3.1 WORK IN PROGRESS | BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Tonya Stuart-Melland | GR 600: Visual Communications Lab | Spring 2023

# MOTIVATE CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

FACT:
Currently there is no emphasis on the importance of teaching graphic design in high schools in America.

PROBLEM:
Most students/people don't understand the design process and how valuable a tool and skillset these skills are for anyone on a professional/personal level.

OUTCOME:
I will create a graphic design curriculum and teaching tools for high school students.
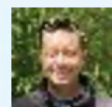
Jeremy Stout ⌄

7 hours ago

approved

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INSIGHT 1:

The program taught in high school is revolved around "the core," which vary by state, with most states having English, math, social studies and science as the core subjects. The most importance is placed on these subject areas. Many schools also teach elective courses such as theater, visual arts, foreign language, and vocational education. However, the availability of these courses depends mainly on a school's financial situation and it is offered at less importance than the core classes. If teachers/adults don't understand the importance in these areas of studies no wonder the students don't as well.

https://www.livepositively.com/what-characterizes-the-american-education-system/

Connections

INSIGHT 2:

No two school districts are a like and have different strategies and key concepts. Some districts are moving to skills based learning where they get hands-on experience, not just theoretical understanding. This is where the design process and graphic skills would definitely connect the strategies together. Creating understanding in skills that will make you workforce ready. For example at the school that I teach at in history class they have to design a poster for a presidential election. Kids are starting to connect that the skills they learn in my graphics and photography classes, they come to use the resources I have in my class. What if they incorporated this into history class for the kids who haven't taken my classes.

https://www.highereddive.com/news/skills-based-learning-is-the-key-to-improving-roi-in-education/630896/

INSIGHT 1:

Since more emphasis is given to core subject areas, and students are taught in order to test to receive higher scores and therefore obtain more funding. Creative skills and elective classes are seen as less important. How can I show how to incorporate the design process into core subjects to improve problem solving ability. Create a graphic design curriculum to help students in other subject areas as well in future professions/careers. Audience would be mostly educators and students, with maybe some parent involvement. There could be a kit (with posters, books, etc.), a website (with videos, and complimentary information).

https://www.aiga.org/resources/academic-design-education/graphic-design-curriculum

https://www.domestika.org/en/blog/9917-what-is-design-process-and-why-is-it-important

INSIGHT 2:

There are people who have dabbled with the idea of teaching design thinking skills within schools. But they haven't created curriculum that aligns with all subject matter effectively. Creating it to be used throughout all subjects would create a more well rounded system. If the students are getting it in every class they are more likely to understand, catch on and utilize these techniques. Then they will begin to see the connections.

https://www.aiga.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/introduction-to-design-futures.pdf

https://www.aiga.org/resources/academic-design-education/graphic-design-curriculum

INSIGHT 1:

Frog is a organization that has created a design thinking model that has created a Collective Action Tool Kit. They created this tool kit after doing fieldwork in Africa, where they found that there was a need for a universal framework that empowers communities of all shapes and sizes to find and design their own solutions to any problems, any time. Audience wise I should be focusing on high school students, and teaching staff. Also the parents of these students might be beneficial, so that they are on board. As for deliverables I could create a kit that would be specific to different subject matter and show how incorporating design processes to learn problem solving skills could be used.

https://www.frog.co/designmind/collective-action-toolkit-empowering-communities?redirectbrand=frogdesign

INSIGHT 2:

IDEO focuses on design thinking for educators to solve the problems that educators face on a daily basis. They rely on the confidence that everyone can be part of creating a more desirable future, and a process to take action when faced with a difficult challenge. That kind of optimism is well needed in education. They have created a type of digital kit for teachers to use when problem solving. But a kit could be so much more, it could be for students, teachers, parents. There could even be activities for students to create and problem solve, in turn learning the design process.

https://www.ideo.com/post/design-thinking-for-educators

INSIGHT 1:

There are an estimated 204,040 people throughout the United States that work in some form of graphic design industry. In recent years there has been downfall in America's competitive edge due to lack of creativity. Ideas do not fall from the sky; they come from people. People write the software. People design the products. People start the new businesses. Every new thing that gives us pleasure or productivity or convenience, be it an smartphone or the tweaks that make a chemical plant more efficient, is the result of human ingenuity. How do we as a society spark the creative problem solving skills of future generations?

https://https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes271024.htm
https://hbr.org/2004/10/americas-looming-creativity-crisis

INSIGHT 2:

According to the demographics on Zippia there are around 105 graphic design teachers, in the United States teaching at a high school level. There are 27,155 high schools throughout America. Which means that only 39% of high schools in America offer some sort of graphic design course(s). Only 74% of these teachers have a bachelors degree in graphic design. So quite a few of the teachers are teaching without any knowledge of graphic design. So creating curriculum and a website where teachers can go to get resources and learn what is of importance would be very beneficial.

https://www.edweek.org/leadership/education-statistics-facts-about-american-schools/2019/01
https://www.zippia.com/graphic-design-teacher-jobs/demographics/

INSIGHT 1:

The series of videos show how the design process works in an engineering class. It also incorporated other professions/ classes into the design process. For example the last design would need manufacturing students to weld the design. How can students see how group work, and relying on others with the skills they need to get the job done. Seeing connections between all classes and the skills you acquire from each working together.

https://contrib.pbslearningmedia.org/WGBH/conv18/adptech12_int_idsprocess/index.html

Wildcard

INSIGHT 2:

After talking with my fellow co-workers they are seeing the students general lack of problem solving. The students just want to be told what to do and how to do it. They want us to hold their hands until they finish the project. We discussed the design process and how it could teach problem solving skills. How graphic design skills could benefit them as well, with pre-sentations, posters etc.

Fargo South High School Teachers from various subject matters

INSIGHT 3:

A fair amount of educators teaching graphic design have little to no background in graphic design. Those who have an MFA in graphic design are sought after but, majority of those with an MFA degree have no experience in the field. How do they teach the skills in order for students to understand concepts and are they learning the correct concepts? Also those in the field generally come in with little to no experience teaching the concepts. When there is no curriculum to work with how do you know what to teach and if it is something useful for high school students?

https://educators.aiga.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/NASAD-Briefing-Paper-Faculty1.pdf