

AIGA Design Educators Conference

## **New Contexts / New Practices Forum**

<http://www.ncsu.edu/graphicdesign/newcontexts/>

October 8 – 10, 2010

At North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Time limits will be strictly observed.

**1:30** First set of presenters upload slides to the podium computer.

### **1:45 Teaching in the Nano-second**

*Elizabeth Berger, Chair, School of Visual Arts, Westwood College, Visual Arts*

This is a presentation of student work, design briefs and curriculum philosophy of a few key assignments that shift away from the typical teaching methodology of lectures and critiques. Problem based vignettes that students engaged with individually and/or as a group to solve critical issues using skills and concepts needed in learning outcomes. Fast paced, dynamic and kinetic in nature the “nano-second” approach addresses attention span and learning style of the millennium generation. This system was developed to reach a particularly challenging group of at risk students that had experienced failure and challenge most of their lives and academic careers. Lectures are short, tasks are simple, but to reach the goal requires some research, problem solving, deconstructive thinking and focus to achieve a variety of goals in a short time. Game-like, adventuresome, messy, incorporating multiple senses and learning styles teaching in the “nano-second” held their attention for longer intervals of time and drove home the content. This approach is a great alternative to many skills based classes and projects that want to build collaboration.

### **2:00 Facilitating undergraduate learning in cancer data visualization**

*Heather Corcoran, Associate Professor, Washington University in St. Louis,  
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, Communication Design*

This presentation focuses on a transdisciplinary project involving students and researchers in design, health communications, and cancer epidemiology. While epidemiologists are generating increasing volumes of cancer population data, which detail causality, screening, incidence, and survival rates, these data are difficult to make relevant to external audiences. The goal of this project is to break new scientific ground in identifying design approaches that maximize the social impact of population cancer data. This is a complex problem that has implications for how design researchers work with students inside and outside the classroom.

### **2:15 Interactive Narrative Game Design**

*Susan Hagan, Faculty, Carnegie Mellon University, Department of English*

For this senior project on interactive narrative game design, one instructor from visual communication design and another from rhetoric collaborated to make interdisciplinarity attractive by stressing the interdependent nature and synergistic value of the elements that students would weave. Neither instructor was there to present a single expertise, expecting students to make the connections between the two. Instead, we worked to show how narrative informed a meaningful interactive experience, while interaction would present students with an opportunity to plan the use of modalities in ways that would increase imagination and surprise in both the narrative and game design.

**2:30** Second set of presenters upload slides to the podium computer.

**2:45 Design for Development: A case study in pedagogy, collaboration and empowerment**

*Maria Rogal, Associate Professor, University of Florida, Graphic Design, School of Art & Art History*

Historically graphic design does not integrate research, fieldwork, practice, and pedagogy. However, this work is becoming increasingly more important. The design for development initiative explores how graphic designers, in partnership with marginalized communities, use design processes, products, and strategies to develop sustainable solutions for local problems. In this presentation, I provide background on this initiative and share the process by which we work with indigenous groups on problems they have identified. Our partners benefit in the resulting design products, processes, and strategies, and my students and I learn from the new knowledge, methods, and competencies we develop “in the field.”

**3:00 Design for Mobile Experiences**

*Amber Howard, Ph.D. Candidate, North Carolina State University, College of Design*

Mobile media provides the conditions for a new generation of interactions and experiences that we have only begun to explore. In a 400-level course entitled “Design for Mobile Interaction,” students designed mobile services that enabled a specific group of people to learn a complex process. The services focused on the experiential subtleties of developing skills, rather than managing information. We utilized user-assessment methods, information architecture strategies, and production techniques specific to mobile interaction. The process and final projects demonstrate the students’ eagerness to discover and invent mobile opportunities that account for social, cultural, cognitive, emotional, and technological aspects of experience.

**3:15 Contemporary Learning Tools: Designing Assessments that are Visual, Interactive, and Participatory**

*Stacie Rohrbach, Associate Professor, Carnegie Mellon University, School of Design*

Shifts in the ways that society communicates are causing designers to create evolving systems that invite participation as opposed to developing fixed artifacts. Although design curricula are slowly responding to these changes, assessment processes that design educators commonly employ often misalign with this approach and fail to address the learning preferences of students. This presentation argues the value of assessments as learning tools and the need for them to align with course content and activities while resonating with students. It does this through the presentation of a case study recently conducted with second-year design students in the context of a studio.

**3:30 Expectations versus Realities: The Rewards and Challenges of Global Collaboration**

*Audra Buck-Coleman, Assistant Professor, University of Maryland, Department of Art*

Educators have the responsibility to teach students about the pivotal role that effective information design and ethical communications can play in understanding of the resulting interdependencies of the global migration of people, resources and products. To effectively educate students to use their skills to address complex issues that reach across cultures and across the globe, design educators must find new curriculum models that expand the classroom. Sticks + Stones project is such a model for socially-oriented global collaboration, but it is not without flaws shared by similar projects. Sticks + Stones Principle Investigators will present the project and address the successes and areas for improvement to gain a clearer future direction for these types of projects.

**3:45** Third set of presenters upload slides to the podium computer.

**4:15 Works Well with Others: Graphic Design's Evolving Role on Campus**

*Peg Faimon, Professor, Graphic Design & Co-Director, Interactive Media Studies, Miami University, Graphic Design & Interactive Media Studies*

Many designers have traditionally found themselves in a defensive mode, building walls to protect their design knowledge, in an attempt to prove their worth. This presentation will argue that an isolationist approach toward design and design education limits the impact and overall development of the discipline, and that a new approach is necessary. At Miami University we are bridging students/faculty throughout campus by integrating design principles and thinking into complex multidisciplinary problem-solving experiences. Through formal affiliations with various departments, the design curriculum has been infused throughout the university – elevating design's profile on campus, while advancing design pedagogy and interdisciplinary innovation.

**4:30 Design Research: Structural Strategies**

*Enrique Von Rohr, Senior Lecturer and Director of Design Research Studio Washington University in St. Louis, Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts*

In 2007 the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis established the Design Research Studio (DRS). Its mission is to be a catalyst for research and creative activity in art, architecture, and design. This presentation looks at key questions, characteristics and mechanism to encourage building a research culture from scratch, as well as some of the success and continued challenges we face.

**4:45 Design Research as Practice**

*Kristen Coogan, Assistant Professor, Boston University, Graphic Design*

The definition of design as a service industry has grown to incorporate design as a cultural practice. Because design helps facilitate communication and environments for communication, designer's are now engaging with their profession differently than before. Design research—self-initiated or clientless endeavors—is becoming a valid way of engaging in the professional sphere

**5:00 Forum Ends**