

“Design Thinking in the Graphic Communication Classroom”

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Graphic communication students are very familiar with the traditional design process of thumbnail, rough, and comprehensive. They are also somewhat familiar with the idea of critique, though many of them are not sure of how to properly critique other student’s work. The majority of students included in this research were not at all familiar with the design thinking process and after being exposed to the process, found substantial benefits in using the process when it comes to project problem solving. The design thinking process is a solution-based process that is not traditionally used in the graphic communication classroom but is used in various industries and by companies like Google and Apple. It is a non-linear process that focuses on creating multiple versions and focusing on creating best version through feedback and understanding of the problem being solved. The five steps in the process are empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test. Each step provides the chance for feedback and reflection.

This presentation will define the design thinking process and provide real world examples of how the process is implemented in the classroom and in industry and highlight the benefits of using this process. Student reflections on the design thinking process will also be included as data has been collected from three semesters of students completing projects using the design thinking process. The data will highlight the student’s familiarity of the process before starting the projects, and their reflections of the process upon completing the project. Students engaged in three different design thinking process projects. The first was a sophomore level portfolio project, the second a group project on packaging and sustainability in developing countries, and the last project a group package design project. Each project utilized the five steps of the design thinking process, and most students enjoyed using the design thinking process to formulate a better solution to the problem.

Keywords:

Design Thinking

Critique

Group Projects

Individual Projects