UCGD: Re-designing design
Blended learning in graphic design

Bright Horizons

Our goal for overhauling the 4 year programme was to create a three year course that integrated technology, theory and design principles in every unit. Development of a uniform format and 'branding' for the graphic design course that includes the development of a logo, marking, presentation templates and web-interface specific to Graphic Design was a secondary goal. As the first semester of this programme was rolled out, we have had success in many areas however we need to continue to re-assess our goals for the overall course and revisit our objectives for branding, marking, student engagement, and team roles in order to provide the best possible outcome for the course.

During the semester we implemented and experimented with blending learning and use of new technologies to enhance the learning experience in our new course. The following documents the course structure, how blended learning fits into this structure and a debrief on the success of this teaching model in semester 1.

Course Structure

The highlighted units utilized blended delivery techniques this semester.

|	SEMESTER 1	WINTER TERM	SEMESTER 2
1	GD Principles & History 1		GD Principles & History 2
	GD Thinking & Research		Typography & Layout
	Intro to GD Practice		Publication Design
	Elective		Elective
2	GD Principles & History 3	Optional 7 week Winter Term	GD Principles & History 4
	Identity Systems		GD Industry Briefs
	Web Design & Production		Information Graphics
	Elective		Elective
3	Professional Practice 1 Engagement, Ethics & Sustainability		Professional Practice 2 Promotion for Designers
	Motion Graphics		GD Consultancy & Work Place-ment
	Cross Media Production		Global Design Strategy
	Elective		Elective

COURSE DURATION
Standard six semesters full-time
Maximum twenty semesters

Desired student outcomes

By defining the skills, proficiency and outcomes we would like our students to have at graduation, we can ensure that we have a blueprint for the content we need to include in our unit outlines.

This can be extended to the include the deliverables, themes and techniques we promote throughout. The result will be a well rounded course with students which are desired by the industry.

Mapping of marking criteria can ensure that we grade the students based on these outcomes also.
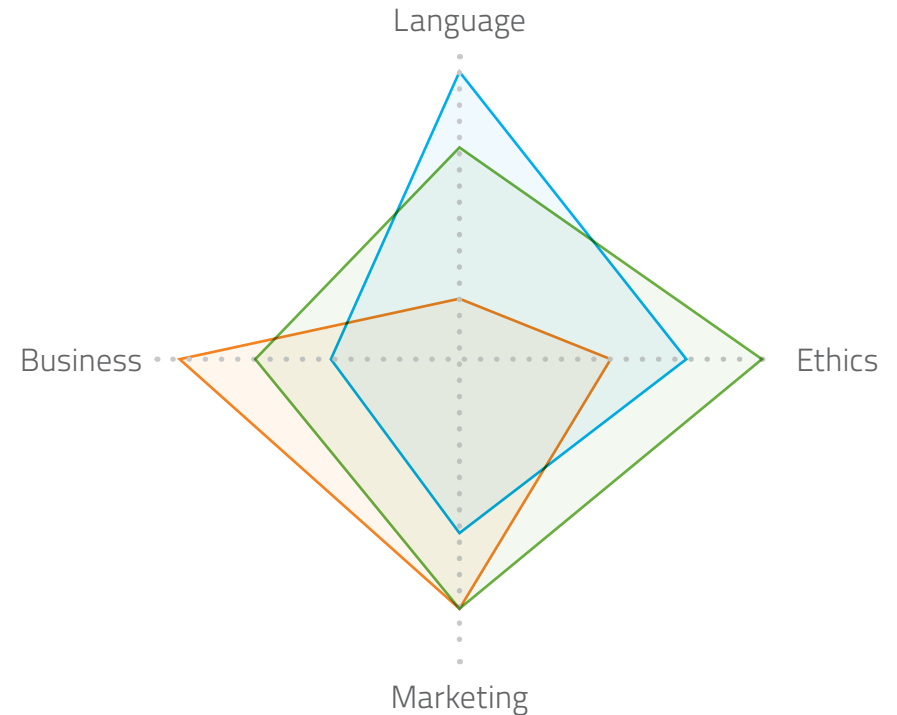
Course analytics

By analysing our current offering, we are able to see deficiencies or overrepresented themes, medium etc. as well as to chart opportunities for using new technologies in our units.

Being honest about our units is the only way to identify areas of improvement. By addressing these deficiencies we can create a better student offering.
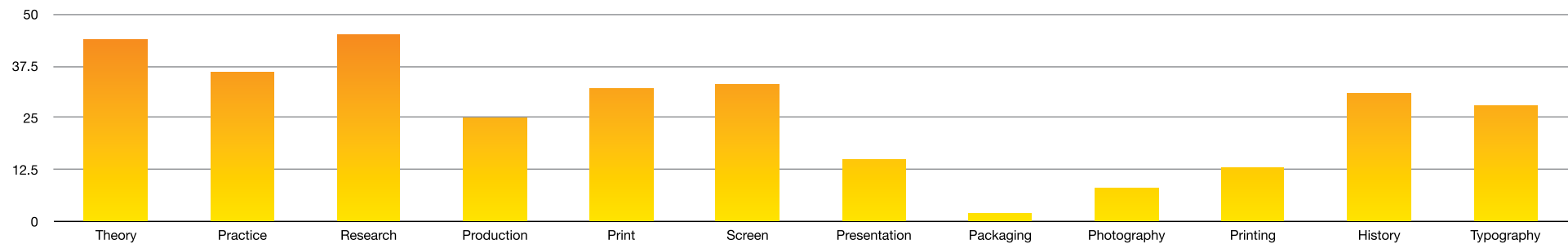
Valuable Outcomes

UC's point of difference

By incorporating assessment items that have outcomes of value to the local/national community we can foster a sense of real world problem solving which will definitely turn heads.

A point of sale, different to any design degree in Australia, we can become the centre of informed and valuable design. 'Design thinking to solve Australian problems."

Bright ideas

By identifying local information or awareness issues we can propose real world solutions to local business or community with the potential that some work may be selected for execution. This would increase exposure for the university and put us on the map as problem solvers. It may take 5 years but it is definitely achievable.
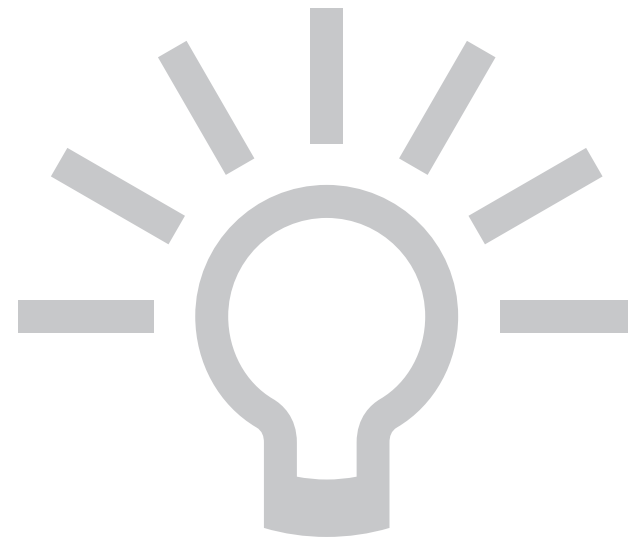
Test Units for Blended Learning

GD Principles of History 1 & 2

In our history stream we have created a new delivery model in which the teaching team all works together to inform their area of expertise into the lecture series. Each lecturer gave a presentation of historical design periods in relation to design principles. The use of a digital diary assessment, online quizzes, video resources and traditional presentation and critique created an engaging learning experience. In History 3, students generated a typeface design and had the opportunity to use specialized software to create a commercial font set.

Web Design

This unit relies heavily on the use of streamed video instruction which allows the student to learn at their own pace with the ability to replay essential skill based tutorial for comprehension. This method improved student skill retention and enabled students the flexibility to engage with the material in multiple settings.

Identity Systems

One of the learning objectives of this unit was to get students to engage with new digital production platforms for generating interactive online documents. Students produced long-format annual reports optimise for viewing on e-reader devices such i-pads.

Justification map

No nonsense justification

A justification map is an interactive PDF which the students develop in all units to emphasize the reasons and research which they used to inform their design decisions. This document can be used for any assessment where design process and justification are emphasized.

By introducing this concept and using it consistently throughout the units we can create a deliverable which gives us what we want to see from the students.
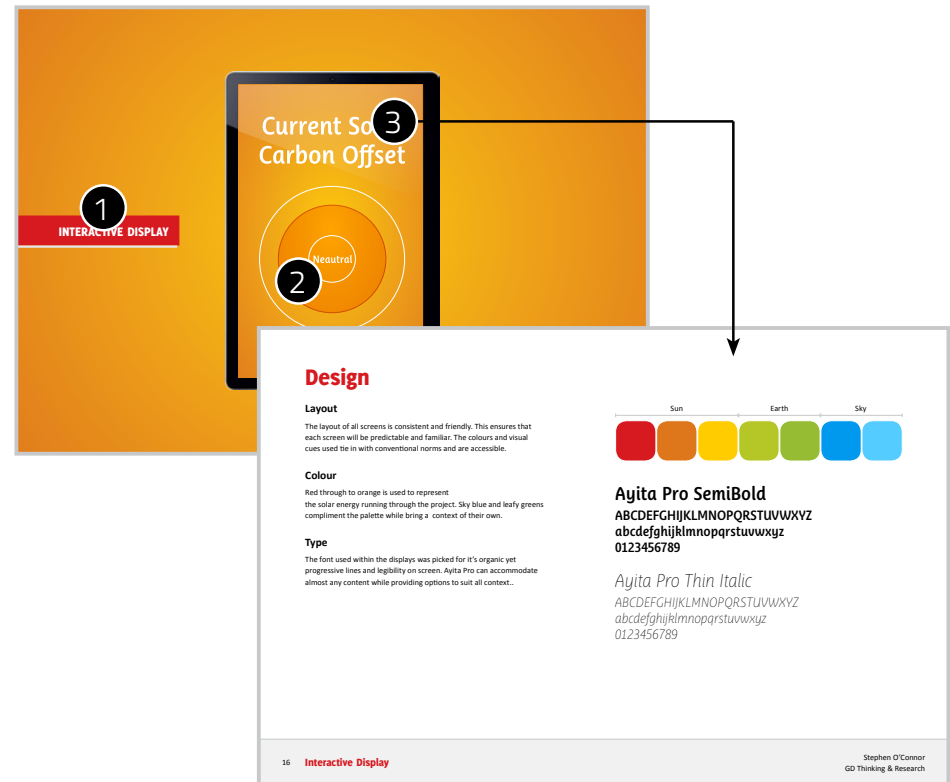
Study Guide

Clear as day

The study guide is a tool that gives clarity and design direction to the assessment items. It is to be used in correlation with the Universities Unit guide. It is an interactive PDF document that covers the following:

» **Course specific definitions**

» **Assessment overview**

» **Minimum deliverables & document spec**

» **Minimum content of each deliverable**

» **Marking criteria**

» **Submission requirements**

» **Inspiration imagery and additional resources**

» **Student learning contract**

Resources & Tools

Checklists and stuff

To remove all reasonability and ambiguity from the marking process, we outline the exact marking process as agreed as a faculty. The guide includes:

» **Production checklists**

» **Printing preparation checklist**

» **Stock photo resource links**

» **Additional content which can be referred to**

Many questions and problems can be fixed with this resource guide by their side.

Moodle snippets

One stop information

With the simple addition of a moodle HTML snippet we can have a consistent moodle header which incorporates links to centralised course and unit documents. This means we only need to make an amendment once and not in multiple places. It also brings attention to information we want the students to know.

Schedule

Each moodle site should contain a clear schedule from semester day 1. This schedule contains per week:

» **Content of any lecture of tutorial**

» **Post class notes of interest**

» **Any assessment submission deadline**

Moodle site consistency

A familiar experience

Treating our moodle sites with the same conventions ensures that students will be able to identify, find and digest unit content each time, every-time! With the stipulation of minimum best case usage and follow through from all involved we can achieve this easy feat.

Everything they need

From day 1 each moodle site should contain all of the information a student will require to execute their assessment confidently. The only difference will be unique weekly content and the theory/practice they require to complete the assessment tasks set.

This information transparency ensures that the teacher and students are on the same page and minimal room for argument is allowed. Any additions or changes are to be made through a consistent process also,.

UCGD TV

Promoting student opportunities

Through the ITalls grant we purchased a large screen TV with a card reader to broadcast student opportunities, inspirational student work, studio Friday times and major events in graphic design units.

Contact

UCGD TV offers the students another point of contact for information about the course and functions as a dynamic bulletin board. The ease of changing presentation materials means that this resource is constantly updated to reflect a vibrant studio culture.

Laser print offer for all UCGD students
$5 gets you A4 & A3 laser prints until the end of 2011
See Kylie for more details!

The top 5 characteristics employers are looking for in a design graduate:
1. Keen work ethic
2. Understanding of design process
3. Ability to adjust to feedback
4. High pace output
5. Respect

UC GD

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AND ENJOY EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO: MASTER CLASSES | INDUSTRY MEET & GREETS
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Promoting community

Healthy Competition

Promoting some healthy competition between students of the same year level and as a whole can bring some much needed engagement to the cohort. Possible low cost sponsored prizes would mean greater incentive for students to produce good work.

A mid year design tournament with entrants from each year grade with prizes would be a fun and engaging event for all. This can feedback into marketing materials and promote a sense of teamwork amongst the years.

A design trade-show which is specifically for 2nd year students could run around the same time as the 3rd year exhibition. Both years with incentive to promote.

Year level identity

Developing a course with each year split up with emphasized skill levels could help show the difference and growth of each year level. Unit materials, shirts or other materials could help give these years a better identity. All student opportunities and case studies are advertised on our "UGCD TV" large screen in the studio.

Studio Friday

Studio culture

Students will get to know they value of coming to the studio in groups to work on their assessment and other projects together with consultation from staff.

Teacher presence

By emphasizing the value of coming in on a Friday to have access to teachers thorough out the day, students will understand that they have an outlet to gain feedback and work on concepts. This can double as dynamic consultation time. All student opportunities and studio Friday themes are advertised on our 'UGCD TV" large screen in the studio.

NOW OPEN FRIDAY

Consistant use of UCGD branding

Many authors, one masterpiece

By using the same lecture and unit templates we create a consistent experience for all students and develop a brand which students will recognise at a glance. This will also promote a unified team resource pool where no one 'owns' course content. Unit templates are all digital interactive resources for the students which encapsulates important course information and is highly portable.

"Apparently there is nothing that cannot happen today"

– Mark Twain