

**ethics and sustainability
in design education**

may 15–16, 2010_toledo, ohio

sun. roundtable notes: *AIGA Standards of Teaching*

R1

**louise sandhaus_ what are your current
assumptions about design ethics?**

What are your current assumptions about design ethics?
Are they important to you, your peers, your students?

Empathy Building, we stop at the observation of the research,
next step we need to walk in the shoes of anthropology
colleagues, and analysis after observation.

We need to be aware and own the consequences. Problem is
many have been trained Swiss methodological, where we let our
clients tell us what we need to design. We need to draw the line.
Being able to put yourself behind others who don't agree. I'm a
designer at X firm and really don't have any power here. Respect
instead of empathy until a few weeks ago.

Do we use our gift for something we don't support? Real
responsibility, build a healthy living environment and the right
choices will surround you.

"It has to start here, if we can do it, people will gravitate to us,
not sell out the first dollar bill."

To whom are we responsible to and why? To my client?
Responsibilities that don't affect me but a kid making sneakers
in a sweat shop. Competing visions.

Certification, where you can punish those for not being ethical.
The question is whether I choose to take the job. Comment on
the students and how they deal with ethics, My school has ethics
really big in their learning. It's very political and about beliefs.
Conservative students fighting environmental beliefs such as
sustainability.

How do you teach students with different ethical backgrounds?
Teach them how to rationale through problems. Be careful
not to teach them your beliefs through your teachings. Inquiry
lecture—learned to questions. Indoctrination.

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**nathan shedroff_ what ethical dilemmas
have you faced in the design classroom?**

What ethical dilemmas have you faced in the design classroom?
How did you handle them? Where did you turn for guidance?
What do you think of it?

Some seem too wordy; they aren't as tailored to our profession.
Don't be prescriptive (maybe more general). Don't punish
people—we are different from architects. Maybe wording for
using bad/harmful imagery.

If you can't be punitive—then how would we uphold it? Would we
refuse people entry into AIGA? Whose ethics are they? How do
we come to those decisions?

People don't have same ethics—so maybe just teach them—no
upholding them.

How do we do that then?

Many times, teachers are upheld by their students.

What is considered harmful?

Maybe it's just considered a base to start the conversation of
ethics.

Any specific ethical dilemmas you are facing?

Often difficult to talk about AIDS awareness without discussing
condoms—was a problem because of religions' meanings/
concerns. Pro bono—how do we determine that? Which groups
should we be working for? Maybe we look at the organizations
before we to work for them. Nonprofits don't necessarily mean
charities. Some students don't want to work pro bono or for a
nonprofit.

Is it ethical to require a student to take a course (design for the
non-profits) that he/she doesn't believe in?

Tell them may actually be better for us as designers because we
aren't working for pay—so we have more creative license.

How do we present these “values” without the students feeling
like we are preaching to them?

We have to decide if we want to create a more socially conscious
field. Where do we want our field to be in the future? How do we
want to raise these designers? Let them decide for themselves.

They are at your school—you present it to them and then
allow them to make their own decisions. If you have assigned
something that is personally offensive—then they have to make
the decision about how they will handle it.

General thoughts: Maybe we start looking at other ethical boards
to use as a baseline. Is there a pledge that we pick 3 or 4 things
we can all agree on and then use the other issues as guidelines?
One person thinks thoroughness is good, but maybe more
targeted towards more disciplines (organize the content better).

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**paul nini_ are you currently teaching
ethics in the design classroom?**

No one is immune to “cranking it out”

The key/goal is to become smarter and faster and really consider every decision and why you’re making it.

Are designers ready to step into a leadership role?

As the definition of designer shifts and the world/society/cultures of the world change, can designers step up to become leaders?

Christine mentions concern over doing meaningful/important work without seeming arrogant or preachy.

Designers are no longer in the artifact business, but in the consequences business.

The “move it here” problem comes from trust issues. Open a conversation to collaboration. Being told to do something is symptomatic of a lack of trust between client and designer. Design with show evidence of process, no matter what and if the process begins with a “toxic” relationship, it will be evident.

Design success is often based on healthy client/designer relationships.

“I prefer we don’t go in that direction, again.”

“How do you perceive me, council or vender?”

Designers have an opportunity to become leaders. The leaders of now (who we consider leaders anyway) haven’t necessarily done all they can do.

“I design opportunity.”

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R4

barbara sudick_

how can the SOT be implemented?

History of Development, lack of standards for design educators, needs to be in practice.

Awareness of professional standards.

- What is design educators responsibility to students, environment, public, etc.?

Guidelines for ethical decisions. Intent: outline responsibility of a community.

Development: sustainability, models, code of ethics. Dynamic document, community drafted. Understand own actions compared to community. Contests not structured for growth.

- How will these standards be implemented? How do we raise awareness of SOT? How can we bring the standards to light? How can we inspire students to use SOT? How will they be monitored, regulated? Do we want to report those who go against SOT? What's the process for updating?

Incentives for motivation of implementation:

Standards being sent each week; daily update. Create focus. See it in action. Create first person to focus: "I am...." Some are inherited, some have personal commitment. Have effects in tenure process. Institution: supports SOT, administrations. Create standards for AIGA members. Incentive, having marker online at AIGA. Account for all members.

Are they policeable? Become a resource, expertise. Narrow down fields of interest. Professional practice, most basically covered. Contest, spec work not incentive. Legitimate document. Pro bono and spec work defined by process. Search for correct fit. Honorarium. Filtered through student chapter.

- Does it meet curriculum?

Client contact necessary to legitimize? Where would we like to see standards reach? Growth in implementation. Standard of expectations, definition of roles. Administration adoption. Compare to eco label. Money versus Recognition. Submission of project...did I meet standards? "This project meets AIGA SOT." Institutional Award, college recognition. Toronto district school board.

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**laura chessin_ *How can we educate
design educators about the SOT?***

How do you get the word out? Code of Ethics

NASAD vs. NAB

Not imposing, but discussing. If they are not a member of AIGA do they have to follow these ethics? Process for discussion. More proactive in meeting more people.

How do we present the force? Even playing field. Blogs of critiques on institution. How different “ranks” treat each other. Standard language. Promotion and Tenure guidelines. Binding resolution.

Educating administrators: design research; structure—finding out what’s good/bad; facilitating; guiding the dean and then let them go.

Outstanding at the numbers of design educator members. Perception issues—not sure what it is all about; changing term to scholarship for higher education. Common language to be cohesive. How we receive other work. Bottom up development. Students have a voice.

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**mike zender_ *should the SOT be more
principles-based or rules-based?***

Graduate programs don't teach how to teach. Framework/ curriculum; UC Masters/PhD department (practicum/ mentoring; grad assistantship). Training graduates how to teach. Compliance.

Principle space/rule space? How many students in studio class? Syllabus, outline? Grading, policies?

Zender: withdraw slip, then out; unexcused; absence rules/ BCT vs. UC; principles make more sense; standard set of rules; benefit of following rules/principles; guidance/guidelines.

Measuring principles: following through; celebrating diversity.

Principle Base/ Rule Base: how? what?

Not a form of regulatory board (from TX): board more supportive/not regulatory; how NASAD accesses situations; treating people correctly; maintaining practice; how do you determine excellence?

Licensed professionals (architects) vs. not licensed (graphic designers)

Zender: When class has 3 or more outstanding students, they produce better work vs. one with none. Set a standard across the board. Interior design—standards suck, check list style. SETA? CETA? C-TA? Requirements?

Context between all design is always different. But difference should be respected.

Student work/progress not shown in teacher evaluations but seen in students' work. Size/scope issue; resource issue. Can't be adopted by one professor. Needs to be adopted by school itself. Have faculty adopt rules.

NASAD needs to work with AIGA but AIGA shouldn't credit.

Zender: Can envision for future or pull of teaching in class room or be doing researching? Obligations at UC for research. In the future, we need to be funded at high levels and should be taken seriously. How do we tenure a graphic designer??

Help us achieve these professional goals. Treat it as an academic, not a club.

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**mara fulmer_ how can we empower design students
to uphold high standards of practice and to understand
that they have a responsibility to do so?**

Learn skills, do certain things to get a job. Find different ways to empower different students (empower = ownership); example: magazine, publication, on campus interview for positions so students feel ownership over their position.

Keeping students involved thought the end of the project; people like the idea but don't follow through. Leadership: mentoring the full scope (even the non-leasers).

Responsibility: student's choice to go to college excited and interested to be in the program; educator's job to keep them excited.

What are high-standards?

Choose to say no to clients (spec work/unethical companies/contests). Example: student doing graphics for a strip club—making ethical decisions. Example: Muslim students—resistances from employees acting on taboos—the hand shake.

Muslim culture—family structure. American students on their own at 18, but Muslims can and do go home after college. Be mindful of other cultures. International students: students don't question authority. Hierarchy in Fiji: Chief = Professor.

Empower students in a global context.

The importance of reflection: from the professor; from the internship client.

Pushing students to care about, have integrity, take ownership of work.

Fine art vs. graphic designers.

Ethics: look at the audience that is affected by your design work, responsibility to students. Ethics can differ from university to university. Public vs. Christian university.

"Discourage spec work." This is an important part of the SOT because no one should have to work for free.

"Are you currently teaching ethics?" One lady said that 50% of the projects they do are for non-profits.

Critiques: structure of the critique, more in depth than just whether it looks good or not.

It was brought up that students often lack ethics and would do whatever is necessary to make money. Example: "If you knew a company was dumping toxic chemicals in water would you do work for them?"

Are there specific resources available for students?

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**robyn waxman_ what are the emerging
ethical design issues?**

Amazed with Toledo Art Museum and Glass Pavillion...wanting to see universities.

Brains are going on overload with all of the information presented this weekend.

- What is the merging ethical future?

AIGA's professional standards into teaching standards.

- What's next? Ethical issues.

Students plagiarizing; internet feels like a free source. Fine for big projects but don't get fine for small projects. Site the source; add it to design.

- Is it original when rearranged? So many laws, research components...must site that. Copyright laws in the 70s because of Disney.

Recycle, recycle, recycle your own work (your own content)!!

No more original ideas anymore...credit to where images come from or make it/take it yourself.

Three table winners of five for books!

Speaker: Barbara Sudick

- How do we make the SOT work for us? What do we do about breaking SOT?

Bring to life...updating

What we expect of ourselves (teachers); social responsibility of designers; ethical responsibilities; What's on the rise? AIGA has no teeth: no accreditation. How much authority does AIGA have? Be accredited; only 80 people here out of 800 educators in AIGA. Can we work with NASAD?

Sustainability is an ethics issue. Students need to be aware when working on projects. Lots of wasted material on environmental standpoint. Educators are responsible to model behavior as into to assignment. Re-evaluate how products are produced—pdf form. Process work seen in a different way. Instill in students. Designer's choice to make cigarettes look cooler so more people will buy it. Design educators help guide students on their ethics and who they work for.

Unpaid internships on the rise—problem! She signs them off, but unethical. Students are too desperate. Frame it to trick students. Students turn over ideas to corporations...who owns the rights? Most people don't show students guidelines—expecting things. Get license to their ideas; required course; you can buy a course's name and teach.

Volunteering is fine—lots of free work. N.P.O. does need help. Choose one—worked 10 years and had to cut it off. If you have charity you want to give your services to, but not for competitions...limit them.

Students doing work and not getting paid: teachers need to know about it...obligated to tell kids. Faculty is caught in the middle of art director and educator. Keep business separate from teaching. Lots of overlap and people their jobs.

Register of Graphic Designers in Ontario Canada: have accreditation but no weight either. Have faith in people...they don't need to be told what to do.

This document needs to be able to change.

It's a first step. Feels like the right direction.