Southern New Hampshire University

8-2 Final Project: Professional Reflection

Jaslyn Escobar

GRA-491: Graphic Design Portfolio

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**Overall, what was your capstone experience like?**

In general, capstone courses are "generally developed to energize students' critical thinking, problem-solving, oral communication, research, and teamwork abilities" (UNext, 2022). Overall, I felt that my capstone experience was definitely a challenge. It was honestly difficult to hear some of the constructive criticism regarding my designs after having felt like I finalized them in their initial courses. However, I can definitely see why this process is so essential in the journey of becoming a graphic designer. According to a LinkedIn article, "critiquing your peers in graphic design is not only a valuable skill for improving your own work, but also a way to build trust, respect, and collaboration in your community" (LinkedIn, 2023). Giving and receiving criticism comes with the job of being a graphic designer. One must be able to take such criticism and utilize it to their advantage in order to grow and learn within this field. As design programs are further developed and expanded upon, a graphic designer must ultimately be able to adapt to technological advancements and be willing to improve upon their own potential and skills. That being said, I have come to realize how I personally need to grow. I think I have come to develop good design skills and techniques, however I still have a long way to go in my career and I should be flexible, open-minded, and willing to learn from and accept help from others.

**Reflect on the significance of the capstone in relation to your own experience at SNHU.**

Based on my own experience at SNHU, I always felt that my capstone would be the culmination of everything that I have learned so far. I always felt anxious about it because I was unsure of my own capability and potential as a student just beginning her studies in the graphic design program. However, with each new course I took, I began to gain confidence as I found a rhythm to my studies. I became motivated as I excelled academically, maintaining a high GPA and taking pride in my work. However, once I reached the capstone course, I began to feel discouraged once more. I understood its significance and importance in my academic program, but I was worried that everything I had learned would not be enough for me to overcome it. Taking the capstone has been a difficult part of my academic journey, but it has definitely helped me improve within the graphic design field.

**What connections do you see between your capstone and your academic program?**

I can definitely see a strong connection between my capstone and my academic program. Everything within the capstone was essentially all the previous courses I have taken built upon one another to a certain level of professionalism. I can see how it is an essential step that a student must take before embarking on the path to a professional career in the field of graphic design. It is a culmination of all the necessary skills and knowledge needed to proceed in this industry. Additionally, the courses that I have taken in my academic program alongside my capstone have provided me with tools that will aid me in being able to pursue this type of career. These tools include my portfolio website, my print portfolio, and my personal logo. Even if I do not necessarily end up using these specific items, I have come to learn of their importance and value for the sake of promoting myself to potential employers.

**What feedback did you choose to incorporate into your print-ready portfolio and portfolio website? Discuss the importance of collaboration with regard to the improvement of your works.**

When it came to my print-ready portfolio and my portfolio website, I found that the feedback of my classmates and of my instructor were incredibly valuable assets to improve upon my work. Overall, the field of graphic design is one that heavily features collaboration. According to the article "How Collaboration Makes us Better Designers," "designing collaboratively means putting your ego aside to make something that transcends the sum of its creators. A collaborative design process can be challenging at times—especially at first. But getting out of our own heads and incorporating collaboration into our design process is worth the effort because it improves our work" (Knapton, 2023). In order to achieve success in one's career, a graphic designer must be willing to listen to and build upon constructive criticism. Furthermore, even if a graphic designer has a vision for a particular project, another designer may have good ideas that have not been considered. Working in a team results in the benefit of all parties involved as it results in designers aligning towards a common goal. According to the article "The Secrets of Effective Design Teamwork," "whether you have two people or two dozen people working on a project, perfecting your approach to team design will streamline your processes and lead to better results" (UXPin, 2023). This leads to personal and professional growth and shows potential employers that you are flexible, willing to adapt, and willing to learn from others.

**How will you apply what you have learned to your future academic and/or professional life?**

I hope to apply what I have learned to my future professional life by implementing and utilizing the skills I have developed to real-life scenarios. I have come a long way through my academic journey and I have learned so much about graphic design and how the industry functions. Though I do not know where this career will take me next, I do know that I have been armed with valuable knowledge that will help me face new challenges and overcome them. This is especially true regarding how well-versed I have become with modern graphic design software. As stated in an article regarding such programs, "the best options are more varied and powerful than ever, providing professional designers and enthusiasts with a vast range of options to create in the way that best suits their needs and workflow" (Foley, 2023). Over various courses, I have become familiar with how design programs such as Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign are effectively used in the creation of graphics. As such, I feel confident enough that these skills will ultimately lead to great career opportunities for me.

**How will you maintain ethical principles and incorporate social responsibility in order to advance the graphic design industry and/or create artifacts (products or designs) that leave positive lasting effects on people and societies?**

I will maintain ethical principles and incorporate social responsibility in order to advance the graphic design industry and/or create artifacts that leave positive lasting effects on people and societies by being self-conscious about what I choose to put out into the world. According to the article "The Ethics of Graphic Design: Balancing Creativity and Responsibility," graphic designers have "a unique power to shape public perception, and as such, must carefully consider the ethical implications of their work" (Singh, 2023). Ultimately, being ethically and socially responsible is an important part of being a graphic designer. As such, one must be well-versed in the current issues facing the societies of today's world and make a conscious effort to avoid

offending any social or cultural group. A huge part of this effort involves keeping up with current events and major changes in social media and popular culture. As a general rule of thumb, I believe that one must simply keep in mind the goal of spreading love, kindness, and positivity through their designs.

**What are your goals for your professional life?**

In my professional life, my ultimate career goal would be to work in the anime/manga or video game industries because I have been an avid fan since I was a kid. Tsuyoshi Kusano, "the art director behind numerous popular anime series, [is known for] his work as a graphic designer. Kusano, who has been interested in video game packaging design and brand logos since he was young, says that the process of graphic design feels similar to video games" (Terunuma, 2021). The success of such notable people in this industry stirs my interest as well as inspires me to strive towards this goal.. One of the companies that I am interested in applying to is Viz Media, one of the largest companies responsible for the translation, publishing, and distribution of manga in the United States. Their main office is located near me in San Francisco, CA and they offer positions for Senior and Junior Designers who are put in charge of designing book covers, logos, and other print and marketing materials. I am also interested in working within the video game industry at companies like Playstation or Nintendo. According to the article "Graphic Design Jobs in the Video Game Industry," the video game industry "has grown exponentially in recent years, offering a wealth of opportunities for graphic designers to showcase their creativity and contribute to immersive gaming experiences" (Hitmarker, 2023). I would love to dive into this industry, working either in marketing design or being hired as a concept artist. In the meantime, once I graduate, I plan to spend some time doing freelance work to gain some experience and build up my portfolio more.

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