

Curriculum Outline for ASB: Graphic Design and Visual Communication

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"visual design has an important impact on the usability of designs. Research shows that people believe that more attractive designs are easier to use than less attractive designs — even when they're not. This is known in psychology as the [aesthetic usability effect](#) and in folklore more simply as, "first impressions count"." [source](#)

Rationale

The visual design sub focus should be used in an ASB workshop because being able to create effective visual designs that communicate your ideas as a designer is an important part of what we do in HCDE. Visuals can be the simplest way to communicate an idea to others, and creating visually pleasing designs can draw people to your work. Effective visual communication can make complicated ideas simple to understand. In our college classes we use visual design in our various classes, and good document design can apply to multiple majors. For example, business majors may find graphic design skills useful for creating campaigns or presentations.

This also is a project that students can relate back to the world around them. The project asks students to create a cool poster design for an event, school club, or business that is already part of their lives. Using the software skills they gain during this week students can continue to complete similar projects on their own as they complete high school. The particular project we have outlined below fairly accessible as it can be accomplished without fancy software like the Adobe creative suite. Students will still need access to the internet and will be introduced to some basic vector graphic design skill, but the curriculum is largely focused on teaching concepts and broad skills over software tips and tricks.

This curriculum plan may not be ideal for an ASB project as it does not have as strong a connection to engineering as some other projects. As HCDE majors we do complete visual design projects, but they are typically tied closely with an engineering project. Due to the limited time span of this project it is probably only feasible to cover visual design rather than trying to finish an "engineering" project then teaching visual design around that project.

Target Grade

This curriculum is probably optimal for middle school students, but by asking students to complete more complex vector graphics or do more detailed research and writing it could be tailored to high school as well.

Overall Learning Outcome

Over the course of this week students will learn skills that can be applied to their work as a student and to their community. The things they will practice include:

- Creation of custom graphics
- Principles of successful document design
- Sketching their ideas
- Collaboration in small teams
- Presenting their ideas at the end of the week
- Research skills in preparation for the assignment
 - Writing skills as they determine the content for their poster

Good visual design can be essential for communicating student's ideas, and this curriculum will equip them with basic knowledge of document design and vector graphics. These skills reflect what is done by design majors in university, and is a basic introduction to visual communication design. Knowing how to create unique graphics and posters is a skill that students can begin to apply to their community immediately, especially as students. Creating eye-catching visuals can help them promote the things that they care about, such school clubs or events, in their day-to-day lives.

Considerations

Pros	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Teamwork and collaboration on a single deliverable● Skills that can be used and practiced outside of class● Reflects work completed in college classes● Applicable to more than just engineering or HCDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Requires use of laptops● Requires internet connection● Instructors must have technical knowledge of the chosen vector graphic and document design software

Curriculum

This project will happen in three parts:

1. Students complete research before we arrive on their area of focus
2. Students learn about vector graphics and develop a custom logo
3. Students learn about document design and use their logo to create a poster

Assumption: Students will have access to a laptop, one per group of 2 students.

Day 0 - Prep Work

Learning outcome: Completing research for a user or client of some sort who will be using your designs.

Rationale: Having students get into groups, decide on an area of focus, and then complete research ahead of time will save time during the week UW visits and potentially get students excited for the coming activities.

Activity 1: Forming groups

- Have the teacher separate students into groups of 2

Activity 2: Completing Research

Students will need to choose their topic or been assigned their topic for the week ahead of time. They will need to have completed some basic research to prepare. One project topic **per group**. We can provide guidelines for choosing a topic and the kind of information they will need ahead of time.

Recommendations for topic areas might be:

- Their sports team or club at school
- Their favorite business in town
- A local event they love to go to each year

Students will need to collect this kind of information:

- Name
- Location
- Time/date, or opening hours
- Brief Description
- Why should people go to this place/do this thing/watch this game, etc.?
- Brief History

Resources: Probably internet access and a way to take notes

Day 1 -Logo Design Sketching & Understanding Design in HCDE

Step 1: Introduction to HCDE and Visual Design

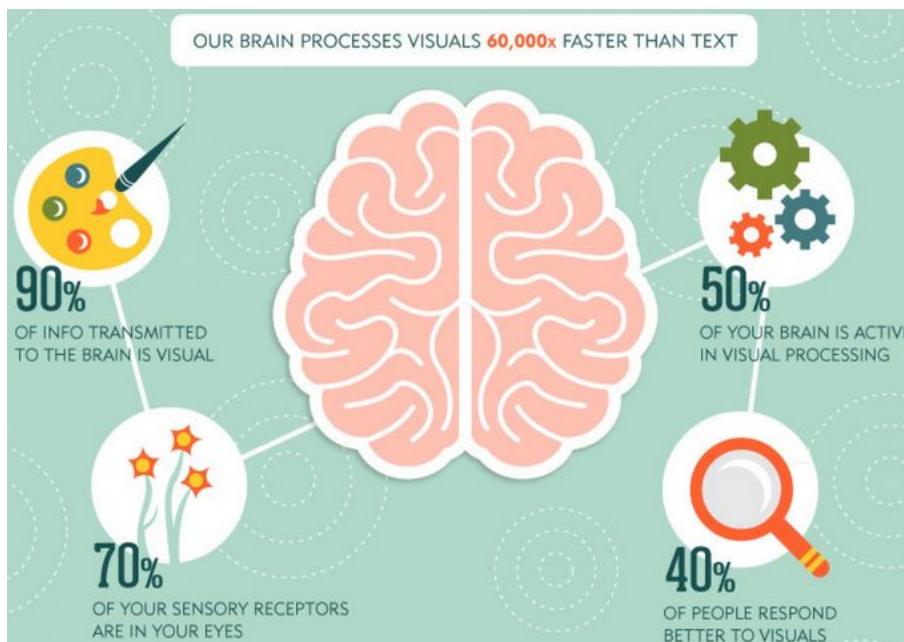
Learning Outcome: Understanding of what HCDE is and the importance of visual design.

Rationale: Students should get introductory knowledge about what HCDE is. Explaining the *design* element of HCDE and it's importance should give the students working knowledge of

'Why we design' and the fact that through design even the most complex information can be put across in a way that's easier to understand.

Activities:

- Begin by introducing ourselves and give a brief introduction to HCDE (maybe by showing the HCDE video).
- Link visual design to HCDE and show 1-2 slides showcasing the projects made by students in HCDE while giving a brief description.
[The Journey - By Expedia \(A Capstone Project\)](#)
- Explain the importance of visual design through slides and examples (more like a theory class)



One example can be as follows:

- Ask them which of the two seems visually more appealing



Show some statistics like

- Users form opinions in 17 milliseconds at an average.
- Research shows that website sections that drew the most interest from viewers were as follows:
 - The institution's logo. Users spent about 6.48 seconds focused on this area before moving on.
 - The main navigation menu. Almost as popular as the logo, subjects spent an average of 6.44 seconds viewing the menu.
 - The bottom of a website, where users spent about 5.25 seconds.

Step 2: Introduction to Logo Design

Learning Outcome: Understanding the importance of logos and how a good designed logo can help promote identity.

Rationale: Students will understand why companies use logos as their identity elements and the importance of a good logo in terms of visual design.

Activities:

- Introduce overall project for the curriculum, linking the theory to what they will be doing (it will make it easier for the students to understand their tasks).
- Play a few rounds of '*Guess the Logo*' game with the students.
- Introduce logo design, explain how its part of the project, examples
 - <https://sites.google.com/site/mrsbaxterlessonplans/home/logo>
 - Better return on investment for businesses
- What makes a cool logo and discuss who their designing for?
 - One in which the user can easily relate the logo to the company's product or service.



Step 2: Sketching the Logo

Learning Outcome: Practically performing Ideation and sketching.

Rationale: The students would experience a part of the UCD charette learn the process of ideating (or brainstorming ideas) while simultaneously turning their ideas into sketches.

- Have the students divide a sheet of paper into 4 quadrants and sketch out 4 logos.
- Make them pick their favorite one or the one they feel most confident about to work on tomorrow
- Wrap up (~5 mins)

Resources:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Colored pens or pencils

Day 2 - Logo

Step 1: Understanding of the import element of *Typography*

Learning Outcome: Knowledge of how text, font, weight of text etc. can add impact to the design.

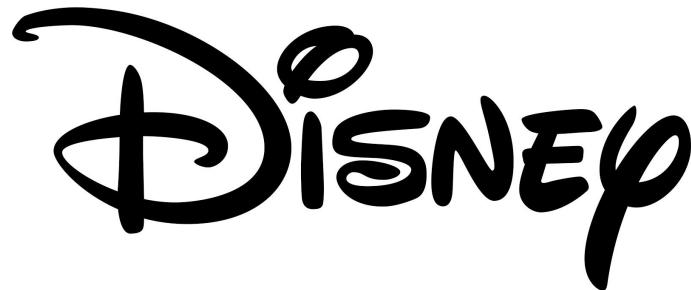
Rationale: Students will gain the insight to how readability of text affects the logo design or design in general and how poor choice of typography can negatively impact the user.

Activities:

- Show the students different typefaces on a single slide and ask them which one is the easiest to read. This would make them the user and teach them the impact of readability.



- End the concept of typography by showing popular examples of good typography.
Example:



- - The text gives off a playful impact that children can relate to.

Step 2: Introduction to the Vector Graphic Software

Learning Outcome: Learning how to use a basic vector graphics software.

Rationale: A short easy tutorial will give the students the confidence to use a new software which they will be using to create their own digital logos. Learning such a software would give them the edge in various fields of employment ranging from visual design to architecture.

Activities:

- The students would complete a short easy tutorial related to the online vector software that they would be using to make their logos.
 - Link: <https://vectr.com/new> → this is the link to the online vector graphics tool.
- The students would spend around 35 mins to create a digital version of a logo.
 - This may involve some more sketching as the students will need to combine ideas within a group of 3 to come up with a single logo.
- Wrap Up
 - Give a brief description of what will be happening tomorrow (~5 mins)

Resources:

- Laptops with Internet Access
- Paper and pencils for sketching

Day 3 - Poster/Flyer

Idea behind poster: The kids can use the logo they made as an element in the poster design. This will teach them about creating a visually interesting layout, as well as emphasizing skills in teamwork and collaboration as they must work as a group to make a single design. Using a business/event they are familiar with makes this an applicable skill to their community/lives. Talk to teacher ahead of time to see if it will be possible to print copies for them to take home.

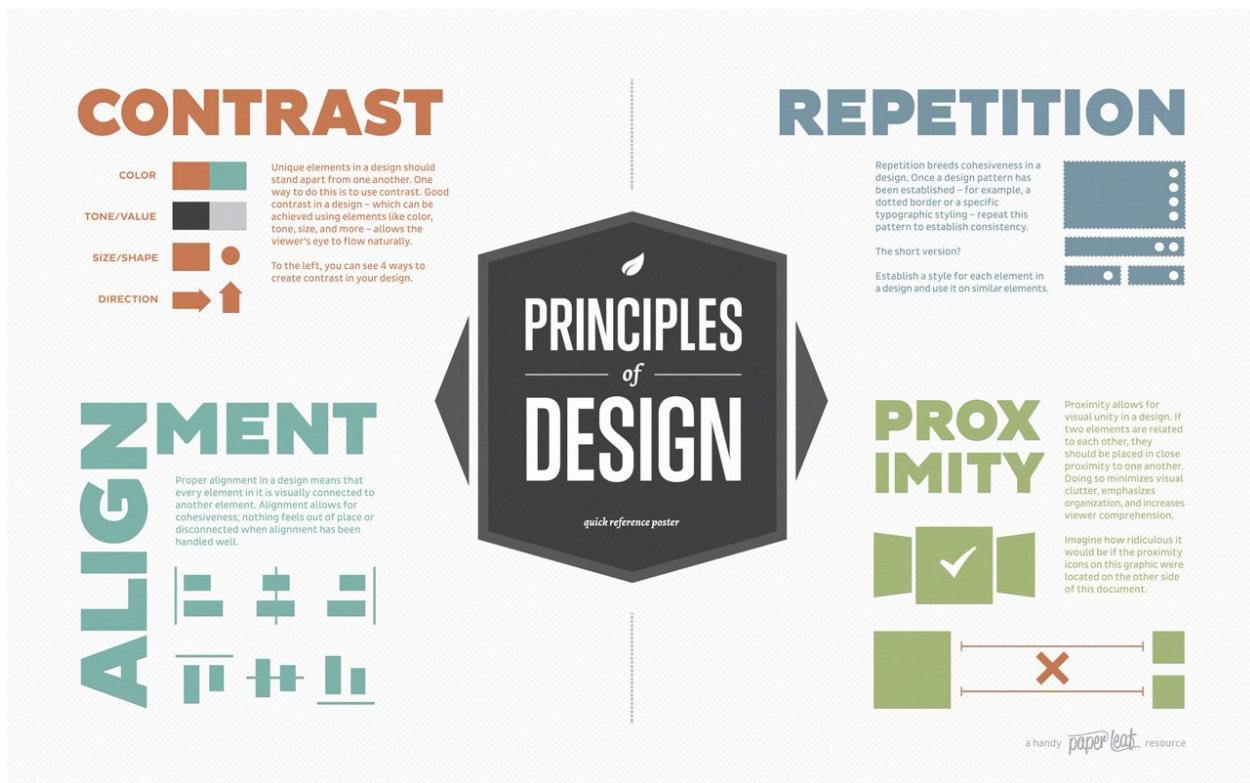
Step 1: Principles of visual communication

Learning outcome: Learn the basic principles of visual communication/document design/layout that can improve usability and how easy it is to understand a document. (Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, Proximity)

Rationale: Students should get a little bit of theory of graphic design throughout this curriculum. This can help them think critically about future designs, and reflects a college course where students learn a combination of theory and practical information.

Activity:

- Begin by introducing the 4 principles using slides with images showing each of the 4 principles



- **Contrast:** Draw people's eyes to what is important



(for example)

- **Repetition:** Consistency. Easier to learn similar things when they are presented similarly
- **Alignment:** Aligning elements to make them easier to understand and to read
- **Proximity:** Items near each other seem related. Grouping.
- Have students complete an activity about these items. Possible activity described below.
Design principle scavenger hunt:
 - Pass out magazines to each group
 - Ask them to find an example of each of the principles in the magazine and be able to talk about why it fits that principle
 - allow/encourage them to tear out and write on pages
 - After they have found the principles, ask them to talk in their groups about how this makes the pages better or easier to understand
 - Possibly pass out collected examples of less successful design (junk mail? Printouts of confusing web pages?)
 - Ask students to talk about what makes these less easy to understand

Step 2: Starting the poster

Learning outcome: Students will learn and overview of what the project they are going to complete over day 3 and 4 is. They will also think critically about presenting information and practice sketching.

Rationale: Starting the project off with an overview of all the steps will give students insight into what they are working towards. Sketching will help them practice brainstorming, working together, and iterate on their ideas before jumping into a high-fidelity final.

Activity:

- Introduce the poster project by telling students they will be using their logo and research to make a poster
 - Talk about examples of when we have made and used posters in college
 - Explain that we'll start by sketching then use software* to make them look professional

- Show them some examples of finished posters
- Show them examples of sketches for posters
 - Introduce this as the current activity
- Have students sketch possible poster layouts in their small groups

Resources: paper and pencils/pens

Step 3: Learning the software

Learning outcome: Students will gain an understanding of how to use the software that they will be making their posters with.

Rationale: It's important to demo the software to the class so that they can be confident and jump into creating their final poster instead of being confused by the software.

Activity:

- Have students open computers and navigate to the chosen software
- Run students through the different available options in the software
 - May be best to do this by showing them the parts of the example poster from earlier in the day/how it was made
- Have students try a couple of different things in the software as practice (such as formatting text boxes, making shapes, etc.)

Resources: Laptops, projector/smartboard for presentation

Wrap Up (5 mins)

***Possible options to use for creating poster layouts:**

- [LucidPress](#)
- [Microsoft Publisher](#)
- [Microsoft Powerpoint](#)
- [Scribus](#)

Day 4 - Poster/Flyer & Wrap Up

Step 1: Work on posters

Learning Outcome: Students will get practical experience making a creative poster design using the chosen software, and will make decisions about colors and fonts to communicate their ideas/based on yesterday's lesson in design principles.

Activity:

- Have students get into their groups
- Make the poster design using the chosen software
- Save files onto a USB so that they can be printed/saved/mailed out to students later

Resources: Laptops/Computers

Step 2: Presentations

Rationale: This gives students a chance to show off their hard work from the week, and to practice speaking in front of others and justifying their design decisions to peers.

Activity:

- Give students a few minutes to prepare a presentation
 - Ask them to:
 - Introduce themselves
 - Talk about the company/group/event they designed for and who they are
 - Tell us about their logo
 - Tell us about why they made their poster look the way it does
- Have students come up to the front of the class and present their posters
 - Show on a projector for now?
 - Then it would be nice to have them printed later/asap to display in the classroom

Step 3: Reflection on the week

Learning Outcome: Understanding of how this all relates to college.

Rationale: This can help boost students confidence about going to college because they've done college level work! Reflection is a great way to solidify learning.

Activities:

- Review what we accomplished this week
- Reiterate why it's something important/something we do in college
- Ask students to talk about their thoughts/have them fill out a reflection form

Resources

Do you have code, example projects or other outside resources? Include it here! Help future ASBers by pointing them to what is important for your topic. If an outside resource was super helpful to you, let them know :)

<https://sites.google.com/site/mrsbaxterlessonplans/home/logo>

http://www.userfocus.co.uk/articles/A_CRAP_way_to_improve_usability.html

<https://youthradio.org/uncategorized/principles-of-design-part-1-of-2/>