

Mahsima Alkamooneh

SNHU GRA 491

April 24, 2022

Written Reflection

Website Home: <http://massalkdesign.com/index.html>

Graphic Design Portfolio Page: <http://massalkdesign.com/page4.html>

Print Ready Portfolio: <http://massalkdesign.com/assets/files/Portfolio-Final.pdf>

This capstone project was overall a lot of fun as well as a ton of work and very rewarding. Throughout my time at Southern New Hampshire University, a lot of my projects I've felt like aren't entirely representative of my abilities. However, they did give me opportunities to learn and develop my style and the kind of graphic designer I want to be. Throughout my time here, I have been positively influenced and pushed beyond what I expected in various types of projects, whether it be a design assignment, an analysis or several research papers in relation to design in both history of photography and design. Albeit at times, it was difficult to understand exactly how to do some projects, the online environment isn't always easiest, I believe this pushed me to be a quick problem solver and think on my feet.

The print and web portfolios gave me an opportunity to really see all the work I have done in relation to my degree as well as in my fulltime position as a public affairs non-commissioned officer. Having the ability to see some of my best work in one spot as made a difference in my confidence as a designer as well.

The courses I have taken at SNHU taught me how to analyze art, about art history, design elements, design programs and technology. Through out my time, I have done research about design from a psychological perspective, having learned that blue represents trust, security and calmness. (Cherry).

I have also learned about intentional and unintentional messaging through design and how research and market strategies can help eliminate negative unintentional messages. In addition, I was taught to be aware of bias and perception and the impact a design may have on different audiences.

One of the most important things I have learned throughout my studies is the four general education lenses to analyze project from. This includes history, humanities, social sciences, and natural and applied sciences. (The Four General Education Lenses) Analyzing or developing work through these lenses can enable a graphic designer to take on projects from several perspectives.

The capstone project connects to many of the projects I have done previously. Not only does it require me to use industry standard programs such as Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop, but it paralleled my previous classes formats. It also allowed me to gain peer insight throughout the course and broke the big project into chewable taskings, making it easy to ensure that I was on track throughout the term.

I received good feedback throughout the term on specific projects that I wanted to include in my portfolio. This feedback focused on spelling mistakes and tweaks to make each project better. For example, one student suggested I alter the color of icons on my personal branded material to help them stand out from the background. Another student suggested I create a secondary logo for Lil' Guppies Scuba School, which was something I hadn't thought of at all. Having feedback like this, opened my eyes to the types of things I can offer when working with a client.

Because I had annual training in the middle of this course, there were times that I missed out on feedback. Having missed that opportunity on occasion, taught me how important it is to get a second opinion or even a third or fourth. From what I can remember, there was only one suggestion that was made, that I didn't take. Everything that I did include, made the designs truly portfolio ready.

In my professional life I plan to continue asking peers and colleagues for their opinions. I believe it is critical to have someone check and double check your work. It is the same concept in carpentry, measure twice, cut once. Continuing a project through to the final stages without feedback is a recipe for disaster. What happens if a client prints 500 business cards and the designer spelt something wrong or the design gets cut off? That reflects poorly on the designer and the client most likely won't offer them another job. Vasudha Mamtani said it best in an article titled the power of collaboration in Design when she wrote "We understand that in most cases, what someone can do by themselves, they can most definitely do better with more help." (Mamtani, 2019). Mamtani goes on to say that collaboration allows for new perspectives and creates a safe space to exchange ideas to achieve the best results.

Collaborating or reviewing work can help grow a designer's following on social media and in return build their network and career as word spreads about their abilities. It also can offer a chance to learn new skills or even a new, more efficient way of completing a task.

Throughout my professional career and my time here at Southern New Hampshire University, I have learned how important it is to do research prior to starting any project. This ensures that you can make ethical decisions without making a simple mistake, for example, using a hashtag on social media that means something different from what you intended. Mistakes like that can create a negative impression from a designer. To be successful in this career field, it is

important to ensure that negative impressions are limited as much as possible. Design has the ability to impact popular culture and humanity. To prevent design from negatively impacting society, designers should follow a few steps: identify if there is an ethical issue, conduct research for facts, create a list of options, make a decision based off of pros and cons and analyze the outcome. (Bowers). By doing this, I will learn to make ethical design decisions quickly as my experience grows.

Following my graduation from SNHU, I plan to apply to a Master's in Marketing program at the University of Minnesota. I also plan to stay with the military for another 14 years, with at least five or so being fulltime. From there, I hope to have a new job in a marketing firm or with one of the colleges or universities in my local area.

Moving forward, it will be important to remain professional with the individuals I meet. Even more so when it comes to working with the public in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area in my current role as a public affairs specialist and while attending a local university. Being professional will give me the opportunity to network with potential clients and employers as well as ensure when someone hears or sees my name, they have positive response. ("Top 12 benefits of professional networking and how to get started | Michael Page", 2021)

It will also be important for me to maintain and build the skills I currently have by attending class for certificates to build my resume and test my abilities within the graphic design realm. A resume shows insight into who you are and what you find important in your career for a future employer. Having graphic design certificates, or any certificates, will be important for me. (Berenson, 2020)

References

- Berenson, L. (2020). The Importance of Professional Certification on Your Resume - Sterling Career Concepts. Retrieved 25 April 2022, from <https://www.sterlingcareerconcepts.com/the-importance-of-professional-certification-on-your-resume/>
- Bowers, M. (2022). The Higher Ground – A Guide to Design Ethics. Retrieved 25 April 2022, from <https://www.toptal.com/designers/design-director/design-ethics>
- Cherry, K. (2022). How the Color Blue Impacts Moods, Feelings, and Behaviors. Retrieved 25 April 2022, from <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-color-psychology-of-blue-2795815#:~:text=It%20is%20often%20described%20as,feelings%20of%20sadness%20or%20aloofness.>
- Mamtani, V. (2019). The power of collaboration in Design. Retrieved 25 April 2022, from <https://uxdesign.cc/the-power-of-collaboration-in-design-b5a680427ff>
- The Four General Education Lenses (2022). Retrieved 25 April 2022, from <https://learn.snhu.edu/d2l/lor/viewer/viewFile.d2lfile/660806/23936,-1/>
- Top 12 benefits of professional networking and how to get started | Michael Page. (2021). Retrieved 25 April 2022, from <https://www.michaelpage.com.au/advice/career-advice/career-progression/benefits-networking>