

Reflection

Making art is a long road with many possibilities. In my early days, I liked to try many different kinds of art, like 3D, video design, digital art, and traditional painting. Every time I tried something new, it was like an adventure. But recently, in my studies, I had four main projects. I made a clear choice: I decided to focus on graphic design. I wanted to get better at making posters and illustrations, which are old and difficult types of art. This was not a quick decision. It came from a strong feeling inside me. I wanted to practice my skills in a basic and useful area to become more professional. This focus also helped me to think about myself, design, and the world in a new way. This was not just about learning skills, but also about understanding myself better and changing how I think.

D - Description: What I Learned from Practice

The most important thing I learned during this time is this: design ideas and growth don't just come from big experiences like traveling. They mostly come from small things in daily life, from trying new methods, from facing failure, and from trying to work with limits. I learned this through four different projects.

First, I learned that using a system to create things is powerful. In Project 1, my group studied Conditional Design. This was a new idea for me. We did not just wait for ideas to come. We followed rules from a handbook to make our designs. We tried this design process in class and then made our own rules for other students to try. This showed me that creativity can come from a system. However, our rules were described as "very similar to a subway map". This taught me that setting good rules is important. Especially the color rule I suggested—using only red, yellow, and blue. I thought these primary colors would be easy to see, but they made the picture look boring and not harmonious. It limited our freedom to create. This helped me see the difference between theory and real work.

In Project 2, I learned that ideas can come from anywhere. Before, I believed that designers must get ideas from big things like traveling far away or visiting famous art shows. But this time, my idea came from simple graffiti on the street. This made me realize that everyday life is the best source of inspiration. The graffiti gave me an idea for a fairy-tale-like story about a little girl who saves her town from a demon. To tell this story, I chose to make a poster that looked like an old newspaper. While making it, I learned to make choices to support my main idea. For example, to create a feeling

of the past, I used a serif font instead of a modern sans-serif font. Also, to make it look like an old newspaper, I removed the bright colors from my first design drafts. This made the final poster less eye-catching, but it was better for the story. This taught me that good design serves the content, and sometimes, "less is more".

Project 3 taught me the value of failure and how to show feelings with data. I used a very personal set of data: the shape of my shoes when I took them off each day and my mood on that day. I found a pattern: when I was very happy or very sad, my shoes were messy. This discovery was a kind of learning. I tried to show four different moods—happy, content, numb, and sad—using different effects on a poster. But even though I spent a lot of time, the result was not good. I used too many layers and effects, which made the poster look "dirty" and confusing. This experience taught me that using complex skills does not always mean good design. The most important thing is to show the main idea clearly.

Finally, in Project 4, I learned about the good and bad sides of building a new world. I created a new universe with two types of alien bees: one plants stars, and the other catches them. I used a style like old Disney and the game "Cuphead" because I like that vintage-future look. I spent a lot of time on small details, like a

one-eyed bee wearing a clear hat to fit in, and how they use different tools to catch big and small stars. But I learned a hard lesson: thinking too much about small details can slow down the project. I wasted days thinking about things that were not important for the final storyboard, like if the bees had plants growing on them. This affected my time for other projects. Also, I loved my characters so much that I became anxious. I was afraid I could not draw them perfectly, so I had trouble starting to draw. In the end, the storyboard was not very complete.

In short, this journey taught me many things beyond just skills. I realized that it is okay to be imperfect and that sometimes, "done is better than perfect". I also learned to use AI translators to help with my English, so language was not a problem when I shared my design ideas. It was a good lesson that nobody is perfect.

I - Interpretation: The Deeper Meaning of My New Understanding

What I learned was not just on the surface. These ideas are changing how I think and work as a designer.

First, I changed from thinking about big stories to small stories. Getting an idea from graffiti in Project 2 changed my view on inspiration. This might mean that a designer's ability to see and

understand things is more important than where they are. Real creativity is not found far away; it is found by paying attention to everyday life. This change made me an active "meaning finder" instead of a passive "inspiration waiter". It could also mean that future design work can be more connected to normal people's lives.

Second, I understand rules and limits better now. Project 1 showed me that Conditional Design has two sides. Rules can help us think in new ways. But bad rules, like my color rule, can stop creativity. This probably means that design freedom is not about having no rules, but about using rules in a smart way. This connects to some design theories. For me, it means that in the future, I will think more carefully about any rules I set for a project.

Third, I have a new definition of failure. The poster in Project 3 was a failure in its final look, as it was messy. But for my learning, it was a success. It clearly showed my weaknesses in controlling visual layers, using effects, and composition. This could mean that failed works are not useless; they are like "diagnostic reports". They tell me exactly what I need to improve. Understanding failure this way helps me to face future problems without fear, seeing them as chances to get better.

Finally, I learned to be careful about perfectionism. My experience in Project 4 was a deep look into my own mind. My love for the world and characters I created caused anxiety and stopped me from working. This shows that perfectionism can be bad. It comes from passion, but it can prevent you from finishing your work. This may mean that a good designer needs not only ideas and skills but also good project management and emotional control. To turn a great idea into a finished product, you need discipline, planning, and a better attitude. Knowing that "done is better than perfect" is important because it shows that making improvements over time is key. A 70% finished work can be discussed and improved, but a 100% perfect idea that is only in your head has zero value.

To sum up, all these points help me see design as a complete practice. It includes methods, observation, technical skills, emotional management, and thinking. I now focus not just on making things look good, but on understanding and improving the entire creative process.

E - Evaluation: The Value of What I Learned and My Change in Thinking

This learning experience and the new ideas I got are very valuable for my personal and professional growth. They have completely changed how I approach design problems and made me a better thinker.

First, the choice to focus on graphic design was very valuable. It helped me stop trying to be good at everything but master of none. By focusing on one main area, I could study it deeply and gain solid, useful skills. This focus will be a strong foundation for my future career. This decision was important because it showed I was changing from someone who learns based on interest to someone who learns based on goals.

Second, the idea of "getting inspiration from daily life" is valuable because I can use it forever. It has freed my creativity from needing special conditions. This understanding makes me more confident and independent. I don't feel anxious anymore if I don't travel or go to exhibitions. Instead, I pay more attention to the world around me. This is a big change in my mindset, from consuming inspiration to producing inspiration. This ability will be extremely useful in my future career because my source of ideas will never run out.

Third, facing and analyzing failure helps me grow faster. The dirty poster from Project 3 showed me what to improve more clearly than any successful project. It made me understand that thinking about failures teaches more than celebrating successes. This is valuable because it develops my critical thinking and problem-solving skills. I no longer avoid my weaknesses; I look for them and use them as opportunities to get better. This "growth mindset" will change how I handle all future challenges.

Lastly, understanding the danger of perfectionism and learning that done is important has made me more productive. The anxiety and delay in Project 4 taught me that having expectations that are too high is the biggest enemy of creation. This insight helped me see that design is a process of making changes, and the first version is never perfect. Accepting this allows me to work more easily and efficiently. I will not be afraid to start something new because I know it's just the beginning. This change in thinking is very important because it affects my ability to produce work and my mental health as a designer. It is similar to the MVP idea in agile development, where you release a basic version quickly and then improve it based on feedback. I am starting to use this idea in my own design process.

Overall, these insights are valuable because they help me build a more mature and complete model for how a designer should work. My thinking is no longer just about "how to draw better," but has expanded to "how to think more effectively, work smarter, and create in a healthier way." This is a big step up in my development.

P - Plan: Using What I Learned in the Future

Based on my description, interpretation, and evaluation, I have made a clear plan for my future studies, career, and personal development. I will make sure to turn these important lessons into real actions.

In my future courses and studies, I will continue to focus on specific goals. I will choose projects that help me improve my weak skills instead of just staying in my comfort zone, like 3D modeling. For the problems I found in Project 3, I plan to study color theory, layout design, and how to use effects in Photoshop or Illustrator. I will use "done is better than perfect" as my motto. I will set clear deadlines and "good enough" goals for each project to make sure I finish my work on time.

In my future design practice, I will make looking at daily life a habit. I plan to start a visual diary or a special social media account to

post one interesting detail, color combination, or composition I find every day. This will be my continuous library of ideas. Also, when I start a new project, I will first think about conditional design: what are the main limits of this project, and how can I use them to create something unique?

Specifically, I plan to revisit and improve Project 2 and Project 4 soon. These projects have the potential to become bigger ideas, and I don't want them to be just school assignments. For the town story in Project 2, I will develop the story more and try to present it as a series of illustrations. For the "alien bees" in Project 4, I see a chance to develop it into a full brand. My plan is to first organize the world-building ideas clearly. Then, I will redraw the character designs until I am happy with them and create a more complete storyboard. In the long term, I hope to explore making it into a small game, an animated short, or a line of products. This will be a great chance for me to practice project management and turn an idea into a real product.

For my personal growth and career, I will continue to believe that "nobody is perfect". I will be more open to feedback from others, even if it's negative, because I know it helps me grow. I will keep using tools like AI to work more efficiently and focus my energy on

creative ideas. Most importantly, I will be mindful of my creative mindset. When I feel anxious because of perfectionism, I will take action, like breaking down big tasks into smaller steps or setting aside "no-pressure creative time" just to enjoy the process.

In conclusion, this experience was like a mirror, showing me my strengths and weaknesses clearly. In the future, I will carry these valuable lessons with me. I will be more focused, practical, and resilient on my design path. This journey, which started with improving my graphic design skills, has led to a deeper self-awareness and endless possibilities for the future.