S A V O R & S H A R E

S A R A H S A L I S B U R Y
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IRB STATEMENT

This project does not aim to answer a research question nor is it an investigation. It does not need to be reviewed by the California Polytechnic State University Institutional Review Board.
As an avid cook, I take pleasure in experimenting with new dishes and exploring diverse flavor combinations. However, I currently lack an organizational system for my recipes, as most of them remain unwritten. Unfortunately, when friends and family ask me to share my recipes, I often confuse them and make it difficult for them to follow the steps correctly with my verbal explanations. To address this issue, I have decided to compile my recipes into a cookbook that will serve as an organized and easy-to-reference collection. This will enable me to easily alter and share my recipes with others.

Cookbook design plays a crucial role in making the cookbook visually appealing and user-friendly for its readers. Effective cookbook design involves the use of design principles to create a well-organized and aesthetically pleasing layout that guides the reader through the recipes. The design of my book will be purposeful in improving reading comprehension through the incorporation of a grid, visual hierarchy, and pertinent illustrations aimed at assisting readers. The use of grids, visual hierarchies, and illustrations can all contribute to the effective communication of information to an audience. Poulin (2011) notes that a well-utilized grid can enhance the clarity of any message by prompting visual unity and proportional relationships between elements. Coates (2014) further suggests that visual hierarchies direct the audience’s attention, simplifying complex information for effective transmission. Tondreau (2019) adds that illustrations are a powerful storytelling tool, capturing the reader’s attention and providing a visual representation of complex information. Thus, the intentional use of these design elements can aid in conveying a message to the audience and making the learning experience engaging and enjoyable.

The completed project will be a collection of recipe pages for 5 recipes that are aesthetic, organized, and easy to comprehend by the use of a consistent grid, hierarchy, and layout with cohesive illustrations and design elements. It will also provide a framework for me to continue adding new recipes. To ensure quantifiable data, I plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the design through a consumer survey that will consist of multiple-choice questions, such as rating the level of comprehension on a scale of 1-10 for a particular recipe; other categories may include clarity, aesthetic, etc.
THEORIES & PRACTICES

Reading comprehension as it applies to graphic communication refers to a reader’s ability to process and understand the information presented to them. This is not a mere regurgitation of information, but rather the creation of meaning and construction of thought which allows the reader to apply the information (Duke, 2003). A clear and effective presentation of information greatly improves reading comprehension. The organization of information is important because it helps readers to identify the main ideas and key details of a text. This means distinguishing the importance of information, and drawing connections between different pieces of ideas which Dickson and Sherly consider foundational skills of reading comprehension (Dickson, 1995).

The success of information design in improving reading comprehension can be influenced by several factors, including the use of a grid layout, visual hierarchy, and related visuals. Poulin states when coupled effectively these elements boost the clarity of information and improve the communication of ideas to readers (Poulin, 2011). Coates supports the idea that effective organization of information with a clear hierarchy within a well-designed framework facilitates clear communication of content (Coates, 2014). The example of a newspaper’s use of a grid layout and visual hierarchy, combined with related visuals, exemplifies how employing these elements can enhance the digestibility of information for readers.

According to Poulin, grid layouts are crucial in creating order and structure while also allowing for creative flexibility in presenting content (Poulin, 2011). National Geographic magazine is an example of effective use of a grid layout, where text, images, and graphics are carefully placed in relation to one another, establishing a consistent structure and rhythm throughout its pages, in line with Poulin’s assertion of the essential function of the grid (Poulin, 2011). The use of a consistent baseline grid ensures that text and images are properly aligned and spaced, leading to improved readability.

Visual hierarchy involves establishing a clear distinction between various elements on a page, such as headlines, subheadings, body text, images, and other visual components. A clear visual hierarchy, as mentioned by Hughes, aids in prioritizing essential information and leading the viewer’s eye through the design (Hughes, 2019). When a clear visual hierarchy is absent, the viewer may become overwhelmed by the amount of information presented. Additionally, the effective use of visual hierarchy can enhance the aesthetic appeal of a design, creating balance, contrast, and harmony in the overall layout, making it easier for the viewer to navigate and appreciate the design as a whole.

Incorporating visuals in learning materials can improve memory retention and improve understanding by enhancing mental representations and reducing cognitive overload according to Sadoski (Sadoski, 2014). The strategic use of visuals can break up text-heavy content, make complex ideas more accessible, and provide context and associations between ideas. In the context of a science textbook, for example, complex scientific concepts, such as the water cycle, may be difficult to grasp solely through the text. However, if the textbook includes a diagram or illustration of the water cycle, with arrows and labels indicating the different processes involved, it can become easier to conceptualize.
Cookbooks are an essential tool for anyone who loves to cook. A well-designed cookbook not only provides recipes but also inspires and educates the reader about food, cooking techniques, and culture. Effective cookbook design is a balance between aesthetics and functionality, where the visual elements serve to enhance the reading experience and guide the reader through the recipes. The purpose of creating a cookbook is to communicate my recipes in a direct and user-friendly manner so it is crucial that the comprehension of my audience be at the forefront of my design.

The layout of a cookbook should be organized and easy to navigate. The use of grids and columns can help to create a consistent and structured layout, making it easier for the reader to follow the recipes. According to (Morris, 2016), the layout should be designed with the reader in mind, with a clear hierarchy of information that guides the reader through the recipe. This can be achieved through the use of headings, subheadings, and bullet points.

Visual hierarchy refers to the way in which visual elements are arranged on a page to create a sense of order and importance. In cookbook design, visual hierarchy is used to guide the reader through the recipe and emphasize key elements. According to (Dumais, 2015), visual hierarchy can be achieved through the use of contrast, size, and placement. For example, recipe titles can be made larger and bolder than the recipe instructions to create emphasis and draw attention to the recipe.

Illustrations play a significant role in cookbook design, as they help to enhance the visual appeal of the cookbook and provide additional context for the recipes. Illustrations can be used to showcase ingredients, cooking techniques, and finished dishes. They can also aid in reading comprehension by providing a visual representation of the recipe steps, making it easier for the reader to understand the instructions and follow along. According to (Meyer & Saljo, 2015), illustrations can provide a form of cognitive support, helping the reader to better understand the text and retain information. Additionally, illustrations can help to make the recipe more approachable and less intimidating, especially for novice cooks who may be less familiar with cooking techniques and terminology.

In conclusion, a well-designed cookbook is a valuable asset for both amateur and professional cooks alike. It not only provides recipes but also inspires, educates, and guides the reader through the cooking process. Effective cookbook design requires a balance between aesthetics and functionality, with a focus on creating a clear and organized layout that is easy to navigate. Visual hierarchy, through the use of contrast, size, and placement, helps to emphasize key elements and guide the reader through the recipe. Illustrations are also an important aspect of cookbook design, as they enhance the visual appeal of the cookbook and aid in reading comprehension. Ultimately, a cookbook that is thoughtfully designed with the reader in mind will make the cooking experience more enjoyable and successful for all.
RESULTS

I have finished a project that encompasses a cover design, a color palette, various typefaces, and two recipe page designs which I produced using Adobe InDesign. These page layouts will serve as a foundation for future recipes as I continue to augment the book. The book, called Savor & Share, has dimensions of an A4 square and is structured with a seven column grid with 0.1875 in gutters. Each page has a top margin of 0.5 in, a bottom margin of 0.75 in, an inside margin of 0.875 in, and an outside margin of 0.75 in. In addition, each recipe step includes an illustration that I created using Adobe Illustrator. The book adopts a color block style that uses contrasting colors to ensure that the information on the page is visually striking.

The feedback received for the project was overwhelmingly positive, with reviewers acknowledging that the design was visually appealing and easy to follow due to its well-organized layout, use of visuals, and concise text.
COLOR PALLETTE

TYPEFACES

BD Supper
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Semplicita Pro
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

RECIPE 1 LAYOUT

RECIPE 2 LAYOUT
CONCLUSION

My project aimed to demonstrate the advantages of successful information design in improving reading comprehension, particularly in the context of a cookbook. To achieve this, I utilized a grid layout, visual hierarchy, and related visuals as key elements. The feedback received for my project emphasizes the importance of balancing aesthetics and functionality in cookbook design.

The practical implications of my project suggest that cookbook designers should prioritize the use of visual elements to enhance the user experience. By providing context and associations between ideas through visuals, readers are more likely to be able to apply what they have learned to their own cooking. The feedback received also highlights the significance of careful placement and sizing of visuals, as well as the use of typography to create a clear hierarchy of information.

By implementing effective information design in cookbooks, designers can improve reading comprehension and overall usability for their audience. This will lead to a more positive user experience and greater success in the use of the cookbook.
The project faced limitations due to a short timeline and unforeseeable life factors, which forced a redesign of the project’s scope. As a result, the number of final recipe page designs had to be reduced, and there were limitations to the evaluation methods. Unfortunately, a survey could not be conducted to collect feedback and measurable data, which is something that would be included if the project were to be repeated.

Due to these limitations, the feedback received was limited and verbal. None of the reviewers attempted to make any of the recipes in the book, making it difficult to evaluate the practical application of the design and its effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension.

Moving forward, the future goals of the project include adding more recipe pages to physically produce the cookbook. Additionally, creating a digital version of the cookbook would make it more accessible to a wider audience. Finally, implementing a flexible grid system to create more variety and fluidity within the layouts is another goal. By overcoming the limitations faced in this project, we can better evaluate and improve the success of the cookbook design.


Tondreau, B. (2019). Layout essentials revised and updated: 100 design principles for using grids. Quarto Publishing Group USA.