LESSON PLAN: 3

SESSION TITLE: ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

SESSION LENGTH: 2 hours   **PREPARED BY:** M. Wagner 1/92

OBJECTIVES: At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify **design** as the organization of written and visual information in such a way
      that the significance of the subject is highlighted;
2. Describe the "rule of thirds" as it relates to space;
3. Define "chaos of emphasis" as it relates to scale and proportion;
4. List 2 advantages and 2 disadvantages of using color in design;
5. Analyze a selection of illustrative media, identifying effective and ineffective
      design elements, and suggesting reasons behind the designs;
6. List 4 characteristics of contemporary park visitors that dictate specific design
      techniques.

HANDOUTS: annotated bibliography of resources, type - styles and sizes, type - as
pictorial image, justification, grids, chaos of emphasis, definitions of design jargon
(all in progress by M. Wagner, ARO)

Some Basic Resources

   White, Jan V. Editing By Design. R.R. Bowker Company, New York, NY, 1974.

   Lauer, David. Design Basics. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1985.

   Parker, Roger C. Aldus Guide to Basic Design. Aldus Corporation, Seattle, WA, 1988.

Training Aids: flip charts; assortment of graphics - magazines, books, folders, etc.,
examples of layout grids.

Content	Method	Time
A.Introduce concept of design as:	Lecture discussion	10 Minutes
1.a system of organization 2.a hierarchy of information; the establishment of priorities 3.a method for capturing a viewer's attention 4.the power to express the significance of ideas and concepts Use some simple examples that obviously show organization and purpose.		
B.The Balancing Act	Lecture discussion	20 Minutes
Introduce the concept of space and the relationships between design elements (text, graphics, objects, white space, etc.) 1.Rule of Thirds (balance) a.1/3 text b.1/3 graphics c.1/3 white space 2.Proportion a.refers to relative sizes b.size as measured against other elements 3.Scale a.refers essentially to size b.is related to thematic importance c. dynamics of opposing visuals 4.White Space a.not a random "nothing area" b.active participant in design c.gives the eye a rest Highlight each of the above points with good graphic examples using slides, actual pictures, overheads, or handouts.		

Content	Method	Time
C.The "chaos of emphasis" Explore the use of type styles and sizes, divider bars, boxes, and design element size. Focus on the need to maintain a hierarchy (see A.2) 1.Define "chaos of emphasis" The combination of too many bold, competing elements, preventing a clear hierarchy of information. 2.typography a.variety b.readability c.categories 1.serif 2.sans serif d.weight e.mixing typefaces and fonts (includes definitions) f.consistent application of type g.upper and lower case h.justification (columns) 3.bands, bars, and boxes 4.standardizing a.grids as framework b.spacing elements 1.between headlines/titles and text 2.between pictures/objects and captions 3.between other elements as needed 5.too many visuals - the clutter syndrome. Also discuss the level of information that needs to be presented - i.e., a simple piece of line art may be a better approach than a complex photograph that includes a lot of extraneous information Use good visuals to emphasize the above points. Much of this discussion will only make sense with well-chosen examples and good clear explanations.	Lecture discussion	15 Minutes
D.Color 1.Functions a.as background tint b.as a tool for emphasis c.as a working element rather than a decoration	Lecture discussion	5 Minutes

Content	Method	Time

2.Expense - color costs more

3.Expertise - color is more complicated

Have good examples to demonstrate section 1 elements.

E.Visualizing	Group exercise and discussion	50 Minutes

This activity gives participants the opportunity to use newly introduced concepts by analyzing a variety of printed materials.

Small groups will be given a selection of magazines, books, folders, etc. The group task will be to identify both positive and negative design elements. They will also suggest possible reasons for why particular designs were chosen.

Each group will select one of those materials and present a "design critique" to the class. (Option: if desired, the instructor may pre-choose materials for presentation to ensure a better variety of designs).

Class discussion will follow each presentation for added insights, debates, etc. This will be the opportune time to introduce the subjective aspects of design.

The materials chosen for this group exercise need to be chosen carefully. A series of books such as Time-Life or a guide book series would be ideal to show several publications created on the same grid. The NPS handbook series will work as well, but the grid structure is a little more complicated.

Also note magazines like Newsweek or Time that use a consistent design style each week. Beware of just using advertising. Often ads are excellent for illustrating proportion and emphasis as the product is made to stand out. But, advertising mentality is subtlety different from other kinds of design presentation.

F.Who's Out There?	Lecture discussion	10 Minutes

This section looks at the perspectives of contemporary park visitors - what they want and expect to see. The visitor today as a visually (vs written) oriented should be stressed.

Content	Method	Time

1.visually oriented materials
2.short sections of text
3.color vs. black & white
4.accessibility

Some up-to-date behavioral information is needed here
that discusses the perceptual processing of information
in the post-modern world. It will deal with the change
in emphasis from the written word to television, video,
etc. Some hard hitting examples from studies will be
helpful to emphasize this section.

G.Conclusions

Design is very intentional, but should be based on a plan
that includes an analysis of the viewer and the function
of the media.

Design is not something you learn in two hours. This
class is a very basic introduction to some of the basic
principles underlying design. Course participants can
use their new basic knowledge to "notice their
surroundings" from a new perspective.

Instructor should have some everyday examples of designed
materials (e.g., cereal boxes, airline tickets, bill
boards, forms, etc) to highlight the principles.
Encourage everyone to take a closer look at their visual
world as a way to heighten their perception of design and
to assist them in becoming better designers themselves.

Time (G.Conclusions): 5 Minutes