



Looks are Everything (But Content is Still King) Tips and Techniques for Making a Visually Appealing Curriculum

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What is a Medical Illustrator?

- Professional artist and graphic designer with advanced education in both the life sciences (anatomy, cell biology, neuroscience, pathology) and visual communication
- Typically collaborate with scientists, physicians, medical-legal lawyers to transform complex information into visual images that have the potential to communicate to broad audiences

Ideal Process for creating an interactive educational module

- 1) Discussion of concept, ideas, goals, and interactivity
- 2) Outline of module
- 3) Script creation from outline (most difficult part)
- 4) Design the interface of the module
- 5) Storyboard
- 6) Production of illustrations, animations, audio, interactive components
- 7) Review and critique by faculty
- 8) Student review and feedback

How will the module be used or accessed?

- Will users access the module on the computer?
- Is it necessary for the module to be compatible with devices such as the iPad?
- Very important to make these decisions at beginning of module creation process because it will determine how all the videos, graphics, and animations are rendered, and establishes the size of the module interface
- Module should be PC and Mac friendly and compatible with standard internet browsers such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari

Script (if using audio)

- Script is very different than a PowerPoint or outline—think about what something will sound like; read it out loud; Think about what will be on the screen and what the audio will add
- Many students may prefer not to have a narrator; avoid long narrations that lull the user to sleep!
- Some modules are created with an audio on/off feature where students who prefer to read narrations can turn off the audio and read text on the screen
- Script should be as close to a final version as possible to avoid setbacks
- Put time in at the beginning of the production process by creating a refined script rather than making large scale changes at the end
- It is easier and more time efficient to have the script ready before recording audio and producing the module (in some cases it can be difficult to backtrack- especially if you are using video with actors) although it is possible to re-record audio, etc- just expect production time to increase
- Many freelance artists will charge clients for multiple changes and revisions

Module Length

- Manageable length needs to be determined when creating the script
- Let user know how long each section will take to complete/how long it takes to complete the module—this is important to students so they know how much time to set aside

Dividing Module into Chapters

- Depending on the module, breaking down the script into several chapters may be helpful for ease of use and convenience
- One benefit to divide module into chapters is that the user can access specific sections quickly without having to go through entire module again
- Convenience, clarity and straightforwardness will likely encourage users to revisit the module again and to use it as a reference

Design of Module Interface

- Design must be user-friendly in addition to be aesthetically pleasing
- Clear/obvious navigation tools (user should not have to search screen for navigation tools)
- Pause, forward and backwards buttons, scrub bar on videos to give user more control over module and allows for quick review

Storyboard

- Storyboards are important so that all involved in the project are on the same page and there are no surprises with the outcome of final products
- Must have a script to produce a worthwhile storyboard
- There are many ways to produce a storyboard - Storyboard can be made using visuals along with text from the script, or the visuals can be described using words
- The medical illustrator/ media team should always show their clients examples of progress to make sure they are satisfied with quality of the work
- Especially critical to obtain feedback from experts if accurate anatomical images are being produced

Module Instructions

- Useful even if module seems like it is easy to navigate
- Keep in mind that you have been using this module all the time and people who are using it for the first time may not find it as intuitive

Label and Highlight Important Items

- Label and highlight images to complement audio and to direct user to look at important areas on the screen
- Many students who use modules, request that there be more highlights on images/videos/animations and more text on the screen (key points)
- Modules should be appealing to all types of learners by using a combination of narration, images, and text

Include a Summary Section

- Allows for quick review of complex topics
- May be helpful to include option to print out PDF document of the narration or a “take home points” sheet so the user can follow along and take notes or review at a later date to study the main points of a module

Where can I find a medical illustrator?

- Association of Medical Illustrators (AMI)
- www.ami.org
- You can contact AMI and request to post a job (freelance/full time employment) on their webpage, or search for a medical illustrator in your area