

Designed Worlds.

By Gaurav Shah

Background

Before taking this course, I believed that design was simply a way to communicate a message through pretty colors and typography. Brands often hired designers to create a vague message that looked visually appealing. However, this course has provided me with a fresh perspective on design. In this magazine, you'll discover my top five takeaways from GBDA 101.

We live in designed worlds

Design is a lot more than a logo or a poster. Our very first GBDA class opened my mind to the idea that everything around us has to be designed. From the Stratford building to a simple mug, the way everything is designed has meaning. Upon further reflection, I also realized that even if every design decision is not conscious, it is there for a reason. It may rely on past mental models or may just be the easiest to produce, but either way, the design serves a purpose.



Design depends on context

Design has cultural contexts and not everything means the same thing to everyone. Viewers always lay the lenses of culture, past experiences and ability on pieces of design. As a designer, it is important to include the audience in the design process to get feedback and make sure that it for everyone.



One great example of this is colour psychology. While it's always spoken about online, I always questioned its credibility. This class taught me that the emotion given to colours may vary by culture. Since then I've stopped overthinking my colour choices. Instead, I evaluate my design as a whole based on how well it communicates the message.



Good UX is functional, reliable, usable and beyond

One of the key things I learned in this course is the importance of good user experience (UX) in both physical and digital products. The elements that make up good UX are arranged in a pyramid, which is similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The lower levels of the pyramid must be met before the higher levels can be addressed.

The first level of the UX pyramid is functionality. The product should work as intended and pass basic accessibility checks. The second level is reliability. The product should work

every time and be able to handle peak usage times. Data displayed should be accurate and the product should be compatible with all major device types. The third level is usability, which includes practices like usability testing and heuristic checks. This ensures that users can easily navigate the product.

For most products, the next step is to make them pleasurable, however, that can be replaced by any emotion. For our third assignment, we had to incorporate an emotion while still keeping the first three levels of the pyramid intact.

Feedback is tricky



Feedback played a crucial role in our past assignments. It provided us with new perspectives that inspired us to create better designs. However, I also learned that feedback is a complex process. Not everyone shares your vision, and their feedback may contradict your design goals. Therefore, it's essential to be cautious and critically evaluate every piece of feedback you receive. It's perfectly acceptable to ignore feedback that isn't relevant. The

emotional design assignment made the feedback process more challenging by requiring us to keep our emotions concealed. As a result, the feedback we received was less effective. This mirrors the real-world experience of design teams, where confidentiality is often necessary. In such scenarios, it's best to communicate only with individuals with whom you're allowed to interact and assess all other feedback before implementing it.

Theme!

Before starting any project, it's crucial to have clear design goals. For my poster assignment, I aimed to showcase two opposing realities: mesmerizing and chaotic. This helped me choose design elements more efficiently. It's okay to break guidelines like white space or consistency if it aligns with your goals. Prioritizing your message is key and may even improve its effectiveness.

Conclusion

I believe design is heading towards greater accessibility, ensuring fewer people are excluded. This benefits everyone. About 1 in 8 people experience disability, while others face similar challenges. Better design can accommodate more people and improve user experience. I'm excited to contribute to and shape the future of design.



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Our world is a canvas of design,
From a mug to a building's line,
Each creation holds a story to find,
Culture and feedback shape its shine.