

Inclusive Design for Cognition: Worksheet

A three-step, interactive worksheet

- 01 Start with motivation
- 02 Identify learning styles
- 03 Include customer insights

Introduction

This three-step, interactive worksheet is designed to help identify and frame mismatches between a user's cognitive abilities and product's cognitive demands, and brainstorm solutions that better meet diverse cognitive needs.

This is meant to be supplemented within your existing practice. Below we walk you through the process using the scenario of someone learning to cook a new dish.

01

Step one

People are motivated by all kinds of things.

Someone playing in their free time would approach a product experience much differently than someone trying to deliver on a tight deadline for their boss.

When we understand what people are trying to accomplish and why, we can design products that work better for more people.

Rather than asking what features or technology we might add to a product, identifying a customer's motivation and desired outcome—or goal—is the best place to start. From there, design and product teams can determine the cognitive demands their customers may encounter and how to mitigate them.

EXAMPLE

The guidebook outlines the cognitive demands to solve for, and how to understand which ones are relevant to your products. Here's an example of this process in practice:



Motivation(s)

Creating or discovering something new; feeling inspired or curious; seeking joy or wonder; overcoming a challenge



Goal

Cook a new dish



Task

Learning to cook



Cognitive demands

Learn and focus

PRACTICE

Do the same for your experience in the boxes below.



Motivation



Goal



Task



Cognitive demands

02

Step two

This exercise helps you identify who might be excluded from your experience and brainstorm ways to provide access to people of all learning styles.

This exercise should be done for each cognitive demand required by your experience. Below is an example of this in practice for one of the cognitive demands, learn, from the above scenario.

2a

What's your learning style?

People take unique approaches to acquiring knowledge, mastering skills, or trying something new.

Think about cooking a new dish for dinner. How would you approach that task? What steps would you take? Start by describing how you find ideas about what to make and write your answer below.



EXAMPLE

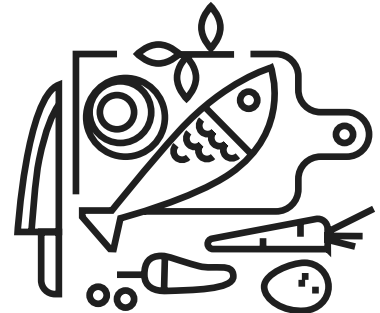
What's your learning mode when cooking a new dish? Circle the one that's closest to your approach.



Guided learning
(Structured)



Some direction



Trail and error
(Tinkering)

Some people may want a detailed recipe, while others might like to tinker until they find what works. Would you take a cooking class, research an in-depth walkthrough from an expert, or totally wing it?

When considering the many approaches to trying something new, design teams might find it helpful to consider a neutral scenario—like cooking dinner—before diving into the work. Doing so can give people an appreciation for how many ways there are to tackle a challenge, complete a task, or solve a problem.

Acknowledging diversity is a necessary first step in fostering empathy that can be translated into tangible design and product output.

2b

Who might be excluded?

Think about the project you're working on or the product you're hoping to build. Who might be excluded from your current experience and why?

Brainstorm ways to make the experience more inclusive of all learning styles.

First, think of a common scenario or customer use case. Describe it from their perspective. What are they trying to accomplish and why?



Next, list the steps someone takes to complete the task you've outlined above. Start at the very beginning. **What actions do they take to accomplish their goal? What challenges do they encounter in each of those steps?** Write your answer below.



How might people who learn in different ways approach this scenario and what might they do if they get stuck? Circle the learning mode that might get excluded in the process you recorded.



Guided learning



Some direction



Trial and error

2c

How can we include people of all learning styles?

Brainstorm ways to make your experience more inclusive for people of all learning styles using the questions below.

Thinking of the scenario you've outlined and steps necessary for a customer to complete the task at hand, what might make it easier for them to be successful and why?

- How can you help people of all learning styles complete this scenario successfully?
- How might the experience change for people less familiar with this scenario (or first-time users)?
- Think about your success criteria. Did any new criteria come to light during step two?
- Are the user's goals aligned with your design and business goals for the scenario?
- How might goals differ for people of different learning styles in different contexts?

03

Step three

Here are some ways to include customer insights and diverse perspectives while co-creating more inclusive experiences.

- If it's an existing product, dig in to understand customer usage and feedback for today's experience while still testing it out with a larger amount of people with diverse learning styles.
- If it's a new product, create a prototype and test it with people of all learning styles. Use participant screeners ([link to screener](#)) to help recruit individuals with different lived experiences.

If your experience requires multiple cognitive demands, you will need to repeat step two and three for each cognitive demand

We want to hear how you're using Microsoft's Inclusive Design for Cognition Toolkit, and the impact it's had on your business and customers.

Share your stories with inclusivedesign@microsoft.com

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