

The Informatics 386

takeaway journal

Inspired by 35 humans

Jonathan Ford Alkan / Mesfin Bekele / Michelle C. Bridges / Lucy Eun
/ Anushree Gopal / Sungmeen Hong / Kairi Hye / Brendan James Ja-
cobsen / Jon L. Jewik / Andrew David Johnson / Sunwoo Kang / Davin
B. Lee / Jenny Hyun Jung Lee / Michael Edward Lew / Christopher
Allan Maglio / Nico Rummel Malig / Daniel Thomas Merchant / Markos
Samuel Mezgebu / George Ng / Jason Scott Peachner Ton / Sarah Phil-
lips / Makenzie Marie Pletcher / Nicholas James Polsin / James / Tiny
Porter / Laura Schildkraut / Setota Assefa Solomon / Chevy MAGA
Swanson / Kinsley Tran / Benjamin Walchenbach / Austin Le Weale
/ Vincent Wu / Sue Youn Yang / Joycie Anna Yu / Dominik Andrzej
Zmuda

Adrian Pacheco

Created in 2017 by
Adrian Pacheco
email: adrianpachecodesign@gmail.com
www.adrianpacheco.com

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INFO 386 A Winter 17:
Professionalism In Informatics

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Course objectives

On the first day of class for INFO 386: Professionalism in Informatics at the University of Washington, every student was asked to write down their objectives for the course.

My course objectives:

- Be open to adopting new points of views
- Regain public speaking confidence
- Apply what I have learned from previous classes towards group assignments
- Build trustworthy connections

After reviewing the course schedule on the first day of class, I was confident that my course objectives would be feasible throughout topics of personal branding, taking responsibilities for your choices, team project plans 1-3, ethical challenges, effective writing and presentations, creating a compelling business case, personal introductions, diversity, and networking.

Introduction

This takeaway journal is me talking to a previous version of myself.

These are concepts I have either learned or expanded onto over the course of ten weeks in understanding what it means to grow professionally and personally. I hope these concepts produce inspiration, motivation, or innovation. The goal would be all three.

Let's get started.

Explore new perspectives

Be slow to speak, but quick to listen / Study role models / Stand next to the talent





Be slow to Speak, but quick to listen

As of 2017, we live in a generation of instantaneous interactions with people and technology. Being quick to voice opinions and emotional expressions without taking precautions of how it may affect long-term situations has never been so easy. This has become especially true with the help of Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram.

It is without question that humans can't help talking about themselves during conversations, simply because it is so easy to do. As much as we enjoy doing so, I find that allowing others to dominate a conversation creates opportunities to learn rather than to teach. Whether you agree or disagree with what the speaker is saying, it is important to be open and transparent with their perspective. Be interested. Be patient. Be willing to see their point of view without feeling the need to go against it. You will learn more than you expect.

Study role models

One of my favorite ways to learn is by browsing the web about someone who I admire without having any end goal in mind. From that starting position, learn and study everything there is to know about that person. Then find at least two people that person admires, and find out everything about them. Repeat this cycle until you realize that time had become irrelevant.

Eventually, you will gain an understanding of how your admirer came to be. The best part is that in the process of browsing, you may likely come across a completely new people your admire. As you start building your tree of role models, life becomes easier to comprehend. Then you soon will be able to start your own tree.

Stand next to the talent

Explore new perspectives

Take every opportunity to stand next to the talent because it won't be likely that the talent will stand next to you. This can be as simple as getting a cup coffee with the talent so that you are able to see and experience the way that person does things. Take mental notes when the talent does something out of the ordinary or demonstrates personal characteristics and mannerisms because that may just be his or hers talented secret.

Share your existence

Invite others to wonder with you / Write to write / Be the talent / Demonstrate consistencies / Go public in places you love



Invite others to wonder with you

No matter how ridiculous your idea, thoughts, or emotions may be, please, in absolutely no way feel discouraged to share them with others. Because in reality, life is just too short.

Sharing your wonders in some cases may set up the perfect opportunity to start a new relationship with someone who shares the same wonder.

Now I do agree that there is a time and place for everything. But I also believe that worrying about the right time to do something results in less time to work with. Basically, the time is now to share your wonders, and it doesn't even have to be with people you know or even people that exist.

Just do it!

Write to write

Humans are capable of generating 50,000–70,000 thoughts per day, but how many of those do you actually remember at the end of the day? Can you imagine all the missed opportunities you had from not writing down your ideas simply because you told yourself that you would remember?

I carry a small plain paper notebook with me each day, along with a black pen, to create an archive of random ideas, quotes, questions, thoughts, and feelings. Doing this not only becomes an evolving tangible item to share with my future kids, but it also becomes a place that I can always rely on to spark inspiration when needed. I never realized how much the notebook would come in handy until I started carrying one.

As a creator, this became extremely beneficial when I started using the notebook to associate words with visualizations to simplify or elaborate potential project ideas and blog post. The best part is when you look back at the story you created just before your vision turned into a reality.

Be the talent

As a creator, I am comfortable to say that I have developed a “work with what you have” attitude, a mindset rooted back from my father’s teachings when we worked together on house projects, on the golf course, and during working hours at ACE Hardware. I was taught that life does not always go the way you plan for it too, so use what you have at the moment and make it work. I share this talent in my everyday life of designing, cooking, and traveling.

In demonstrating my talent of creative works, I have had the privilege of sharing a personal design project over the summer of 2016 alongside Damian Borba, Product Manager for Adobe XD. As part of my professional career advancement, I was an early User Experience / User Interface Designer for FitTraction, before my current Freelance position as a Web Designer for the University District Street Medicine in Seattle, a community-driven bridge that collaborates with currently and formerly homeless individuals through community service providers.

Demonstrate consistencies

One way to gain credibility in your professional career is to be consistent with what you present to the world. While keeping in mind that authenticity is crucial, developing consistencies stem from natural self-expressions through apparel, speaking, and note-taking, to name a few. Everyone has consistencies in their work ethic and lifestyle but may not become noticeable until someone points it out. However, when you do figure out what your consistencies are, embrace it and demonstrate it humbly.

Two consistency elements that I have maintained can be seen throughout my resume, cover letter, and online portfolio. Each is designed with the essence of minimalism at its core with a primary color of #f7f7f7. These two consistencies are always applied to every single project I begin working on as it establishes a sense of elegance, which is how I present my work to the world.

Go public in places you love

If you wish to gain recognition in your professional career, you must take advantage of social media platforms in a business manner. Even if this means you need to create a new email address, username, and profile picture. It will be beneficial to take this approach into the world of the internet.

Apart from building your online presence, going public in the real world is just as important. Be willing to build a network away from the screen by making connections in face-to-face interaction. Go to places you love and carry conversations with the people there. I have found this creates the most straightforward first impression you can possibly make to someone you just met.

A few places that I often make an appearance to are at waterfront views and art museums. The conversations held at those places seem to feel more relaxed. I now understand there is a high likelihood that I will come across someone who knows more than I do, so it then becomes a learning experience. And it is interesting how those conversations often become most memorable.

Trust the universe

Build a network of friends / Emphasize strenghts, not weaknesses / Mistakes will happen / Be





Build a network of friends

Make as many connections as you can because you never know when that person who said can fix computers will come in handy. Which is why it is important to make friends everywhere you go not just because they can become resources, but also because it is an earthly thing to do. Then at some point in your lifetime, you will be able to say “I got a guy”.

Emphasize strengths, not weaknesses

I would say there are two types of people who handle their strengths and weaknesses differently. One person may feel the need to improve their weaknesses in order for it to become a strength. But interestingly, there are also people who look to improve their strengths and let their weaknesses be. These people are the smart ones simply because they understand the time it may take to turn a weakness into a strength takes away from the time that could have been spent on improving their strengths. So, they use their human resources to their advantage to fulfill that weakness.

Each approach has their pros and cons, but the important question to ask yourself is how much time are you willing to spend on something you are not good at?

Mistakes will happen

As careful as we may be in making sure everything goes as planned, it is very likely that it will not. Mistakes will happen and some may affect you more than others. The universe works in mysterious ways, but you are in control of how it is handled mentally. Instead of looking for a reason to blame, let the mistake become an opportunity for self-improvement.

Be

The most important takeaway from this journal is to be.

Be who you are.

Be what you believe in.

Be the reason why we exist.

Trust that the best is yet to come.

Just Be.





Objective assessment

My course objectives from day one:

- Be open to adopting new points of views
- Regain public speaking confidence
- Apply what I have learned from previous classes towards group assignments
- Build trustworthy connections

Through all the lecture topics, individual and team assignments, and guest speakers, my course objectives were met and aligned with my expectations from the beginning of the quarter.

Given the opportunity to see how everyone else a part of the class presented themselves in class activities, allowed me to learn from their mistakes and accomplishments. Reflecting on their performance in comparison with mine, I was able to clarify my strengths and weaknesses in terms of my professional career. Having that figured out early on in the course enhanced my level of confidence and comfort in all class activities. Most significantly, this course allowed me to expand my network of friends that may become resourceful in the near future.

Overall, the content, people, and experiences I had with this class will be taken to heart and will always be reflected on during my life of professional advancement.

Additional takeaways

Speak with your personality / Help others even if it embarrasses you / Attire matters / Be accountable / Keep your composure / Knowledge comes in many forms / Nothing is original / Discover your specialization / Fewer complaints, more love / Never present a problem without proposing a solution / Emotional intelligence / Connect your brand / Communication at its finest / Fit into an organization / Observe / Use visuals to your advantage / Clarify objectives, goals, strategies, and tactics / Raise questions / Do your research / Define your jam / Details matter / Start blogging now / Listen to podcasts / Read when you have downtime / Be creative / Live in the moment / Accept all things that are against you / Professional maturity / Embrace your skills / Go with the flow / Be a “that guy” / The importance of follow up messages / See both sides of an argument / Handshakes as first impressions / Carry a notebook / Remove fluff / The 50 words or less solution / Know your competition / Bring your enemies close / Know your product / Ask open ended questions / Interview fundamentals / Adaptability / Start strong, finish stronger / Numbers are our friends / Meet your admins / You are loved

