

Design Process

Define the Problem | Learn | Generate Ideas | Design Development | Implementation

National Visual Art Standards

VA:Re.7.2.II.a: Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of...

VA:Re8.1.II.a: Identify types of contextual information useful in the process of constructing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works.

Guiding Questions

- What are the five steps in the design process and how are they used?
- How does the design process help designers solve visual communication problems?
- What constitutes effective graphic design?

Objectives

Students will...

- Analyze and understand the strong connections between art and design;
- Realize the design process is just that—a process;
- Start to understand the differences between effective and ineffective design.

Vocabulary

Aesthetic: a set of principles underlying and guiding the work of a particular artist or artistic movement; concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty.

Big idea: the driving force behind a design.

Compelling: evoking interest, attention, or admiration in a powerfully irresistible way.

Concept: a plan or intention. The **big idea**.

Design: the creation of a plan or convention for the construction of an object or a system (as in architectural blueprints, engineering drawings, business processes, circuit diagrams and sewing patterns).

Design for good: the implementation of design thinking for social change. Design is problem solving. Therefore designers hold the tools and have the potential to transform social norms for the better of society as a whole.

Design process: a defined system of steps presented to aid a designer in the planning and execution of a plan in order to solve a presented problem.

Graphic design: also known as communication design, is the art and practice of planning and projecting ideas and experiences with visual and textual content. The form of the communication can be physical or virtual, and may include images,

Time Period: at least one class, 45-60 minutes in length

Lesson Introduction

Graphic design is typically a visual problem solving field concerned with communication of specific messages to specific audiences. It is ever changing, as societies and technologies evolve. This makes it a **compelling** field of study. The term graphic design is somewhat problematic and may be better represented as **visual communication**. Designers take on client based projects and through the **design** process solve a client's problem. These problems come in all shapes and forms, from small straightforward business cards (see Figure 1) to complex visual systems such as the Olympic games (see Figure 2). Designers tackle projects from a communication standpoint focusing on a defined problem, not on their own personal preferences.

The **design process** is not unique, nor a new process. Many professionals use the design process because it works. What is unique is the goal to attach visual messages which have greater power to inform, educate, or persuade a person or audience into action. Designers implement their artistic abilities to communicate. Though art and design have identical fundamental guiding principles, graphic design is typically done for someone else, as art is often



FIGURE 1: The Fish Market branding by Micael Butial. A realistic design that not only looks good but is highly functional and central to making a brand stand out (www.designideas.pics/the-fish-market-by-micael-butial/).

"I've been to the restaurant several times and I really love their food and service. The restaurant also has unique decor and they have amazing view by the water. These are the things that inspired me to redo some of their collateral pieces. I was inspired by the decor of the restaurant specially the mural of fishes. I tried to mimic the look by using silhouette and simple shapes for the cover, pins, shirts and business cards. The biggest challenge for me was making sure to make everything consistent. I've done that by strictly using the colors." – Micael Butial

words, or **graphic forms**. The experience can take place in an instant or over a long period of time. The work can happen at any scale, from the design of a single postage stamp to a national postal signage system, or from a company's digital avatar to the sprawling and interlinked digital and physical content of an international newspaper. It can also be for any purpose, whether commercial, educational, cultural, or political [Juliette Cezzar, www.aiga.org/what-is-design/].

Graphic forms: of or relating to visual art, especially involving drawing, engraving, or lettering; giving a vivid picture with explicit detail; denoting a visual image such as charts or graphs.

Ineffective design: the inability of design to effectively (successful in producing a desired or intended result) solve its intended purpose. Design is created to solve a problem and therefore should be effective in its mission.

Method: a particular form of procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one.

Visual communication: communication through visual aids, which conveys an idea(s) and information in forms that can be read or looked upon, including signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, industrial design, advertising, animation, color, electronic resources, etc. It also explores the idea that a visual message accompanying text has a greater power to inform, educate, or persuade a person or audience.

Materials

- None for the introduction

Figures

1. The Fish Market branding
2. Rio 2016 Summer Olympic branding
3. The design process
4. Chipotle Mexican Grill and Always' Like a Girl campaign websites

Art Context, Cultural Connections and Relevancy

Design thinking is problem solving and contextually relevant in many professional areas, including the individual lives of students. The design process is a way of making connections and solving problems. Skills developed through the design process can be utilized in interpersonal relationships within business, personal friendships, or even family dynamics.

AIGA, the professional organization for design, has started an initiative called **Design for Good**. Design for Good is a platform to build and sustain the implementation of design thinking for social change. This platform creates opportunities for designers to build their practice, their network, and their visibility. Design for Good recognizes the wide range of designers' work and leadership in social



FIGURE 2: Rio 2016 Summer Olympic branding. The visual identity for both the Olympic and Paralympic games were created by Brazilian multidisciplinary firm Tátil (see [Interview With The 2016 Rio Olympic Logo Designer Fred Gelli/Tátil](#)). The branding is a multicolored, vibrant, and harmonic depiction of Brazil, Brazilians, and Rio de Janeiro. It emphasizes the diversity of the country's people. The look is organic and enveloping, like an embrace—inspired by Brazil's lush nature and warmth. See the [Making of Rio 2016](#). The video walks through their design thinking and process.

created for more introspective reasons. That isn't to say that design is not artistic or introspective, nor that designers devalue personal style or artistic expression, but rather, by understanding design, students comprehend the potential design holds and the potential found in the design process. This lesson is meant to give students a better understanding of the process designers implement in order to find solutions to the visual problems they take on.

The design process has been defined through five steps:

- Define the Problem
- Learn
- Generate Ideas
- Design Development
- Implementation

The first step helps designers better understand the root of the problem, while the second step drives understanding and empathy through research. When the problem has been defined and there is good understanding of what surrounds it, then **concept** development can commence in the idea generation stage. Once a strong concept has been developed, then sketching commences.

change which benefits the world, our country and our communities (www.aiga.org/design-for-good/).

Examples of social change which may affect high school students could be gender equality (see the Like a Girl campaign in Figure 4), becoming informed citizens in preparation to vote, understanding how bullying can affect self esteem, Black Lives Matter, or understanding the importance (and privilege) of good education. The list goes on but the idea behind design for social change is vital to creating inclusive communities based on mutual respect for individuals, not what they look like or believe.

This idea of designing for good comes to life through the design process as students start to understand the power of design and the ability to communicate through it. They have the potential to change perceptions, attitudes, and persuade inclusiveness. If students can make the connection that through the design process they can solve problems, this can empower them to start thinking about the problems that surround them and do something about them. This could be personal or cultural.

For example, Chipotle Mexican Grill has taken the route of fresh healthy food asking us if we know where our food comes from (see Figure 4). Another example is Always' Like a Girl campaign, bringing awareness of demeaning comparisons that belittle girls and women. There are so many more examples of people trying to do good and they all started with an idea that turned into a campaign. Maybe they all started with the design process?

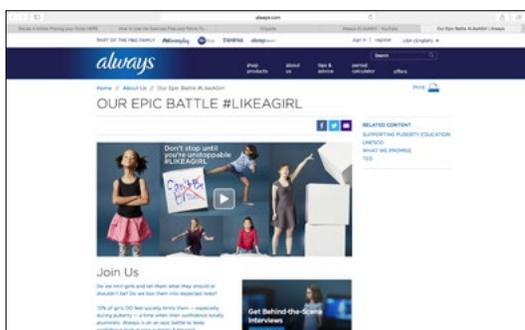
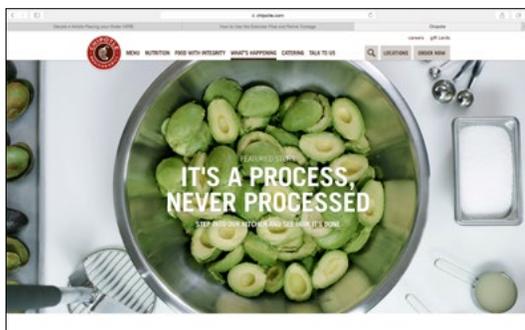


FIGURE 4: Chipotle Mexican Grill and Always' Like a Girl campaign websites, examples of companies standing for something and using visual communication as a force for good (www.chipotle.com/whats-happening; always.com/en-us/about-us/our-epic-battle-like-a-girl)

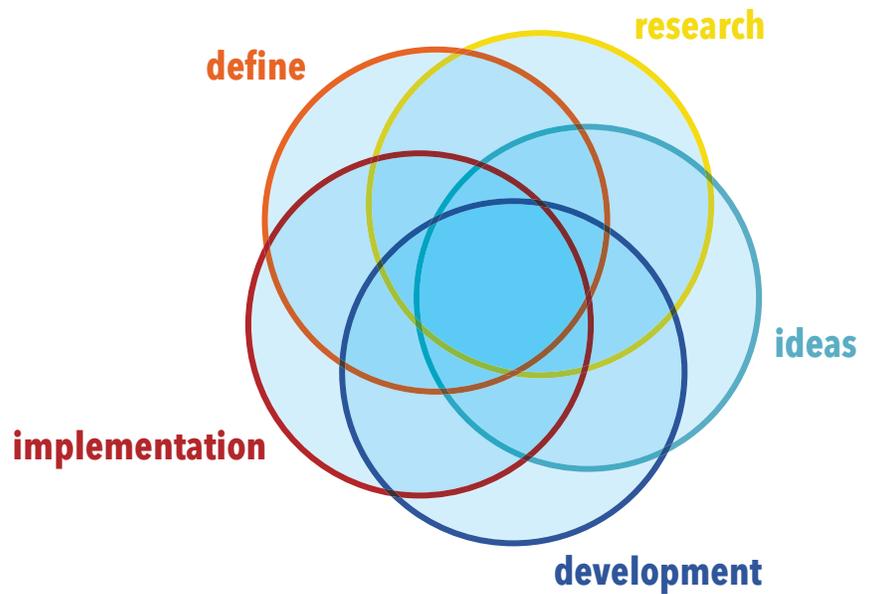


FIGURE 3: The design process, a **method** for designers to explore possible solutions to defined problems. All steps can be approached individually, yet together form a cohesive whole. As one executes each step, a shared space becomes evident in the center. This is where the magic happens. The most unique and appropriate solutions will be influenced by all the steps in the design process.

Design development is typically a student's favorite part of the design process as they get to use their artistic abilities. This is where **aesthetics** should be addressed. Eventually a design is chosen and implemented through the last step. All these steps are essential in developing successful design and will be addressed fully in the following unit sections.

By the end of this unit, students should not only be able to identify each step in the design process, but be able to understand the importance of each step and implement them. They should continue to utilize the design process in subsequent units, reinforcing the concepts driving the design process. Their work will improve if they commit to utilizing the complete process. The tendency is to skip vital steps in order to quickly finish or do what is comfortable or easy. For example, students would rather start working directly on the computer (if available) instead of exploring and developing their ideas on paper first because it's easier. This sketching part of the process is where ideas are explored and developed. The misconception is they will get more done faster by skipping the hand drawings, but what typically ends up happening is that their ideas aren't developed enough to produce unique solutions. The computer becomes a crutch through the lack of technical skills. Even if a student has the technical skills, the ideas are lacking. Emphasize the importance of each step in the design process. This will help resolve **ineffective design** issues.

The magic occurs where all steps meet (see Figure 3). The more students utilize the process the more potential there is for developing a successful solution. This process may initially seem daunting but in reality it is a common sense approach to problem solving. Often times, it doesn't even seem like a process at all but more as experimentation or play, which it should.

Even the best methodologies and processes cannot ensure effective design. The defined process is meant as a starting point that can be

Artists/Designers Referenced

Micael Butial: (www.linkedin.com/in/micaelbutial; micaelbutial.prosite.com; www.behance.net/micaelbutial; dribbble.com/micaelbutial) is a passionate designer who studied graphic and web design at The Art Institute of California-San Francisco. He works as a graphic designer at the Gymboree Corporation in San Francisco (as of January 2016). In early 2014, Micael won an award and scholarship from the Hyatt Hotels and Resorts for a design that is featured on their Canvas Merlot Wine. His works have been featured in The Dieline, AIGA Members Portfolio, Serifs & Sans, and in the CSS Design Awards. The Fish Market business cards (figure 1) he designed are a good example of directly communicating the brand. The design is straightforward and playful. Students can relate to the design through today's cultural eyes, hopefully realizing that personal style can play a role in good design.

molded and customized to fit the needs of each designer. These five steps are considered vital and a good foundation for developing positive professional habits. Though a designer's process may change with time and experience, this foundation should continue to guide their process—whatever that may be.

We could say that this unit is about developing useful professional habits that can transcend disciplines, supporting not only art-minded students but all students. They will be better prepared to solve the life problems they'll be dealt, both on a professional and personal level.



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www.aigaminnesota.org

AIGA is the profession's oldest and largest professional membership organization for design—with 70 chapters and more than 25,000 members—they advance design as a professional craft, strategic advantage, and vital cultural force. From content that defines the global practice to events that connect and catalyze, they work to enhance the value and deepen the impact of design across all disciplines on business, society, and our collective future.