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Lucy Jensen
Reflective Teaching Portfolio

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My teaching philosophy. My background is in both advertising and graphic design. I graduated from The Fashion Institute of Technology in 1984 with a Bachelors' Degree in Advertising Design. Working in advertising with an award winning copy chief, as part of a copywriter/art director team, was an amazing experience that stays with me to this day. Having my own business since 1989 has been a very successful and gratifying experience for me. I try to bring the excitement of my own career and experiences to my students every time we meet. I teach courses in the Communication Design Pathways program and the Advertising and Digital Design Program. The classes I teach are all design classes which include Design Studio 1, Typography 1, Typography 2, Visual Language, Foundation in Advertising, Foundation in Graphic Design, Color Studies, Capstone Design Studio, and Art Direction and Design. My teaching philosophy is the same in all courses in that I treat the classroom as an agency, where my students are the art directors and designers and I am the creative director. I emphasize the importance of attendance, deadlines and neatness as being just as important as excellence in design. In the beginning of a project, I stress the importance of research to gain as much knowledge as possible on the topic and related topics, in order to have a greater understanding of how to create a design that is both pleasing to the eye and strong conceptually. I like to make my classroom an enjoyable place for students to learn and to feel comfortable to ask questions. Critiques are a very important part of my classes. All classes include full wall critiques so the students can see ideas being formed and improved and learn to develop a good eye for great design. I encourage students to give their view and perspectives on their peers' projects. As far as the projects themselves, I like to encourage students to improve the projects until they are the best they can be. I ask them to go back and revise until the project is outstanding. Writing and typography are very important to me. In each course, I may assign a writing component whether a reflection on the project or a full creative brief. Grammar and punctuation are corrected and excellent writing is encouraged. Typography is important in every class. Choosing appropriate fonts and knowing the mechanics of typography are crucial to excellent design and I try to instill a passion for typography in my students. My philosophy is one that encourages students to learn, grow and improve in their design abilities and as a person. My personal work as creative director in my own agency has a great impact on my teaching style. I bring many of my personal projects in as examples and use these real-world examples to explain the design process. As a professor, I set high standards for my students and I work with every student to help them achieve outstanding professional-looking portfolio pieces.

On observing a master teacher and what I recall most from the experience. I have observed two master teachers. Both of the teachers were professors of mine at FIT. The first was Martin Solomon, author of The Art of Typography and my first typography teacher. He was a master teacher and a master of typography. He was an amazing professor and designer. He would frequently say "Time is your greatest commodity", and this particular quote stood out to me, and has stayed with me over the years. His assignments on design, kerning and leading in typography were meant to be revised over and over by hand until perfection was achieved. He put great emphasis on the most intricate details of the mechanics of typography. During my years at school and throughout my career, I've always remembered that the extra time applied to making a project successful was "only my time".

It was worth it to put that time to good use, in order to perfect every project. I try to pass this way of thinking on to my students. The second master teacher was William Ronin. He was a master rendering teacher and he instilled the pursuit of excellence in his students. His demonstrations we amazing and inspiring. He made the art of rendering with markers look effortless. His handwritten notes, handed out each session, were written in the most beautiful and perfect handwriting. His outlines were detailed and his step-by-step directions were precise. Through his instruction, I achieved amazing portfolio pieces and applied what I learned to create all my hand-rendered portfolio pieces. These pieces were admired at every interview I had after leaving school and that talent brought me great success at the beginning of my career. I was very fortunate to have had these two master teachers whose influence stays with me to this day.

My most successful lesson and why it was successful. I believe a successful lesson and then a successful project happens when the students are very interested and excited to work on a project and put their effort into it wholeheartedly. An example of a most successful lesson was in the Capstone Design Studio course. The first half of the course involves groups working together to come up with a new company and then to design a full branding project for that company. Thinking about the assignment, I felt it was important to make groups that would each be very strong, and contain a mixture of different talents, while trying to match up similar design interests and personal interests of the students. I did interviews with each student, had them answer a series of interesting questions, do several drawings, thumbnails and logo designs, all to get a good sense of the students and their abilities. The students were very excited about the method of group making. Once the group leaders and groups were announced, the students immediately connected and shared their responses with each other. Their similarities and talents most often led to them coming up with their new companies that answered the question "What does NYC really need?" The projects were beautifully designed and executed, and super creative!

An unsuccessful lesson and how I addressed the challenges. The lesson that comes to mind was in the Typography 2 course, however I feel it was both unsuccessful and successful at the same time. The lesson is called 50/50 and the students do an assignment where they type their first name and last name in 100 different fonts. They typed them and printed them out to bring to class. I gave exact instructions on how much space to leave between each name and how to draw a baseline and neatly cut each set of the name sets in half. Some students followed the instructions and some did not. After cutting the names in half, they were instructed to match first and last names of different fonts to get as many aesthetically pleasing (logo-like) designs as possible. If you can, imagine 25 desks filled with 100 of these names cut out and students making the matches! Some students really loved it, but some were getting frustrated and not understanding why the names needed to be printed and cut out and not just done on the computer. To address the challenge, I went around to each student to help them decide on the top 10 variations and also had students sitting next to each other pick their top favorites. The top 10 matches were then put into their sketchbook neatly and once they had the top 10, they then made the best matches possible with the remaining fonts and put those into the sketchbook as well. In the end, they did a write-up about the project, and most students found the project challenging, but expressed that they definitely learned a lot about mixing typefaces in design. I continued to do this project, but put even more emphasis on following the directions, which makes the project easier to do.

On introducing and/or expanding the use of technology into my teaching. I am expanding the use of technology in my courses to make my courses as clear, creative, interesting, and interactive as possible for my students. Although I consider myself to be a good mix of old school and new school, I want to be using the most up-to-date technology in my teaching, so students get the best of all the teaching methods available. I have found great success with using Blackboard to have students upload their projects and for me to send back critiques and comments. I also use google drive to collect projects for my classes. I put all the presentations that I show in class on Blackboard, so my students can refer to them when they are working on their assignments.

When we started remote teaching in March 2020, I started making weekly folders with my handout of the day, other important handouts, and my presentations shown in class. Each folder was dated, so the students could easily find everything they needed. In the past, I always printed out all the handouts, but after doing it this way, I will probably continue making the folders and giving my students their handouts on Blackboard. I found great success with Blackboard Collaborate this past semester for remote teaching. I would like to introduce new technologies to my teaching, such as Padlet, Voice Thread and Screencast-O-Matic to keep students engaged by the most effective new teaching methods.

Technology innovations and the student / teacher experience. I feel new technology innovations will affect the student experience in a positive way. Students' attitudes have been changing over the past few years and they are embracing technology more and more each semester. There is so much technology involved in the advertising and design world, so staying up-to-date with new technology will be important to making the student experience the best it can be. The new innovations in technology will affect my experience in a positive way as well. By learning some of the latest technologies available, I can offer my students new ways to learn, new ways to critique their work, and new ways to assess their projects. I feel the new technologies will help me to continue growing and make my teaching methods even better.

New teaching ideas I plan to implement as a result of the technology certificate program. The technology certificate program has made me excited about implementing some of the new teaching ideas that were presented in this program. I would definitely like to expand on the Blackboard grade book in my courses. I use Blackboard grading to have students submit their projects and papers and use it to give critiques and instructions on how to improve. Padlet is a new technology I would love to introduce this semester. I think it will be a great way to have students introduce themselves and for them to use to upload their designs and concepts for critique in new, creative and interesting ways. I feel it will be a way to make the class more interactive and increase interest and participation, especially for students who tend to hold back during class critiques. I would also like to use Screencast-O-Matic to create videos for my classes to make my introductions, and explain projects and demonstrations, so students can replay the information when they are working on their projects. Voice Thread is also a tool I would like to work with to add comments and explanations to my slide presentations. All the technologies presented in the program will be very helpful to me to enhance the courses, both teaching remotely and, in the future, in a classroom setting. We must remember all the new technologies are great tools, but it will only be creative and innovative when the professor uses them in combination with traditional learning techniques.

New technology tools/approaches and how they will contribute to my classroom practice. I believe that the new technology tools and approaches will add even more creativity and excitement in my courses. I think it can be used effectively to bring more information to our students in a way that grabs their interest and keeps their minds stimulated. The new technologies for discussions about our projects and assignments, such as breakout groups and chatrooms have already been invaluable to our students connecting, sharing their perspectives and feeling involved, especially in the remote setting.

Evaluating the success of my activities. I will evaluate the success of my activities by creating questions for students regarding their feelings about a particular new technology, and how it was used to enhance a project. In the past, I have always had students do a short reflective paper, or write-up, about their experience and feeling about a project after the project is completed. When a creative brief is assigned for a project, I will also add a section where students can tell me how certain new technologies helped make their projects successful. I will also use the polls section in Blackboard Collaborate for quick feedback from the class on a certain tool or technology used in the moment. I have found that students like to reflect on their work and give their opinions on what positive experiences they had while working and completing a project.

The bigger picture items with regard to technology and learning. Technology and its advances have made it possible to do many things better than before. Students love technology, so using it to enhance the coursework can create more interest and hold students' attention. Technology, however, cannot be used as a substitute for the core content of our courses. All the information prepared and demonstrations and lectures must be filled with creative content that meets the objectives of the course. Then, the new technologies can give professors many innovative and creative ways to present that content. In my own experience with new technology, I feel it is really important for a professor to be very knowledgeable, to practice with, and to be extremely confident about any new tool, before using it with their students. Presenting a new tool, I want to be sure that it will work, and not try to work it out in front of my students. As we present more new technologies to students, we must remind them that technology is always changing. They must always stay current and they will need to embrace the ongoing changes in order to succeed, both in their careers and in life.