

Case Study

Designing with Empathy from Within: A Color First Story

Kathleen Simmons

Case Study

Project Title: Designing with Empathy from Within: A Color First Story

Role: Instructional Designer

Context: Independent portfolio project

Deliverable: Interactive Microlearning Module

Tool: Articulate Rise 360

Challenge/Problem Statement:

Color is frequently treated as decoration rather than communication in instructional design, applied last if at all. This module addresses the gap between visual design practice and accessibility standards, arguing that color-first thinking is an act of empathy, not aesthetics.

Analysis & Research:

- Identified the disconnect between common instructional design practice and accessibility standards for color
- Evaluated the need for demonstration over description -- color contrast principles require interaction, not passive reading
- Researched external tools to extend hands-on application beyond the module

Design Decisions:

- Narrative-driven content positions color as communication rather than decoration
- Authentic first-person perspective builds connection with the learner
- Venn diagram image visualizes how primary colors interact to create contrast, harmony, and clarity in design
- Interactive hue challenge encourages engagement through personal comparison
- External tools provide applied practice beyond the module environment

Implementation Process:

- Built in Articulate Rise 360 with Adobe Creative Cloud
- Personal voice and perspective woven throughout to reinforce the empathy framework
- Licensed Adobe Stock imagery selected to complement and reinforce content themes

Evaluation & Outcomes:

Independent portfolio project. Formal outcome data is not available. The module demonstrates applied knowledge of color theory, accessibility standards, and inclusive design practice through the instructional experience itself.