

1.



Activity introduction

This practice activity is an opportunity for you to apply the concepts that you learned throughout the course. We provide a completed example activity so you can compare and contrast your ideas, designs, and grow as a user experience designer.

This activity will help you apply your critical thinking and information synthesis skills. In this activity, you'll take the insights you gained from your Gmail labels mock usability study to create an affinity diagram.

If you need an in-depth review of affinity diagramming, revisit the reading

[Learn more about affinity diagrams](#).

After completing this activity, you will have the opportunity to compare your work to a completed exemplar in the following course item.



Step-by-step instructions

Step 1: Open a sticky note tool

Affinity diagrams are usually created by putting sticky notes on a whiteboard, window, or another blank surface. Thankfully there are many digital options to build your affinity diagram as well. Some options for creating a digital affinity map include:

Jamboard (<http://jamboard.google.com>)

Miro (<https://miro.com>)

Notely (<http://note.ly/#>)

Mural (<https://www.mural.co/>)

Padlet (<https://padlet.com/>)

All of these offer similar functionality - try one or more out to know which you prefer!

If you want to do this with physical sticky notes instead, fill out the individual sticky notes in a similar way. For the diagramming process, put your sticky notes onto a wall, window, or whiteboard and find groups or themes using the same methods outlined below. Try to be clear and concise with your sticky notes. This constraint will help you articulate your point clearly and in fewer words, making it easier to understand and articulate insights.

Step 2: Add your notes

Pulling from the note-taking spreadsheet template found in the lesson

[Take notes during a mock usability study for the Gmail labels feature](#), begin transferring your notes from the spreadsheet to the digital or physical sticky notes. Each observation and participant quote should be put on its own sticky note. When you're finished, you should have every observation and quote from the study written on a sticky note.

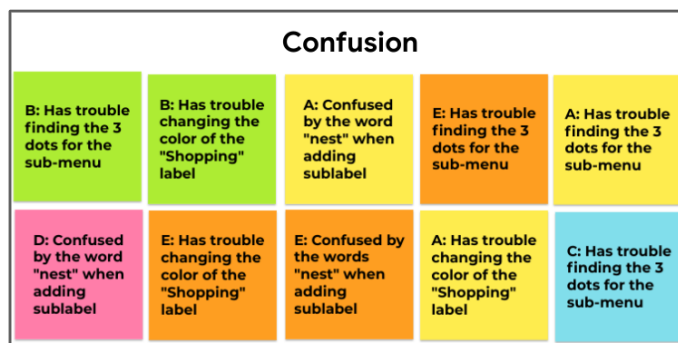
You may find it helpful to assign each participant their own sticky note color. That will make it easier to identify when multiple people express the same or similar things—helping you highlight trends more clearly. If you prefer not use different colors, numbering can accomplish the same thing.

A: Frustrated finding where to add a sublabel

Step 3: Sort by similarity

With all your notes on the affinity diagram, you can begin to move them around. There is no specific method to follow in this process, but at its most basic level, you are searching for and grouping by similarities.

For example, if you find several notes about things that frustrated your participants, those can be placed next to each other. Going deeper, if you find a number of those notes are about frustrations with navigation, those can be placed in a separate, more focused group.



Note that not everything will fit cleanly into groups. The outliers are still valuable pieces of information, but they may not be part of a theme.

Step 4: Identify themes

Reviewing the notes that you've grouped together, determine what the larger theme of that group is. This could be something like "most participants have difficulty finding the three dots for the sub-menu," which sums up the experience of multiple users under one common theme.

To maximize your affinity diagram, take a break after your first round of organization.

Come back to determine if there are other ways to organize your notes. There is no single "correct" way to organize your findings. Take another pass, and you might find additional or more nuanced themes.

Step 5: Reflect on the completion of this activity

Be sure you have addressed the following points in your completed deliverable. Whether digital or physical, your affinity diagram should:

Include all of your notes from testing

Be sorted into clusters and subsets to highlight themes