

Module 8

8-2 Final Project: Reflection

DiCamillo, Ralph

Overall, what was your capstone experience like?

Honestly, when I first heard about this class, and the fact that it was required, I was dubious, and expected it to be busywork and a grab for a few more credit dollars. I am very pleasantly surprised to say that it has been extremely rewarding, and I've found it one of the most time-consuming, but enjoyable, classes I've taken.

After each of my previous classes, I've had ideas to improve my class projects, but never took the time. This class let me go back over a disconnected body of work, and really look at everything with a more practiced eye. I'm definitely not the student I was when I started the program, and I can look at everything chronologically and see how my skill set has gotten so much better. I took the time to make improvements, and in some cases, discard work that wasn't up to my current standards. I also looked back through projects I had done independently before I started at SNHU, and reviewed everything with a much more critical eye.

Another huge learning experience was choosing ten projects, then putting them in order. I started with many more than ten, and really tried to choose ten that worked well together, but also told a story about myself as a designer, showing a broad range of skills. It was not easy. Choosing them was difficult, but ranking them and putting them in order was incredibly enlightening. I had never looked at my projects like that before.

Moving forward, I'll be using my capstone project as a baseline standard for my work. As I complete each new project, I'll be asking myself, "where does this rank in my current portfolio", and I'll always strive to improve it until it can be placed near the top.

Reflect on the significance of the capstone in relation to your own experience at SNHU. What connections do you see between your capstone and your academic program?

I think the capstone has helped me put all of my experience at SNHU into focus. I was able to connect each class I took with the overall program, and see how everything fell into place.

Each project I reviewed represented exactly where I was skill-wise at that time, and I could place each one in chronological order just by seeing how much I had improved after each class. Seeing everything from a different perspective showed how each class was a piece of a whole, that led me to where I am today.

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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.

Each class project was a product of my initial designs, and feedback from instructors and classmates. I always sought out detailed feedback, because I value different perspectives, and honestly, you can always tell yourself something you create is great. I want to hear it from other people. If they don't like it, I want to know why, and then I take another look and change my design accordingly.

Even when feedback is positive, if someone suggests a different color or arrangement, I like to play with the design and see how that would look. From the other angle, seeing how classmates interpreted the same design brief was often illuminating. I learned a lot from how other students approached their designs.

I don't think any designer can work without being able to collaborate. Every interaction with a client is collaboration of some kind. Learning how to modify your work to someone else's perspective is an essential skill! You have to be able to take criticism impersonally and impartially, so you can hear exactly what the client is seeing, and what they are asking for. You may not love the new version, but the essence of collaboration is meeting in the middle.

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

I'll be honest. I turn 55 this year. Covid lockdown made me take stock of my life, and cross a few things off my bucket list. I have always regretted not finishing my degree back in the 1980's, and the combination of lockdown, working from home, and SNHU worked perfectly! I had a good work ethic going into it, but combining classwork with my full-time job really put a strain on me; but, it taught me how to prioritize even better. I will carry that through to my day job.

The surprising thing was how much I loved being a student again. I have made it my goal to keep taking classes, no matter what. I started an online life drawing class because I spend so much time on the computer, I wanted to get back to design basics and create by hand.

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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 work full-time fundraising for cancer research at the UCLA Jonsson Cancer Center Foundation. I have worked for non-profit organizations for the last 30 years, so I feel very strongly about social responsibility; I hold myself to a very high standard. As far as graphic design, I plan on mostly using my skills for the non-profit I work for, and then volunteering my services for others. I don't need the money, but I do need to know that I am putting good out into the world.

I want everything I produce to have a positive impact, whether it be by making someone smile, or motivating them to make a donation to a worthy cause.

What are your goals for your professional life?

At this point, my main goal is to make it to retirement, so I can pursue art full time!

I need a few months to recover from the pace, but I think I'm going to see if I can fit in an internship in graphic design with my regular job. I would love to work in a true creative environment for a short while and experience it first-hand. Plus, I figure I can get away with more as a company's oldest intern.

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