

ABSTRACT

This poster focuses on the importance of introducing graphic design majors to the process of co-design, the process of designing with stakeholders rather than for them. Graphic Design majors in ART 343 *Design for Print Media* engaged three client-focused projects in the fall 2019 semester. Students developed design solutions with clients from Ascension/St. Vincent, Marian University's Writing Center, and Computer Science students. Through

practicing a co-design process, students learn to become design process guides or facilitators. They learn to leverage their expertise of design and research, but also learn not to let their own ambitions or ideas drive the outcomes. While guiding stakeholders through the design process of ideation and development, students learn to develop and raise the fidelity of their ideas and ultimately, design products.



ALIGNMENT OF COURSE OBJECTIVES WITH DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

APPLIED SKILLS

Demonstrate professional level production knowledge and skill with tools and processes in the completion of print products.

Professionally present creative concepts through oral and visual written forms in class critiques and client presentations.

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

Consistently implement the following into the co-design process: client input, problem definition, divergence, transformation and convergence.

CIVIC LEARNING

Maintain an open dialogue through critical and creative interactions with their class peers and clients about their own and colleagues' work.

SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Demonstrate mastery in the application of formal design elements/principles and how they facilitate the desired communication of client/audience needs.

PRACTICING CREATIVITY AND COLLABORATION THROUGH CO-DESIGN

CO-DESIGN PROCESS

1 DEFINE

- Seek to understand
- Non-judgmental
- Conduct interviews with clients and audience

2 RESEARCH

- Understand audience
- Assess Challenges
- Establish Project Objectives
- Confirm brief with client

3 IDEATE

- Share ideas—all ideas worthy
- Diverge/Converge
- Prioritize
- Share ideas with client

4 PROTOTYPE

- Iterate mock ups quickly
- Keep it simple
- Fail Fast
- Client input & confirmation

5 TEST

- Understand impediments
- What works?
- Observe. Listen. Iterate.

COLLABORATION: ETHOS ETHICS JOURNAL

Students collaborated with an off-campus client, the Office of Ethics Integration at Ascension St. Vincent on the development of an Ethics Journal titled *Ethos* for national distribution to in-house and external audiences.

Students met with Ascension six times throughout the creative development for the journal. The journal is now entering the production phase and students will continue to work on its completion during the spring semester.

During our first meeting with the client, students learned about the strategic objectives and gained insights into the clients' vision for the journal.

Following the initial meeting, working as a group, students developed a design brief and a production calendar for the project.

Students also prepared a proposal for the structure of the publication based upon the provided content outline for the journal.

A distinctive feature of the journal are the creative products by Ascension St. Vincent employees, including visual and writing creative content. The focus of the journal is Catholic Health Culture.

Upon client confirmation of the design brief, each student began individual research in preparation for their first creative concept presentation. Each student made several creative concept proposals to the client with the objective of selecting one concept to produce.



COLLABORATION: MARIAN UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

Students collaborated with on-campus client Mark Latta, Director of The Writing Center at Marian University to design environmental signage for the external window facades of the center. The Writing Center recently moved to a new location in the Mother Theresa Hackelmeier Memorial Library and Professor Latta wanted to announce the new location and promote the services to the Marian community.

Students met with Professor Latta four times throughout the development of the environmental signage project. The project is now awaiting budgeting approval and is ready to proceed to final production.

In the first client meeting, students learned about the strategic objectives and gained insights into the clients' vision for the environmental signage.

Following the initial meeting, working as a group, students developed a design brief and a production calendar for the project.

Upon client confirmation of the design brief, each student began individual research in preparation for their first creative concept presentation. Each student made several creative concept proposals to the client with the objective of selecting one concept for production. At the completion of three concept presentations, one concept has been selected by the client for implementation.



Visuals shown are sample student products developed as proposals for each project phase. Students created concept and story boards, quick mock-ups, and progressively comprehensive prototypes to articulate concepts and testing with clients and their audiences.

(Image credits from top left to lower right: Connor Miller—Ethos Journal concept board; Halley Martin—Ethos Journal cover concepts; Connor Miller—Ethos Journal cover and feature spread prototype; Dante Hardin—Ethos Journal cover and spread; Kaitlyn O'Grady—Final Ethos Journal cover and spread. Connor Miller—The Writing Center prototypes and final proposals; Halley Martin—The Writing Center prototypes and final proposals)



REFLECTION

INCLUSIVE:

Students developed and presented their own concepts to clients throughout the duration of the project. Our clients from Ascension and The Writing Center provided students with valuable feedback and encouragement. Students grew increasingly confident in their ideas and engaged as professionals throughout the projects. The *Ethos* journal project provided opportunities for individual and group contributions. One of the most important experiences for students was learning to understand and incorporate clients' objectives and goals. Remaining open to

client participation in the creative process was a new experience for all students as they are used to being the sole author of the creative concept phase. In the *Ethos* journal project, once the client selected the final concept, students joined forces to begin work on developing the selected proposal into a fully realized publication. Students stepped up into roles that fit their individual strengths.

IMPACTFUL:

At the junior level of study, it is appropriate for students to engage in client-based projects. Students have gained a firm foundation in their formal studies of graphic design and general education, and are ready to test their knowledge. The challenges of understanding client goals and objectives, sharing in client values, understanding the clients' constituency, and negotiating the creative process is essential preparation for successful design practice post-graduation. My role as faculty throughout the semester was a one of mentor and advisor, allowing stu-

dents to make final determinations about how to proceed in their work. Students gained many valuable insights into how purposeful and impactful their work can be once produced and distributed to a world-wide audience—students really absorbed and understood the responsibility of their work, not only to the client, but the many people it will reach once distributed.

INTEGRATED:

As evidenced in the products shown above, students drew upon knowledge gained from not only their major, but from their general education studies at Marian University. In fact, the research, ideation, and presentation phases of their projects drew heavily from other disciplines eg. literature, history, communications, etc. Students shared that the projects helped them understand how to synthesize their interests as designers with the clients' industry and the issues that matter to them. Students also gained insights into the values and commitments of the clients, and began to understand themselves as contributing professionals.