

Design Process

Define the Problem | Learn | Generate Ideas | **Design Development** | Implementation

National Visual Art Standards

VA:Cr1.1.IIa: Individually or collaboratively formulate new creative problems based on student's existing artwork.

VA:Cr2.1.IIa: Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.

VA:Cr2.3.IIa: Redesign an object, system, place, or design in response to contemporary issues.

VA:Cr3.1.IIa: Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, reengage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

VA:Re.7.2.IIa: Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of...

VA:Re8.1.IIa: Identify types of contextual information useful in the process of constructing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works.

VA:Cn10.1.IIa: Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research, and experimentation to explore unfamiliar subjects through art making.

Guiding Questions

- How do personal biases and opinions influence design work? How can they be avoided?
- Why is the critique of a designer's work important?
- Why is it important to refine a design?

Objectives

Students will...

- evaluate the effectiveness of their design to influence ideas, feelings, and behavior;
- identify and evaluate types of contextual information useful through the design process;
- engage in constructive critique in order to meet appropriate project goals and vision;
- create three useful logos for hypothetical company.

Vocabulary

Analyze: examine methodically and in detail the constitution or structure of (something, especially information), typically for purposes of explanation and interpretation.

Bias: prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Time Period: at least three classes, 45-60 minutes in length

Lesson Introduction: Design Development

The fourth step in the design process is Design Development. In graphic design, this means to **develop** and **refine** one's work. In the previous step, Generate Ideas, the goal was to ideate—come up with lots of ideas. These ideas should be based on learning and research. One way to generate and visualize ideas is to create thumbnail sketches. These sketches are not the end of the design process, but they are a step closer to solving the design problem. Once ideas are visualized, design decisions must be made in order to bring the design closer to its final state.

Design development starts with sketching. This is also where young designers want to call it good because they now have a picture of what their idea could be. They want to digitize it and be done. It's difficult for young designers to realize their work still requires refinement. It's easy to ignore a design's flaws, especially when it's starting to come into focus, but often it needs just a little more attention (see Figure 1). Emphasize the need for refinement and that refinement only makes their design more effective.

Once a designer has many thumbnail sketches to choose from, they can now start making design decisions. This is where all the previous steps in the design process again come into play. A designer must make choices based on their findings, not personal **opinions**, likes/

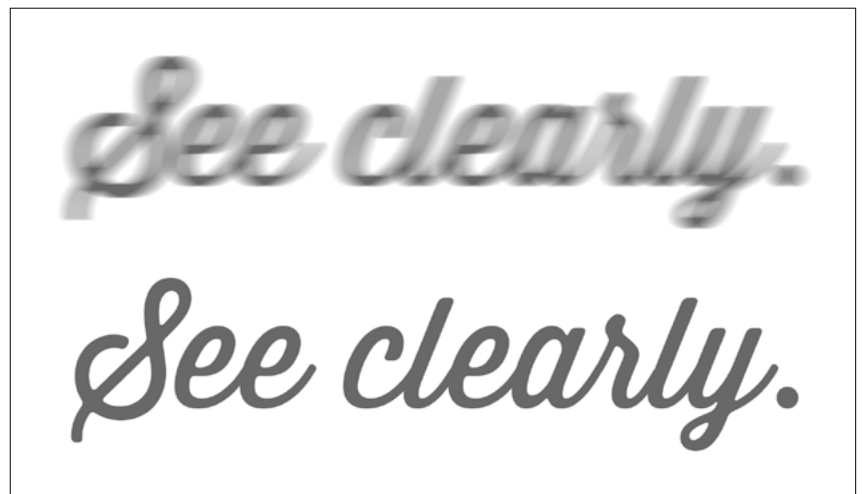


FIGURE 1: Focus. Design work comes into focus through the design process. This is achieved through the development and refinement of design. A thumbnail sketch is like the top line, it can be read but it's a little blurry. Would it work? Maybe, but it would require some explanation, possibly being misinterpreted, and an opportunity to communicate lost. It could be more effective. Students need to "work out the bugs" and bring their design into focus. As a designer works out the details and improves their design, the message becomes clear. This clarity affords intelligent communication.

Content: the things that are held or included in something; the substance or material dealt with, as distinct from its form or style.

Critique: a detailed analysis and assessment of something; evaluate in a detailed and analytical way.

Develop: grow or cause to grow and become more mature, advanced, or elaborate.

Final composition: this is the final, completed design. Bugs have been worked out. This is the finished product following the thumbnail, rough, and tight rough sketching process.

Form: the visible shape or configuration of something. This includes the arrangement of its parts.

Impressionable: easily influenced because of a lack of critical ability.

Iteration: the repetition of a process applied to the result of a previous application, as a means of obtaining successively closer approximations to the solution of a problem (a new version of a possible design solution).

Logo: a symbol or other design adopted by an organization to identify itself and its products and services.

Meaning: is implied or explicit significance, an important or worthwhile quality or purpose. It's a communicated message that is not directly expressed.

Message: a verbal, written, or recorded communication sent to or left for a recipient who cannot be contacted directly.

Offend: cause to feel upset, annoyed, or resentful.

Opinion: a view or judgment formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.

Prudent: acting with or showing care and thought for the future.

Refine: remove impurities or unwanted elements from; improve something by making small changes, in particular make an idea more subtle and accurate.

Rough sketches: are more developed and larger than thumbnail sketches and incorporate more detail in preparation for final design.

Stereotype: a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

Tight rough sketches: the last sketching stage before the final design is complete. They are more refined, close to final size, and close to perfection.

Materials

- Drawing paper
- Drawing pencil
- Foam core board
- Rubber cement (or other glue)
- Sketchbook
- Technical pen (used to make lines of constant width)

Figures

1. Focus

dislikes, or **biases**. This is difficult for beginning designers, especially classically trained in the arts, as they typically want to make choices based on their personal wants (or client's wants).

Design development can also be difficult for teachers because it requires the **critique** of student work. This takes time, effort, and lots of instruction as to not **offend** young **impressionable** designers. Educators need to teach students how to critique and why critique is crucial in the design process. Design development is rooted in analysis and assessment. This is how design improves and how design can become more effective. Critique is also a large part of designer/client relationships.

Design development requires constant refinement. Refinement comes through exploration and talking about the work with others. This critique can be formal or informal and can involve anyone. It's actually a good idea to ask someone who is not familiar with the design as this can bring about a fresh perspective on the work. For example, if a female student is designing for a male-centric audience, she should probably consult with her target audience (guys) to better understand if her design is actually communicating with the intended audience. It could be that she unknowingly utilized a **stereotype** that doesn't sit well with the intended audience (all guys like sports, guys don't wear pink, etc.).

It could be said that design development is a cycle of constant evaluation, refinement, and experimenting until the design problem is solved and the desired outcome is reached. Think of sports. An athlete doesn't just walk onto the field and start playing at a professional level. It took time, practice, study, contemplation, more practice (refinement) and so forth. In a similar fashion, design development refines and perfects design to be the best it can be—not to just kick the ball but to score the goal and hopefully win the game.

The typical design development process starts with thumbnail sketches. These visualized ideas are a great place to start. They must be **analyzed** for **content** and **message** using the learning previously completed. Teachers can help students analyze their thumbnails sketches. Choices concerning which thumbnails to refine must be made. Once thorough analysis has taken place, refinement can occur. This is often referred to as **rough sketches** (roughs). These would be larger than thumbnails with more detail and revisions. This is also a good place to try some variation. The next step is **tight rough sketches**—more refinement until the design is almost perfect. Though not necessary, if resources allow it, this is a good point to digitize the project. The goal is to pretty much finalize the design so most, if not all, design decisions have been made before taking the design to the computer for implementation. This process also helps teach students that computer applications don't create design, designers do. The last step would be **final compositions**. This is a completed design that could be digitized. To reiterate the design development process:

1. Thumbnail sketches
2. Rough sketches
3. Tight rough sketches
4. Final composition (or "comps"), also referred to as comprehensives

Don't forget that analysis and refinement throughout lead to the final composition. In the end, the final comp shouldn't merely be a pretty picture but a unique and direct piece of communication that solves a presented design problem.

Art Context, Cultural Connections and Relevancy

Almost anything can be improved with some analysis and thought. In this unit, students are learning to evaluate and refine design. Yet these skills, being able to successfully analyze and implement appropriate actions, can be applied elsewhere in their lives. Students are constantly faced with decision-making opportunities where critical analysis could play a large role and have even larger affects on their lives.

ACTIVITY PROCESS

Engagement (the hook–motivation and relevancy)

Students often know their work can improve and want to improve it but aren't sure how. Understanding the design development process and how to analyze and refine their work may motivate them to actually produce more thoughtful work. It may even motivate them to do the same elsewhere in their lives.

DAY 1

Introduction

Design development helps designers troubleshoot in their design. The **prudent** designer will engage and delve deep into this step of the design process, as this is where much of design finds its **form** and **meaning**. The difference between good design and great design is in the details—unique ideas lead to unique and memorable solutions. In the previous assignment, students created 50 thumbnail sketches for a new company logo. This will be the starting point of the next assignment.

Assignment 7–Logos

SYNOPSIS: A **logo** is often the first encounter a potential customer has with a product or service. Therefore, it must communicate quickly and directly, conveying precise information in a small package. A logo contributes to a company's first impression and must be memorable and packed with meaning.

ASSIGNMENT: Using the thumbnail sketches from Assignment 6, analyze and refine the company's logo to best communicate what the company does and stands for. The goal is three possible logo choices for presentation.

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Logo must work in black and white (gray is okay).
- Logo needs to be readable at ½ inch at its largest dimension (this means the design needs to be simplified—doesn't mean void of detail but rather thought-out and precise in detail).
- Turn in three different logo choices for the same company (two sizes for each—large, 5" and small ½"). Logos should be created on drawing paper and mounted to foam core for presentation.

PROCESS:

1. Analyze the 50 thumbnails previously completed in Assignment 6.
2. Identify five unique ideas that have potential to become the face of the company (what do they or could they communicate?).
3. Refine the five chosen ideas into rough sketches (this is a good place for **iterations** and expansion of the chosen ideas).
4. Analyze the five rough sketches (if more iterations are needed, make them).
5. Choose three to refine into tight rough sketches.
6. Make needed refinements.
7. Create final compositions for presentation.

Adaptations and Accommodations

Students may need help identifying ideas that have potential and may require more direct instruction. The idea is to have students make informed decisions. Students who require more direction may need to be told what to do and how to do it.

Extensions

Advanced students could exemplify direct connections back to the research they've completed concerning the newly created company. Ask them specific questions to help them understand the importance and links between all parts of the design process, learned up to this point. Questions could include:

- How does this logo communicate to the intended audience?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Why did you choose those colors?
- How can this design be improved?

Homework or Independent Work

Students should accomplish Process steps 1–3. Finish the five rough sketches if not already completed in class.

Closure

Rough sketches are just a means to an end—not the end itself. Students should understand that design takes time to perfect and that there may be more than one possible solution. The goal is to find the best solution and not settle for anything less.

Checks For Understanding

Students should be problem-solving, not just sketching. Make sure they have clear goals in mind as they refine their logo ideas into roughs. The more they think and refine, the more defined their ideas become.

DAY 2

Assignment 7—Logos (continued)

Students should have their rough sketches completed and should now be ready to continue refining their logo into three tight rough sketches. This is pretty much the same process as the previous day, except that the sketches should be more thought-out and worked-out. They should accomplish steps four and five in class.

Homework or Independent Work

Finish Process steps 4 and 5.

Closure

The logos should be starting to reveal themselves. Be sure to emphasize simplification of form and precision of line. They're almost complete.

Checks For Understanding

Have students compare their rough sketches to their tight rough sketches. There should be an obvious difference/improvement toward simplification in form and idea.

DAY 3

Assignment 7–Logos (continued)

The logos are almost done. Tight rough sketches should be complete so that students can finish the project. Students will complete Process steps 6 and 7—make any needed refinements and creating the three final compositions ready for presentation to the class. This will solidify the process and help them realize how all the steps come together.

Closure

Design development can be a bit repetitive and mundane but mandatory for concept-driven, thought-out design. Students should have a good understanding of why all the steps in the design process are needed and how it can improve the quality of their work. Now, step back, take a look around, and see how everyone's work has improved.

Checks For Understanding

It helps to place the thumbnail sketches, rough sketches, tight rough sketches, and final compositions next to each other to see the progression in thought and design. Usually this can be enough to showcase the need for design development. Ask the class where their project would be at if they had stopped anywhere else along the way.

Lesson Assessment Based On Objectives

Students should be assessed on their ability to demonstrate an awareness and proper use of the Design Development step in the design process as it applies to their own work. The correct use of unit vocabulary in class dialog and in written reflection should be accurate and appropriate to the work they make and see. All work produced in and out of class—as well as student writing—should be collected and analyzed. (See *Unit 3D and 3E Rubrics.docx* for assessment and rubric ideas. Customize to meet class specific assessment needs.)



Minnesota
the professional
association for design

AIGA Minnesota Innovate grant funded project

www.aigaminnesota.org

AIGA is the profession's oldest and largest professional membership organization for design—with 70 chapters and more than 25,000 members—they advance design as a professional craft, strategic advantage, and vital cultural force. From content that defines the global practice to events that connect and catalyze, they work to enhance the value and deepen the impact of design across all disciplines on business, society, and our collective future.