

## MAKING A MARK: ROLE OF EXPRESSIVE TYPOGRAPHY IN FOSTERING CREATIVE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS IN LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper explores the potential of typography as an essential element of visual communication in enhancing creativity and cognitive development. The focus is on how the use of expressive typography can foster creative skills in students and contribute to the cognitive development of young children. The paper investigates the use of expressive typography in practical art education to improve visual thinking and its application in nurturing children's cognitive and creative skills. The research highlights the significance of typography as a powerful tool in visual communication and its role in the development of creativity and cognitive skills in education. The findings suggest that the integration of expressive typography in education can provide a valuable platform for students and children to explore their creative potential and develop critical thinking skills.*

**Keywords:** *Typography, expressive typography, story, reading, visual communication, creativity, cognitive development.*

### INTRODUCTION

Typography is an essential element of visual communication and has been used in design for centuries. However, the potential of typography to enhance creativity and cognitive development has only recently begun to be explored. In the context of education, the use of expressive typography has been shown to foster creative and cognitive skills in learners. This paper aims to investigate how expressive typography can nurture students' creative abilities and develop their cognitive skills. In particular, the paper will examine how expressive typography may be utilized to improve visual thinking and communication in practical art education. The first part of the paper will explore the relation between typography, expressive and experimental typography. Followed by an overview of the literature on expressive typography that has already been written, including research on how it affects creativity and cognitive growth. The later part will emphasize applied art education and the significance of visual communication in this subject. It will also look into how expressive typography can be utilized to improve students' visual perception. It will look at how typography may be used to keep respondents interested in what they are studying and to greatly enhance self-learning.

### TYPOGRAPHY (EXPRESSIVE TYPOGRAPHY)

As Helmut Schmid, the finest typography practitioner, and a graphic designer state, "Typography needs to be audible. Typography needs to be felt. Typography needs to be experienced." Intentional use of typography can help convey ideas, evoke feelings, and ultimately tell a meaningful story, (Sprouse, 2022). The term "typography" is derived from the Greek term's *typos*, meaning "impression" or "mould", and *graphein*, meaning "to write". It refers to the practice of placing type in a way that makes it legible, readable, and visually appealing when it is exhibited or printed, Arina Stoenescu, (2008). The overall appearance and feel of a design can be affected by the font, size, spacing, and colour choices. Expressive Typography is an art form where text is highly visual, here type becomes an image. Letters aren't only meaningless abstract symbols; they also have tangible, physical shapes. Expressive typography may include elements such as handwritten type, custom lettering, and experimental typography. While typography as a whole refers to the art and science of arranging type for communication, expressive typography is essentially a subset of typography that focuses on using typography as a creative tool for expressing emotions and conveying meaning. Modern designers are increasingly adopting expressive typography, which makes use of typography as the main component of a design to produce a distinctive and expressive visual experience. Some examples of contemporary uses of expressive typography are in branding, advertising, web design, package design, and other forms of artistic expression. Expressive typography is a flexible design technique that can be applied in a variety of contexts to produce one-of-a-kind and unforgettable visual experiences. Despite the fact that expressive typography has been thoroughly examined in

the disciplines of design and communication, there are still gaps in research that need to be addressed. Although expressive typography has been used successfully in branding and advertising, more research is needed to determine how it might be applied in other contexts, such as user interfaces, instructional materials, and informational graphics. An experiment was conducted to determine how expressive typography can be utilized to improve children's cognitive abilities. In an advanced undergraduate lettering and typography course students were challenged to experiment with letterforms to convey the sense of words without utilizing any graphic forms. To examine the process, student work was compared using experimental approaches. The study investigates the function that visualization serves in typography.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Cuban (2001)** Reading can be made memorable by using visual aids, study revealed the psychology of visual aids as follows: 1% of what is learned is from the sense of taste, 1.5% from the sense of touch, 3.5% from the logic of smell, 11% from the logic of hearing, and 83% from the sense of sight. "Children also have a better understanding of the meaning of the vocabularies as well as the relationship of difficult words through the design of expressions, which includes changes of words, colors, and simple visual elements".

**Gonzale, (2010)** This triggered a probability of, what if only letterforms were used to tell a story in order to derive the meaning of a word or depict a situation instead of using characters for the same. Early exposure to reading has a major positive impact on a child's language development, cognitive abilities, and academic success.

Stories are powerful teaching tools because they are engaging, convincing, and easy to recall. Stories deal with human-like experiences, which we naturally regard as a real and reliable source of knowledge, which contributes to their believability. Stories help us recall knowledge because they immerse us in the characters' actions. Stories encourage active meaning-making by doing this.

**Newman M. L. Lau et.al, (2015)** Peter Apeloig in this book, the designer Agens Wartner, arranged the typographic elements in an oddball pattern with holes in the shape of circles. The book offers a strong argument for experimental layout using both large and small typefaces. Although the reader may occasionally become lost, they ultimately become drawn to this novel reading style. Stunning, moving, and exquisite typographic moments of visual experience were produced by Wartner's design. This hypertext story was entirely text-based; there were no visuals or noises, in contrast to most others. Thus, the book highlighted the fact that typography can break the monotonous way of reading by generating interest and curiosity in them.



**Fig 1:** Source: Club, T. D. (2009). *Typography 29*. Harper Collins

**(Turgut, O. P. (2017)** Typography has applications in both printed graphic visuals and digital ones. Futurism has attempted to use typography to create expressive forms. "Typography can be made into a tool that viewers can explore without reading in order to get a concept or piece of information. Experimenting with typography leads to unique, inventive, and creative visual design ideas. "Typography can be transformed into a tool which

audiences can watch beyond reading and wander inside and thus obtain an idea or information". Experimenting with letterforms is one of the essential factors of expressive typography. Both expressive and experimental typography aims to use typography as a tool for communication that goes beyond just displaying text. This is how they are connected. Both strategies strive to explore the visual and expressive potential of type while pushing the limits of what is thought of as conventional typography.

## OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To experiment and find how effectively expressive typography can be used to develop visual thinking in Applied Art students.
- To observe how expressive typography can also be utilized to read a story or transmit a narrative, which can add interest and engagement for respondents in instructional materials.

The present study was carried out by respondents from applied art college who were asked to design a story in a creative manner using expressive typography. Consisting of experimental research along with grounded theory research. With the help of participant data, a grounded theory was created using qualitative research. These methods were used to analyze data collected from group-1 to interpret their visual idea skills as creative students and put forth the result in front of children falling under the age group of 7-10 years.

## ❖ SUBJECTS

The research was conducted targeting two focused groups.

- a. (Group-1) The students from Lettering and Typography specialization, studying in the third year BFA Applied Art Course.
- b. (Group-2) Children from 7-10 years of age, who are introduced to reading stories in their initial years.

## ❖ INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURE

The study used instruments that derive information and analyze the experimental result in the form of practical assignments. To make the reading experience of group-2 fun and memorable, an interview with close-ended questionnaires was conducted by analyzing the reading experience of typographical story designs by 10 respondents of lettering and typography specialization (group-1).

Group-1 was given an assignment that included an experimentation challenge. The objective was to experiment and investigate how written text conveys meaning by expressing graphic value by looking at the type via an emotional lens. They were expected to understand.

- How its meaning would be expressed without utilizing any visuals?
- How to denote the same concept graphically?

## ❖ SAMPLE

**Group-1** had to choose a moral tale of relevance to them and illustrate it just in letterforms to produce a dynamic composition using Adobe Illustrator. They were instructed to search the text for words whose meanings could be completely stated in letterforms, and then to scrawl those words on paper while experimenting with other options. After expressing these words typographically, a modular grid was to be used to build the complete plot. The story's typographic design was carefully considered so as not to impair readability. Flexibility in designing a dynamic layout was given since the assignment also encouraged them to use their creativity and explore visual design ideas.

**Group-2** was composed of respondents who fell within the designated age range of 7-10 who were shown these expressive typography results and they were also shown the same story using a standard font. Their responses were gathered to determine whether the story designed using expressive typography had a positive effect over moral stories with regular fonts.

## ❖ RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### ➤ The findings for (Group 1) are attributed as:

Group-1 challenged the creative thinking capability to extract maximum expressive typographical meaning from the stories. Below is the analysis of a few expressive words used.

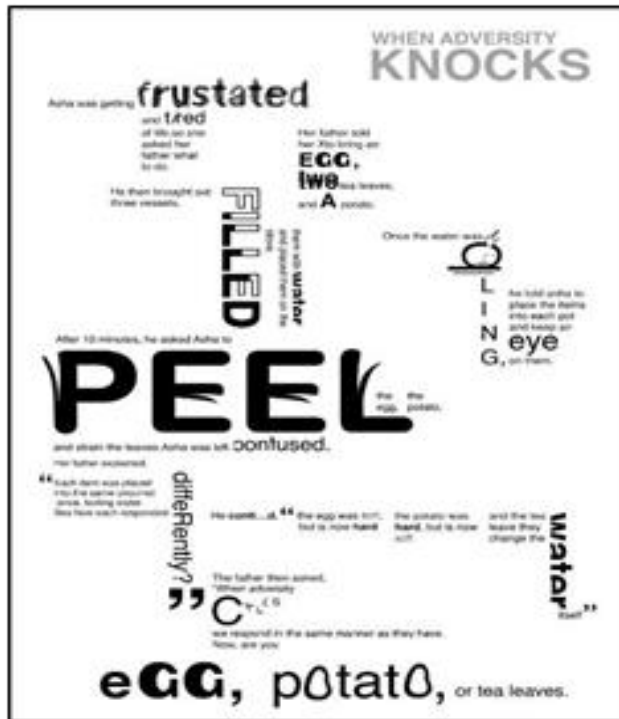


Fig: 2

Figure 2 analyses the words expressed as:

**Frustrated-** The word is expressed using the scribbling technique, which is a common way of expressing frustration.

**Tired-** Lowercase 'i' denotes a person where the dot is a representation of the human head and the stem is the remaining human body part. The letter is shown leaning on the next letter, depicting tiredness.

**Filled-** The Word filled is denoted by simply using the outline of the letter and some part of the letter filled on different levels.

**Water-** Water is shown half submerged by simply cropping the bottom part of the word.

**Eye-** Lowercase 'e' and flipped "ə" gives a resemblance of the eyes. By using a punctuation mark inside the eye, the word is expressed intelligently.

**Peel-** Some parts of the letters are tweaked in a way that gives a peeling effect.

**Confused-** Letters are flipped in order to show confusion.

**Potato-** The letter 'o' is distorted to give it the shape of a potato.

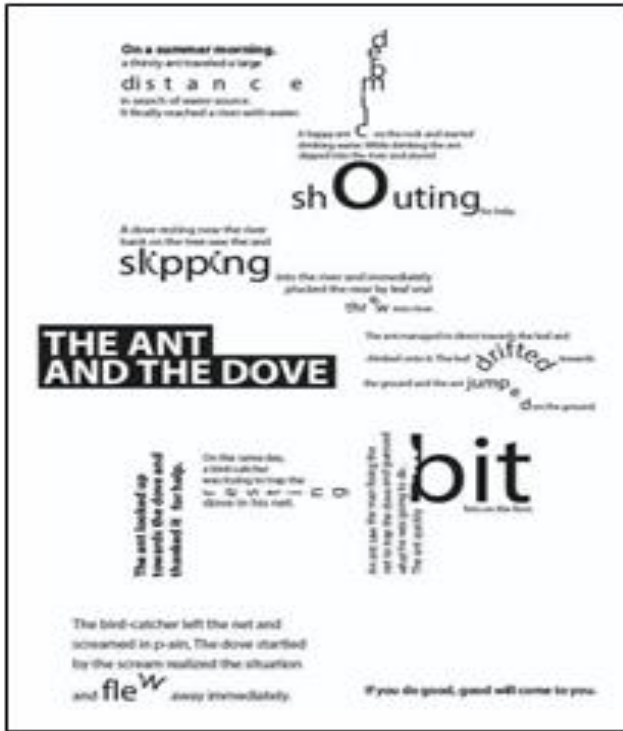


Fig: 3

Figure 3 projects the words expressed as:

**Distance-** The Distance between the letters goes on increasing gradually denoting the meaning of the word distance.

**Slipping-** The letter 'i' is designed in a way that it looks like it has slipped

**Flew-** The letter 'w' is visualized as a flying bird and istreated accordingly

**Rested-** The orientation of the letters is changed in orderto show the resting position



Fig: 4

Figure 4 attributes the words expressed as:

**Door to Door-** The letter 'O 'is creatively arranged in such a way that it appears like a door

**Glass-** It refers to both glass as a container and glass as a material, and has two distinct meanings. The expressive part of this word makes it easier for the reader to quickly understand the context without reading the entire sentence.

Hence the given images show the experiments and highlight the key factors and possibilities ofthe study.

The top 3 examples of the experiments were compiled and evaluated based on their originality, readability,

expressiveness, and scope

of possibility. Figure 2 has some innovative results and the maximum words expressed typographically. Figure 2. has quite a few possibilities tried out. Words like distance flew and the bit was produced innovatively. In Fig 3. Words like door-to-door and glass grabbed maximum attention for their uniqueness.

The results of the evaluation of the top 3 examples of the experiments are presented based on their originality, readability, expressiveness, and scope of possibility. These criteria were used to determine the effectiveness of the experiments and the potential impact of their findings.

**Originality-** First, the experiments' originality was taken into account. The findings show that Figure 2 stood out for its creative outcomes since it provided maximum words expressed typographically. This could mean that the experiment was able to gobeyond what is often expected in this kind of investigation and produce new insights.

**Readability-** Secondly, readability was evaluated. In this regard, all the top 3 examples were found to be highly readable, with clear and concise language used throughout. However, Figure 3 stood out for its use of unique and attention-grabbing words like "door to door" and "glass." This made the findings more engaging and memorable to the reader, which is important in conveying the significance of the research.

**Expressiveness-** Thirdly, expressiveness was considered. All the experiments were found to be highly expressive, conveying their findings clearly and effectively. However, Figure 2 was able to express a range of possibilities and variations through the use of innovative words like "Distance," "flew," and "bit." This made the experiment more dynamic and exciting, and potentially more useful for future research.

**Future possibility-** The range of future possibilities was then assessed. It was discovered that Figure 2 had tried out a lot of potential outcomes, demonstrating a willingness to investigate novel ideas and take chances during the study process. This may result in important discoveries and advancements in the area.

Hence, the findings show that all three were quite successful, but Figure 2 stood out for its novel conclusions and range of potential applications, while Figure 3 was especially successful at attracting attention due to its use of unusual and attention-getting terms. Overall, these studies show that this area has a lot of room for creative and fascinating research.

➤ **The findings for (Group 2) are attributed as:**

- According to the study, the majority of the respondents 80% considered expressive typography words to be 70% more intriguing and eye-catching than conventional words.
- Regular words were simpler to read for 55% of respondents than expressive typography words in terms of readability.
- When asked whether expressive typography terms were more important than normal words in design, 75% of respondents agreed.
- When respondents observed expressive font phrases in a design, 80% of them felt joyful, eager, or intrigued, while only 20% felt bored or neutral.
- 65% of respondents thought words with expressive typography were more interesting than ordinary words.
- However, 70% of respondents found difficulty in reading sentences in a flow due to flexibility in the text orientation.

Along with using expressive typography in creating educational material for children, it can also be used to give them an immersive and interesting learning experience, expressive typography can be paired with interactive features like animations or games. The use of expressive typography in combination with interactive features like animations or games can provide a unique and engaging learning experience for the learners. By incorporating interactive elements, children are able to actively engage with the material, which can help to enhance their

understanding and retention of the subject matter. In addition, the use of expressive typography can help to make the learning experience more visually appealing and stimulating. Using expressive typography may have the ability to assist the learning materials' key concepts or ideas to stand out. For instance, highlighting important words or phrases with bold or italic type can assist the child understand their significance. Also, the use of expressive font can make the subject matter more captivating and exciting, which can encourage children to study more and continue their exploration. The immersive learning experience can be improved even more by incorporating interactive elements like animations or games. Animations can assist in giving youngsters visual representations of abstract ideas, which will aid in their understanding and retention. Games, on the other hand, can give children a fun and interesting method to engage with the subject matter, which can assist to keep their interest and motivation high. It is crucial to keep in mind that the learning objectives of the content should be properly matched with the use of expressive typography and interactive elements. Instead of deviating from the learning process, these elements should be employed to improve it. To prevent children from being exposed to unsuitable content or too much screen time, technology use in the learning process should also be age-appropriate and closely supervised. Children can actively participate in the topic when these features are included, which can improve their comprehension and retention of the subject. To ensure that technology is age-appropriate and secure for children, it is crucial to strike a balance between these factors and the content's learning objectives.

## CONCLUSION

The study analyses that expressive typography words are a valuable and successful tool for design, especially when aimed at young audiences. While creating designs for toddlers, designers and educators should think about adopting expressive typography ideas. But attention should also be paid to the font to make sure that it is simple for recipients of various ages and reading levels to read and understand. To better understand the usefulness of expressive typography words, future research might examine how they are used in various contexts and cultures. For instance, can complicated scientific or technical concepts be adequately communicated with expressive typography? According to this research, including expressive typography in educational settings can give students and children a useful platform to explore their creative potential and hone their critical thinking abilities. Overall, this study adds to the expanding body of research on the value of expressive typography in education and emphasizes how it can be an effective tool for fostering creativity and cognitive growth both.

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