

5 good form 2 : redesign a form for clarity, ease of use

Almost every form can be divided into three areas: information for the user, interaction (i.e., the fields that need to be filled) and administrative information about the form itself.

ex Borries Schwesinger. *The Form Book: Creating Forms for Printed and Online Use*. Thames & Hudson. 2010 : 150

Tables facilitate the selection, categorization, checking, and extraction of data — but there are as many different applications of mathematical tables as societies which used them...

ex "Introduction," M. Campbell-Kelly, R. Croarken, F. Flood and E. Robson, *The History of Mathematical Tables : From Sumer to Spreadsheets* (Oxford UP, 2003)

There's nothing like putting stuff in boxes. (or something to that effect)

Muriel Cooper

No, the real lesson (from Katrina) is that under conditions of true complexity—where the knowledge required exceeds that of any individual and unpredictability reigns—efforts to dictate every step from the center will fail. People need room to act and adapt... That routine requires balancing a number of virtues: freedom and discipline, craft and protocol, specialized ability and group collaboration. And for checklists to help achieve that balance, they have to take two almost opposing forms. They supply a set of checks to ensure the stupid but critical stuff is not overlooked, and they supply another set of checks to ensure people talk and coordinate and accept responsibility while nonetheless being left the power to manage the nuances and unpredictabilities the best they know how.

Atul Gawande. *The Checklist Manifesto : How to Get Things Right* (2009): 79

In the wake of "Advising Day," examine the **summary sheets** for the different concentrations (and minors). Are these easy for you to navigate, keep track of what you've taken and need to take, in order to get a degree?

Examine your own summary sheet. What does and doesn't work? What is necessary? What is missing, that shouldn't be?

Are there entirely different premisses/principles around which it might be organized?

THE WORK

Suggest a redesign of the summary sheet, based on your critique of existing model.

One (extra credit) wrinkle: figure out a summary sheet for a student with a double concentration. The only printed guidance about dual concentrations is to be found in the Student Handbook, page 10:

5. Dual Concentrations

Students considering a dual concentration should meet with their faculty advisor and the Registrar to determine the feasibility of such a plan. Students who wish to concentrate in more than one area may not be able to remain on a traditional schedule for graduation and may need to spend additional time at the college.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Minimize "chart junk," gray backgrounds. Make the logic of the sheet visible immediately.

Use multi-column grid; may use tables (see below).

Remember that paragraph (and table) styles both allow you to specify rules (at different stroke widths and colors) above, below, and at sides of a unit of text.

May take one (or multiple) pages.

Tables may be built into a document by inserting a table in a text box. Instructions below:

Table > Insert table >

Tables > Table options > Cell options (strokes and fills)

Here you can experiment with cell strokes and fills, also vertical and horizontal frames.

Why a table in a text box: so that text in one cell can descend if it doesn't fit in its assigned width; otherwise, it will extend across next tab.

In all cases, "grids should be muted relative to the data." (Edward Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (1983:114))

Here's an example of a table :

103	Thought	Stammer
4103	Thought it would be all right	Standard
334124	Time, patience and perseverance will bring us out all right on this stock	4124 Step
4125	Title	Stephen; but not always the case
4126	Title is good	Stern

WHAT WHEN

- Weds 2 Nov review Good Form (typography and etiquette) posters; introduce Good Form 2
- Mon 7 Nov review posters, deliver PDFs for McVey to produce; close examination of summary sheets (critique of existing, and perhaps some sketches?)
- Weds 9 Nov examination of summary sheets (bring in 10 copies)