
-  Same margin
-  Same font size
- Homizio & Aver Same picked fonts

5 Let typography guide learners




Of course this is a title

Of course this is a subtitle

Of course this is the content

6 Use spacing carefully

The body of a text should occupy 15-40% of the screen



7 Create contrast

Cocogoose & Hurufo & Numero Bold

Homizio & Aver

KENZO & Tw Cen MT Condensed

Velvenda cooler & Latha

Snickers & Champagne & Limousines

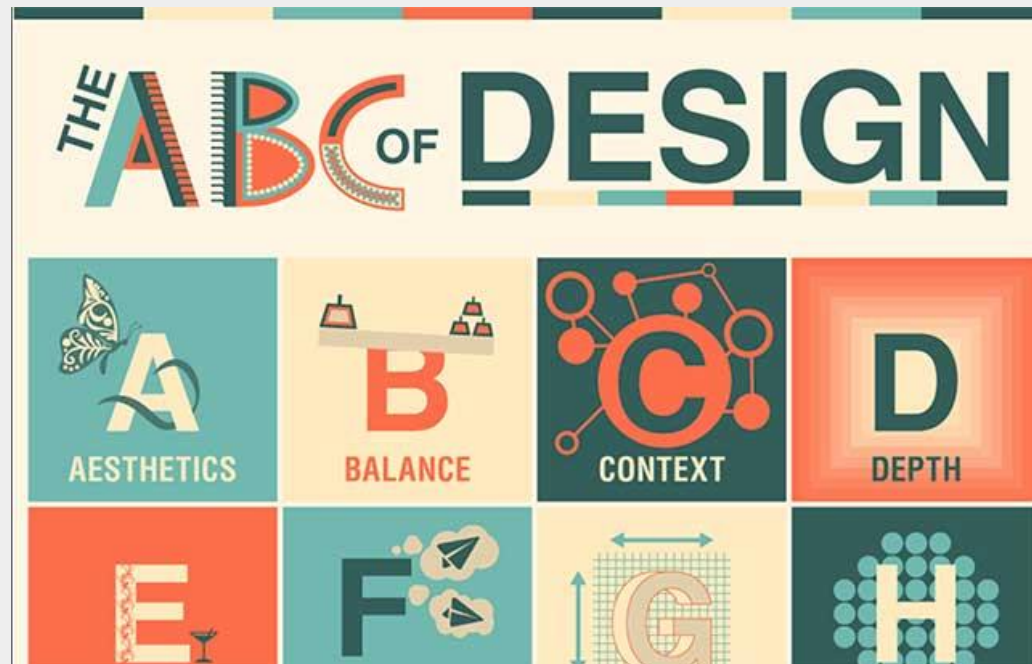
SHIFT
DISRUPTIVE LEARNING



“When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, *The eLearning Coach*

👁️ Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy

This colorful ABC infographic example from [Design Mantic](#) has three clear levels of a typographic hierarchy: title, individual letter and the term.



👉 “When you see this typography example, how do you think font choices and consistency could impact your students’ trust and focus?”

Summary so Far - Instructional & Visual Design

Goal: Equip teachers to address e-learning challenges by blending strong instructional design, clear visual design, and a focus on belonging.

Key Ideas

- **Instructional Design:** Content drives design → define objectives, structure logically, align with UDL.
- **Visual Design:** Alignment, hierarchy, color/contrast, typography, imagery, white space, and motion guide attention and reduce barriers.
- **Belonging:** Inclusive, accessible design ensures all students feel supported, engaged, and capable.
- **Collaboration:** Teachers as both instructional & visual designers → feedback and teamwork create polished, learner-centered experiences.
- **Pitfalls to Avoid:** Clutter, random layouts, irrelevant or overpowering visuals.

Takeaway:

 Great design isn't about looks—it's about helping every learner feel included, focused, and successful.

👁️ Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy

🎬 Animation & Motion: Guiding Attention with Movement

- 👁️ Movement immediately draws the eye and signals importance
- ➡️ Motion can be created through **animation, diagonals, curves, or directional shapes**
- ⚖️ Use sparingly—too much motion distracts and overwhelms learners
- 🎯 Purposeful motion should **guide focus toward learning objectives**

📌 *“When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, The eLearning Coach*

👁️ Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy

In the example below, several elements create a sense of movement from right to left. These are placing objects on the diagonal, use of curvy shapes and lines and objects faced in the same direction

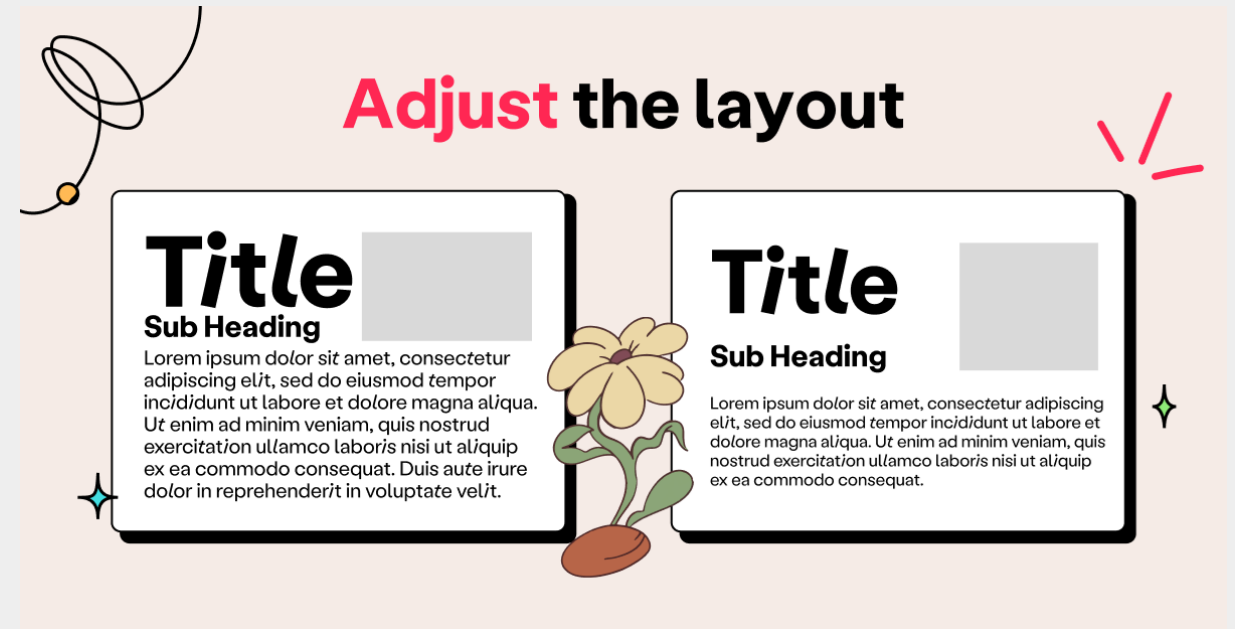


👉 *“How might purposeful use of motion or animation help you guide attention without overwhelming students?”*

👁️ Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy

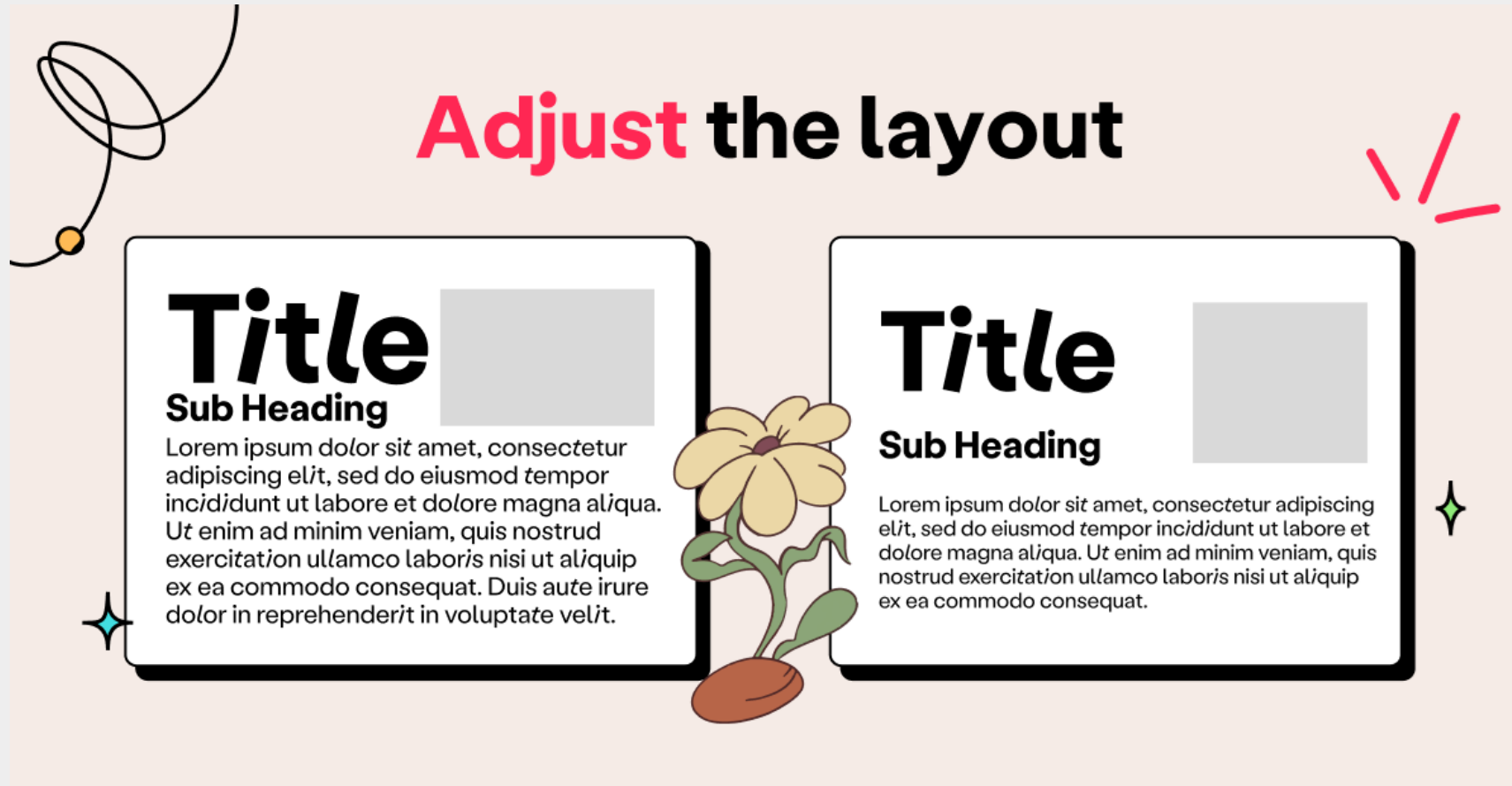
🌟 White Space Is Power

- Empty space makes content easier to process
- Isolating key ideas highlights them
- Clutter = cognitive overload



📌 “When the visual design is intentional, learners know what to focus on first.” – Malamed, *The eLearning Coach*

👁️ Visual Hierarchy: The Six Tools of Visual Hierarchy



👉 “When looking at this white space example, how could giving content ‘room to breathe’ make your lessons feel more welcoming and easier for students to process?”

⚠ Common Pitfalls in Visual Design

Avoid These Visual Design Traps


- 🖌 **Cluttered visuals** → overloads learners, increases cognitive load
- 🗺 **Random layouts** → feels messy, lowers credibility & trust
- 🎨 **Pretty but irrelevant design** → distracts from content, confuses learners
- 🚫 **Overpowering visuals** → design should *support*, not compete with, learning goals





👉 *Ask yourself: Does this design highlight the learning objective—or hide it?*


Collaboration Builds Better Learning

Collaboration Builds Better Learning

 As teachers, you are both Instructional Designers and Visual Designers—how you design impacts how students feel in your classroom.

 When you collaborate with colleagues, you ensure lessons follow UDL principles—clear, accessible, and flexible for all learners.

 Strong design fosters **belonging**: students feel the material is made for them, not against them, which keeps them engaged and motivated.

 “Great design isn’t about looks—it’s about helping every learner feel included and capable.”



 “Great design isn’t about looks—it’s about helping every learner feel included and capable.”




Learning Objectives Check In!


Using Emojis on the Whiteboard - How do you feel about the objectives?


Objectives:


1. **Define instructional design in eLearning** and explain why content—not appearance—should drive design decisions, ensuring lessons are accessible and aligned to UDL principles.
2. **Apply visual design principles** (alignment, hierarchy, color/contrast, etc.) to create materials that support learner focus, reduce barriers, and help students feel included and capable.
3. **Recognize and avoid common design pitfalls** (clutter, random layouts, irrelevant visuals) by explaining how they can hinder learning and reduce students' sense of belonging.

Final Thoughts - Bringing It All Together

 **Instructional Design** ensures learning goals drive the experience

 **Visual Design** makes content clear, focused, and engaging

 **Collaboration & feedback** polish learning into its best form

 Avoid clutter, randomness, and distractions that pull learners away from objectives

 *“Design should never overpower learning—it should illuminate it.”*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
TIME!**

DON'T FORGET TO TAKE THE [SURVEY](#)

Choose **two new strategies** from today's session—maybe alignment, visual hierarchy, or reducing clutter.

Commit to trying it in your classroom.



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MEVA PD Reflection Survey

Teacher Survey – Instructional & Visual Design Training

Section 1: Your Experience with Design Principles

Q1. What challenges do you face when trying to design eLearning materials that are both clear and engaging for students?
(Open-ended response)

Q2. How confident do you feel about using visual design principles like alignment, hierarchy, and white space in your own lessons?
(Linear scale: 1 = Not confident at all, 5 = Very confident)

Q3. In your classroom, what kinds of visual or instructional design strategies have helped your students stay focused and engaged?
(Open-ended response)

MEVA PD Reflection Survey

Section 2: Your Needs and Support

Q4. What support, tools, or resources would make it easier for you to apply the strategies we practiced today?

(Open-ended response)

Q5. How do you think improving instructional and visual design could impact your students' sense of belonging and connection in eLearning?

(Open-ended response)

MEVA PD Reflection Survey

Section 3: Reflection on Belonging at MEVA

Q6a. On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate your sense of belonging at MEVA at the **start** of this two-week training?

(Linear scale: 1 = Did not feel I belonged, 5 = Strong sense of belonging)

Q6b. On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate your sense of belonging at MEVA **now, at the end** of the training?

(Linear scale: 1 = Do not feel I belong, 5 = Strong sense of belonging)

Q6c. What contributed most to any changes in your sense of belonging at MEVA?

(Open-ended response)

Guidance Update 9/8/2025 Student Suicide Prevention

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for 10-14 year olds and the third leading cause of death for 14-18 year olds (CDC).
- One in 10 HS students reported attempting suicide within the last year (CDC).
- Approximately 17% of students express suicidal ideation, with approximately 14% completing their plans for suicide (CDC).

What does this mean for MEVA staff?

- Kids express suicidal ideation in various ways in school...it can come up in a writing prompt, in a conversation with a teacher, in a chat with a friend, etc.
- Notify Heather and Dan **IMMEDIATELY** of **ANY** concern!
 - Please include both Heather and Dan in the email. If you do not get an immediate response call/text Dan: 207-861-1431 or Heather: 207-613-6196. We drop everything to attend to these situations.
- This is crucial...even if the student has asked you not to tell anyone, even if you are unsure, even if the student tells you they have already told their parent....notify us no matter what. **If you have a student in a session with you and they say something concerning, do not release them, contact us immediately so that we can connect with them.**

Beyond Diversity

Moving Toward True Inclusion

Share Out!

How did creating stories go?

Reflection Activity

Take a moment to reflect on your experience creating stories. Consider:

- What challenges did you encounter?
- What insights did you gain?
- How did this connect to inclusion?

Why Diversity Initiatives Fall Short

Though well-intentioned, diversity initiatives alone do not create the changes necessary to move inclusion work forward.

Common Challenges

- ▶ **Surface-level changes:** Focus on numbers rather than culture transformation
- ▶ **Episodic efforts:** One-time trainings or events without systematic change
- ▶ **Deficit mindset:** Viewing differences as problems to be managed rather than assets
- ▶ **Access without belonging:** People may be physically present but not truly included

Understanding Different Perspectives

Neurological Models of Adolescent Competence

Incompetence Model

Competence Model

➤ Brain “under construction”
specialization

➤ Poor impulse control
learning

➤ Limited reasoning
Flexible thinking

➤ Need for protection

➤ Adaptive

➤ Enhanced



Poll

A. Neurological Incompetence Model

B. Neurological Competence Model

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Understanding the Difference



Diversity

The Representation

- Who is in the room
- Demographic composition
- Numbers and statistics
- Physical presence
- Access to spaces



Inclusion

The Experience

- Who has voice and influence
- Quality of participation
- Sense of belonging
- Psychological safety
- Opportunity for authentic contribution



Time to Climb



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Inclusion

Being inclusive is a matter of access that promotes community and belonging while honoring individuals' live experiences.

Key Elements of Inclusion

- **Meaningful Access:** Real opportunities to participate and contribute
- **Community Building:** Creating connections and shared purpose
- **Belonging:** Feeling valued and accepted as you are
- **Honor Lived Experiences:** Recognizing and valuing what people bring
- **Authentic Participation:** Being able to show up as your true self

Overcoming Barriers

Common Barriers to Inclusion

Individual Level

- ▶ Unconscious bias exclude
- ▶ Lack of awareness representation in leadership
- ▶ Fear of saying wrong thing

System Level

- ▶ Policies that
- ▶ Lack of
- ▶ Inflexible structures

Strategies for Change

- ▶ Listen to and center marginalized voices
- ▶ Examine and change policies that create barriers
- ▶ Provide ongoing education and support
- ▶ Create multiple pathways for participation
- ▶ Measure inclusion, not just diversity



Open Ended Question

Ready? Enter your answer here

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Path to True Inclusion

Key Principles

- **Diversity is the starting point, not the destination** - Getting different people involved is just the beginning
- **Asset-based approaches** - Honor and build upon what people bring rather than focusing on deficits
- **True inclusion requires belonging** - People need to feel they can be authentic and valued
- **Intersectionality matters** - Consider multiple, overlapping identities and experiences
- **Systemic change is essential** - Individual efforts must be supported by institutional transformation

The Bridge to Belonging



Inclusion as the Bridge

Inclusion serves as the critical bridge between diversity and belonging. Without it, diversity efforts remain surface-level, and true belonging remains elusive.

The Journey

DIVERSITY

Different people
present

INCLUSION

Everyone can participate
authentically

BELONGING

Everyone feels valued
and accepted

Your Next Steps

Homework: Examine Your Environment

Self-Assessment Questions

1. **Who has voice here?** Look around your classroom, workplace, or organization. Who speaks up? Who gets listened to? Who makes decisions?
2. **Who feels they can be authentic?** Can people bring their whole selves to work/school? Do they need to hide parts of who they are?
3. **What would need to change for everyone to truly belong?** What barriers exist? What could be different?

Your honest assessment:

Other

- Other topics and/or questions?
- Next Professional Learning (PL) Meeting on **Monday, September 15th, 3:00 pm.**
- Indigenous Peoples' Day is **Monday, October 13th**. Please cancel your live sessions.
- MEVA virtual high school graduation on **Friday, June 5th at 2:00 pm.** MEVA virtual eighth grade recognition ceremony on **Friday, June 12th at 11:00 am.**
- Looking ahead, the Last Day of School is **June 12th**.
- PL Meeting Materials are posted at:
<https://www.mainevirtualacademy.org/essaesserlau-elresources/meva-professional-learning-pl-meeting-materials>
- Thank you for all that you do to support your colleagues, your students, and their families.