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Design Critique

Why spend time learning a process for analyzing and commenting on work presented during a class critique?

Because it is a skill that is present in one or more of the core areas of strength needed for communication design.

Juliette Cezzar, a noted designer and communication design professor at Parsons, identified core areas of strength for communication design to be “translation, creation, and articulation. **if taken as a sequence, translation, creation, and articulation mirror the design process itself.** Regardless of its problem or objective, design moves from research to ideation, prototyping, and presentation. Over the last ten years, this way of thinking has been adopted as a process by many non-designers to solve a wide variety of problems.”

(Cezzar, 2020)

Also, from a study of feedback practices during design critiques, Schrand and Eliason found significant benefits for students. “... **we were struck by the level of student engagement during these critiques; this is clearly an active learning approach, with student participation and opportunities for immediate feedback, dialogue, and clarification.**” (Schrand and Eliason, 2012)

Another important observation came from one design student's answer to a question regarding comfort level during a critique,

“comfort is an obscure feeling, and the level of comfort is normally indicative of how comfortable I am with my own performance or the project itself, rather than a fear of criticism. I am my own hardest critic.” (Schrand and Eliason, 2012)

subjective vs objective

Subjective

is a statement that has been colored by the character of the speaker or writer.

It often has a basis in reality, but reflects the perspective through with the speaker views reality.

It cannot be verified using concrete facts and figures.” (Kumar, 2011)

“I hate the way it looks” or “I love the way it looks”, are examples of subjective.

Objective

is a statement that is completely unbiased. It is not touched by the speaker’s previous experiences or tastes.

It is verifiable by looking up facts. (Kumar, 2011)

“The photograph adds a strong presence to the layout” is an example of objective.

description, analysis, and interpretation

(Goshen.edu, 2012)

Strength

Identifies ways in which art was of high quality and commendable, and includes why particular strengths were considered important.

Area of Improvement

Identifies what changes can be made to improve artwork and how these changes can be implemented most effectively.

Insight

Identifies what new and significant discoveries were gained from the learning process.

description, analysis, and interpretation

(Goshen.edu, 2012)

These are comments
that say what we see,
why it makes an impression,
and what it might mean

or how it makes
the viewer feel.

“I like . . .” or,
“I don’t like . . .”

is not specific and objective

Instead...simply say,

“The first thing I see is”

“This _____ stands out
for me because of the”

(size, color, brightness,

contrast, placement,

subject, etc.) .”

(Cezzar, 2020)

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