CAN CONNECTING AND COLLABORATING WITH INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS THROUGH A PROJECT-BASED INITIATIVE CREATE A MEANINGFUL LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS?

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctorate of Education

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Chattanooga, Tennessee

August 2012
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ABSTRACT

The author served as facilitator of a group of graphic design college students at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC). These students embarked on a collaborative, 24-hour+, work-around-the-clock, creative blitz and used design thinking to serve the needs of Dalewood Middle School in Chattanooga. Students collaborated with industry professionals and community members through CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. Through the lens of this experiential, project-based initiative, this study explores the students’ learning and leadership experiences, created by the connection between education, industry, and community. The DATA-DATA action-research model guided this study and embraced the author’s experiences as practitioner-researcher. Students’ public blog posts and students’ public tweets were also be used throughout this study. Through reviewing the data the author discovered that the four themes of the Map4 Awesomeness—Passion, Purpose, Promise, and Pursuit— are prevalent. UTC students naturally captured the four themes throughout their public blog posts and tweets. By reviewing the students’ public blog posts and public tweets, the author was better able to understand what aspects of the initiative resonated mostly clearly with students. The author also determined that CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was a meaningful learning and leadership experience within the graphic design curriculum at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Keywords: collaboration, community, DATA-DATA, experiential learning, leadership
DEDICATION

To my husband, Shaun Inman, for lovingly supporting my efforts to **make awesomeness**.

To my parents, Alice S. Jensen and Norman L. Jensen, for always encouraging me to **do good**.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since this dissertation focuses on collaboration, connection, learning, and leadership, it is fitting that I have many people to acknowledge and to thank. I am grateful for my Dissertation Chair and Advisor Dr. Jim Tucker, not only for playing these roles, but also for believing in me and supporting me throughout the entire EdD experience. I am also grateful for my doctoral committee members, Dr. Hinsdale Bernard, Dr. Valerie Rutledge, and Dr. Mo Ahmadi, who helped me reach my goals even when this seemed impossible. Terry Morris inspired me to earn my doctorate. I thank Helen Johnson, who partnered with me to develop Take Root and CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga and also collaborated with me to achieve great things while enjoying the work. I thank Peyton Rowe who created CreateAthon onCampus, and joined me on the sleepless journey that was CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. I am grateful for my EdD Cohorts, Eleanor Cooper, Greg Laudeman, Joel Baxley, who pushed me further than I could have pushed myself. I am grateful for my students in Professional Practices in Graphic Design throughout the years, but especially those enrolled in the course in the spring 2011 semester: Kayla Brown, Larry Buffaloboy, Lindsey Higgins, Dustin Hysinger, Kelsey Emerson, Summer Leinart, Elena Nikolaeva, Dawn Pfeiffer, Jillian Savage, Robin Seaman, Amanda Sprague, Taylor Wade, Mathew White, Stephanie Whiting, Laura Helen Winn, and Ashley Worley. They were an incredibly dedicated team of students.
I also thank the industry professionals and community members who participated and graciously gave their time and lent their experience to CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. I am grateful for the Head of the Department of Art at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Matt Greenwell, who supported our students and me in our efforts to connect with the community. I thank Dr. David Rausch who helped me to answer challenging questions, and Becca McCashin who made sure that I was also on task and did so with a smile. I am grateful for Dr. Beth Dodd stepped up to help me to achieve my goals. I thank Caleb Ludwick and Aarron Walter for being a part of my Individualized Learning and Leadership Plan committee and for helping me to save my sanity. I am grateful for Kelly Rand, Stephanie Tate, Juanita Tumelaire, and Alissa Jones, who have helped me to find my way into the light, and I thank Michelle Richards, for being the greatest quasi-kid and for making studying fun.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIGA, American Institute of Graphic Arts
AVA, The Association for Visual Art
FAC, Fine Arts Center
UTC, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
WVS, Williams Visual Solutions
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

DATA-DATA: DESCRIBE

“What is my experience with my practice in the situation in which I practice?”
(Peters, 2009, p. 153)

This study uses the Peters’ DATA-DATA action research model which is fully described in Chapter Three. “The model has been used by over 150 individuals who have planned action research projects that span a dozen or more applied fields of practice” (Peters, 2009, p. 147).

Peters (2009) states the importance of including rich personal description in a study that uses the DATA-DATA model. In qualitative research, rich description is often referred to as thick description (Merriam, 2009). When I embraced the DATA-DATA action research model, I also embraced Peters’ belief that context is not separated from theory. Therefore, in Chapter One and throughout this study, I use a narrative paradigm to frame the context of this study. “The paradigm advances the idea that good communication is good by virtue of its satisfying the requirements of narrative rationality, that it offers a reliable, trustworthy, and desirable guide to belief and action” (Fisher, 1985, p. 355). Peters’ also states, “what is usually lacking in such approaches [other action research models] is an account of the circumstances or background that helps shape the problem or need” (p. 151). Peters’ (2009) believes that theory and context exist together to create a holistic approach to action research. Because context is not separated from
theory, throughout this study I include a great deal of background information that leads to formulating the question: “What is my experience with my practice in the situation in which I practice?” (p.153). In following the DATADATA model, I make no attempt to evaluate this context. Instead, the context helps frame the experiences that informed my understanding of my practice and allowed me to better understand students’ learning and leadership experiences when they were collaborating with industry professionals and community members. This study includes relevant rich descriptions of both personal and professional contexts that informed my decision to pursue this realm of research. My history—what lead me to make the decisions that I made throughout this study—started when I was a child. At age four, I wore my Wonder Woman Underoos around my house, my grandparents’ house, our neighbor’s house, and even around the yard. I wanted to be a superhero when I grew up. I was crushed to learn that there is no school for superheroes—no place to earn a degree in how to save the world from looming evil. Instead, I—like everyone else—was destined to go to ordinary school to focus on ABCs and 123s. Even still, I want to save the world. (“Go Forth and Make Awesomeness,” 2010)

When I was four-years-old I did not just wear my Wonder Woman Underoos—children’s underwear that looked like a superhero uniform—and imagine that I was saving the world all by myself. Instead, I strived to save the world with my friend, Thomas. Thomas and I were superheroes together. We were a team. We worked together to save the world in our own four-year-old kind of ways.

One summer day, we saved a slug that had made its way onto the hot pavement driveway. The slug could not find a way back to safety—aka the yard. Our challenge: work together to figure out how to relocate the slug without hurting it. We started on our superhero adventure
together. We fashioned a contraption out of sticks and fresh leaves. Together we were able to bring the slug to safety and continue onto our next superhero adventure. As Tomasello (2009) states in Why We Cooperate, “even young children already have some sense of shared intentionality, that is to say, that they are part of some larger ‘we’ intentionality” (p. 39).

On a regular basis, we witness these types of collaborative moments in small children—before they are old enough to attend school. In the American school system, children are taught to sit in their individual desks and work on their individual work. Year after year, children are often taught that collaboration is cheating. “Schools currently are still training autonomous problem solvers, while as students enter the workplace they are increasingly being asked to work in teams, drawing on different sets of expertise, and collaborating to solve problems” (Jenkins, 2009, “Which new skills Matter,” para. 3). This continues through their K-12 education and even through their college education. “The system tabulates learning incessantly and ranks students against one another, and the students soon divine its essence: only results matter” (Bauerlein, 2008, chap. Introduction, para. 7). Bauerlein (2008) continues by quoting Kohn,

A student who has absorbed that message may find it difficult to get swept away by the process of creating a poem or trying to build a working telescope. He may be so concerned about the results that he’s not at all that engaged in the activity that produces those results. (chap. Introduction, para. 7)

The same students then go on to earn a college degree—often a degree focused on each student as an individual and not as a student who is part of a group, a team, or a community. Then we, as a society, expect these young adults who have for the past seventeen years been in school environments that celebrate the individual, to be able to successfully work in teams—in a collaborative environment—when they move into the working world. Then we wonder why they do not succeed in this environment. It is true, “Our schools have a doubly hard task, not just

3
improving reading, writing and arithmetic but entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity” (Robinson, 2011, Acting differently, para. 5).

In a time where standardized tests earn schools money as they “race for the top” (Archived: President Obama, U.S. Secretary of Education Duncan Announce National Competition to Advance School Reform, 2009), K-12 students are not always being taught to think critically, to communicate properly, or to work with others effectively. “Here, in brief, is why most standardized measures of learning are of little use; they do not reveal whether the student can actually make use of the classroom material—the subject matter—once she steps outside the door” (Gardner, 2007, “How to discipline”, para. 10). Since K-12 students and college students are not always being taught critical thinking, collaboration, and process management, they are unable to effectively connect with each other and with the community.

This is a missed opportunity for both learners and the community (Daniel, 1996). So, what happens when college students are given an opportunity to make meaningful connections with industry professionals and community partners? What are college students’ perceptions of experiential learning? How does connecting with industry professionals and community members influence learning and leadership?

My Practice

When explaining the first phase in the DATA-DATA action research method, Describe, Peters’ (2009) states:

Engagement in the earliest phases of DATA-1 should lead to the practitioner achieving a clarification and improved understanding of his or her practice, particularly the aspects of practice most closely associated with his or her
motivation for acting in the first place. A rich description and analysis of the situation and context of particular aspects of practice should lead to the specification of one or more practical questions that prompt the formulation of an approach thought to be capable of answering the practical questions. (p. 152)

Peters’ continues:

In the Describe phase, the practitioner identifies the details of the situation or context in which his or her practice occurs. The essential question to be asked in this phase is a What? question; i.e., ‘What is my experience with my practice in the situation in which I practice?’ No attempt is made to judge the experience or the situation or to reason why either exists in its current form. (p. 153)

Throughout Chapter One, I delve into specific contexts that inform my practice. In some ways, my aspirations are similar to those of my four-year old self: I want to help save the world. Grant it, my idea of saving the world has matured over time. I am fully aware that I cannot save the entire world from all looming dangers, however, I can take action to help people and to support my community. The perception that I can help others through connection and collaboration is at the core of my practice. The “perceived need to act” (Peters, 2009, p. 152), is how the DATA-DATA action research model begins. A perceived need to act is also how many comic book stories begin. Throughout this study, I follow the DATA-DATA action research model and at the same time I keep the words from the Wonder Woman comic book #62 in mind:

A new journey to be started. A new promise to be fulfilled. A new page to be written. Go forth unto this waiting world with pen in hand, all you young scribes, the open book awaits. Be creative. Be adventurous. Be original. (Q, 2007, para. 15)

**Background**

I am thirty-three years old. The desktop image on my laptop computer is a vintage Wonder Women graphic—a more office-appropriate reminder for me to face everyday with the intentions of a superhero. Today, if you were to “Google” me you would not find any images of
me in my Wonder Women Underoos. My parents were good enough not to take photos of me in my underwear. Instead, you would most likely find a version of my bio similar to the following,

Leslie Jensen-Inman, assistant professor at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, acts on her passion to improve web education through initiatives such as Teach the Web, the Open Web Education Alliance, the WE Rock Summit and Tour, and InterACT. Leslie is co-author and creative director of the book InterACT with Web Standards: A holistic approach to Web design. (“Fronteers 2011 speakers,” n.d., para. 16)

My background is varied; I have worked in many different realms of the design world. After working on Warner Bros. film *The Invasion*, in 2006 I was given the opportunity to work on additional films; but after working on the film, I found myself wanting more. I had proven to myself that I could do it. “It” was being successful in graphic design. “It” was being able to excel at an intense job, with intense hours, and intense creative output. I could be on call 24-hours a day. I could work with a 102-degree fever. I could whip out graphics within fifteen minutes and get them onto set within thirty minutes. I could do “it.” However, I found myself asking myself: do I want to do “it”? What I realized was that the “it” that I really wanted was to connect with people. I could do that through graphic design for films, right? Sure, of course. Major motion pictures connect with millions of people. OK, check. I can connect. Let’s do another film, Leslie.

In that moment, in the conversation with myself, my heart sank a bit and I dug a little deeper. I realized that I did not just want to connect with people but I wanted to connect with people in meaningful ways. Not only did I just want to connect with people in meaningful ways but also I wanted to give back to the community. I wanted to let other people know that they could do “it.” Whatever their “it” was. I wanted to embrace a new “it.” However, I still wanted to save the world.
Opportunities

In 2007, my husband and I moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee. We intended to continue to both have our own creative businesses. What we did not anticipate was me being asked to interview for a three-year lecture position at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC). The position was funded by two local foundations, with the expectation that the person who filled this position would help the Department of Art increase its course offerings in web media. There was also an expectation that the person who fulfilled this role would serve as a link between UTC’s Department of Art and the Chattanooga community. I interviewed for the position and was offered and accepted the job. After the first year of being a lecturer, my position was upgraded to full-time tenure track. At the end of the spring 2012 semester, I will have served the Department of Art at UTC for five years.

Being an assistant professor has allowed me the opportunity to help future creatives (See Appendix A) hone their craft. I have developed opportunities to connect academia, industry, and community; opportunities like going on visits to professional places of business and bringing professionals to talk to and work with students (See Appendix A).

Design students are makers. When designers “build, we do more than create content. Thanks to new technologies, we also create context by building within a particular environment, often providing links or creating connections and juxtapositions to give meaning to the content” (Thomas & Brown, 2011, “Making,” para.2). Recently, I was quoted as saying, “I do my best to have the students connect with the community so they don’t want to leave here [Chattanooga]” (Morrison, 2011). Because I truly believe that:
If it were possible to define generally the mission of education, it could be said that its fundamental is to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, [creative,] and economic life. (Jenkins, 2009, p. 1)

My goal has always been to instill a sense of community within the classroom and beyond the classroom.

**Chattanooga, Tennessee**

*About Chattanooga: Facts and Perceptions*

Chattanooga is a mid-sized city in Hamilton County, located in southeast Tennessee. In 2010, there were almost 167,700 residents. This was a 7.8% increase from the recorded population in 2000. (Chattanooga QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau, n.d.). The Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce website leads to many articles that positively highlight Chattanooga. These articles include titles like: *Communications Technology*’s, *Chattanooga Rocks When it Comes to Broadband; Where to Retire* magazine’s, *Low-Cost Living in Chattanooga, TN; and, Forbes’, Cities Where Home Values Will Rise in 2011.*

Chattanooga today is a clean, green city pulsating with energy. The revitalized riverfront and downtown have pumped new life into this historic rail hub, which enjoys a scenic setting and abundant outdoor recreation in the surrounding mountains and lakes. While the city still recognizes its ‘Chattanooga Choo Choo’ fame, it’s making new tracks today. (Chattanooga makes cover, n.d.)
Indeed, today, Chattanooga is a clean city. It is a city that is full of life and full of energy. Many people ask Shaun and I why we moved to Chattanooga when we had the freedom to move anywhere in the world (as long as the anywhere had high-speed Internet access). In April 2011, Chattanooga was:

Being considered for the top spot in a list of 2011 ‘intelligent’ cities created by the Intelligent Community Forum—an economic and social development think tank that studies 21st Century growth within the global community. About 15 local leaders, including [Leslie] Jensen-Inman, talked Monday with John Jung, a co-founder of the Intelligent Community Forum, about why Chattanooga should be number one. The round table discussion was part of two and a half day assessment during the application process to be the top Intelligent Community. (“Leaders pitch,” 2011)

When it was my turn to share about myself and my husband’s and my decision to move to Chattanooga, I told the group how Shaun and I visited Chattanooga in 2005 so he could speak at a web design conference. I continued, “My ideas of Chattanooga were from when I was young and I’d gone to Rock City and there were gnomes that were scary and pollution” (Leaders pitch, 2011). When Shaun and I visited Chattanooga, “We were living in Baltimore at the time and we just decided that we wanted a lifestyle change” I continued, “we wanted to be a part of Chattanooga because we realized there was potential. You just feel like you could come here and make a difference and do good and be a part of something bigger than yourself (“Leaders pitch,” 2011).
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC)

About UTC: Facts and Perceptions

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is a metropolitan university located in Chattanooga, Tennessee. As of 2011, the average annual cost of on-campus attendance for undergraduate students attending UTC was $17,938, the student to faculty ratio was 22:1, and the total enrollment of all students was 10,526. The student population was composed mostly of white non-Hispanics (77.9%) and black non-Hispanics (14.8%). Fifty-six percent of the students were female and forty-four percent of the students were male.

The UTC Strategic Plan 2008-2013

When I started working at UTC, I was introduced to the University’s 2008-2013 strategic plan. This plan included the following mission statement: “The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is an engaged, metropolitan university committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service, and dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of the region through strategic partnerships and community involvement” (“UTC Strategic Plan,” n.d.). This plan played an integral part in shaping the opportunities that I developed for my students. I viewed my role not only as a teacher but also as a connector.

Department of Art

Like the University, the Department of Art has a mission statement. The Department’s mission statement centers on creativity within the arts. However, even within the Department’s mission statement there is a focus on “partnership/outreach” (“Mission,” n.d.) with the community.
of Chattanooga. This section states, “As an integral extension of this core commitment, the
department strives to maintain a vital partnership/outreach effort that locates us as an essential
component of the Chattanooga arts community” ("Mission," n.d.).

**Graphic Design Major**

I teach within the Department of Art and, even more specifically I teach within the Graphic
Design concentration. This is an undergraduate program—there are no graduate level degrees
within the Department of Art. The degree that students earn when they graduate from this program
is a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Studio with a concentration of Graphic Design.

Graphic Design students are required to take a core set of general electives (See
Appendix B), a series of art foundations courses (See Appendix C), and a core set of graphic
design courses (See Appendix D). The graphic design courses that I have taught at UTC
include: Visual Literacy for Graphic Design, Typography 1, Processes and Materials for
Graphic Design, Web Media 1, Web Media 2, Graphic Design Workshop 1, Graphic Design
Workshop 2, and Professional Practices in Graphic Design. These courses are all studio
courses that meet twice each week for two hours and forty minutes at a time. Most of these
courses are junior level courses; however, Visual Literacy for Graphic Design is a
sophomore level course and Graphic Design Workshop II is a senior level course. Since the
Department Head is also my colleague in the graphic design concentration and has a part-
time teaching load to focus on administrative duties, I carry the greater part of the graphic
design curriculum. Usually, there are about 16 students enrolled in a core graphic design
course; however, the class size can be as small as ten students.
Physical Space

There are two main classrooms for the graphic design concentration. One classroom is a computer lab with 17 computers, four scanners, 17 rolling chairs, and one large stationary work- table. The other classroom is a working and lecture room with 8 rolling tables and 22 stationary chairs. There is a rolling cart with a projector and speaker that can be brought into either room. The computer lab has a white wall to project onto and the workroom has a small projector screen that the head of the department was able to attain from Surplus. Surplus is the area where used furniture, computers, and other university assets that are no longer of use in one department are gathered and sold to other university departments. The screen is broken, but it works better for projection than projecting on the white push-pin board that is permanently attached to the wall. Both rooms are used for the course, Professional Practices in Graphic Design. The rolling tables in the classroom/lecture room are fairly new to the space. This allows students to rearrange these tables as needed. During the spring 2011 semester, the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course was double-booked with another course that needed to use both classrooms for part of each class meeting. The instructor teaching the other course was teaching this course during his first year at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Because this was a new course for the instructor, I did my best to work around his classroom needs. This required much flexibility on my part and the part of my students. My students and I had to shuffle between the two rooms based on the needs of the other instructor teaching the other course. Fortunately, most of my students had personal laptops and this allowed us to move between the two rooms with greater ease.
Dynamics

During the first day of class I perform many of the necessary tasks like reviewing the course syllabus. (See Appendix E) The course syllabus is created to state the expectations I have for my students. Many years ago, I had an “aha!” moment—“the sudden achievement of insight or illumination, especially in creative thinking” (“Aha reaction”, n.d.): students should help set the expectations for each other. I realized that we should set these expectations as a group when we are able to give feedback and agree on the learning goals for the course (Laurillard, 1993). So I started incorporating an exercise in setting expectations for each class on the first meeting day of the course. I start the exercise by asking for a volunteer to write the expectations on the whiteboard or chalkboard. The volunteer takes the whiteboard marker or stick of chalk in his or her hand and I open up the discussion to the entire class. I ask the students questions like:

- What do you expect from each other?
- What is your ideal working environment?
- What do you need from your teammates when you work on group projects?
- What do you want to be held accountable for?
- What do you want to give back to your teammates?

These questions helped to start the conversation. In the spring 2011 semester, I had a class of sophomores that had never had me as their professor before. At first, they were a little shy about giving answers, but then they loosened up and started participating. My other class was a group of juniors. Many of the juniors had me as a professor before and they were not shy at all. They knew from their experience with me as their professor that we would be holding each other accountable for the expectations for the rest of the semester, so they wanted to make sure that their voices were heard. Creating this list together also creates a
shared language within the group, the tribe, because as Logan et al (2008) state, “Change the language in the tribe, and you have changed the tribe itself” (Corporate Tribes, para. 13).

Throughout this exercise, my role moves from leading discussion to moderating discussion. I make sure that the entire group (about 16 students) agrees on all the points put on the whiteboard or chalkboard. There is discussion about the wording of each point. “Great collaboration requires exchanging viewpoints, and sometimes that means constructive confrontation” (Rosen, 2009, p. 13). As Rachels and Rachels (2010) states, I have to ensure that “Each individual’s interests are equally important; no one should get special treatment” (p. 12). This helps to hold each student accountable for the goals set by the group.

At the end of the exercise everyone agrees on all the points written on the whiteboard or chalkboard. This helps set the stage for future collaboration. “Collaboration thrives on diversity of perspectives and on constructive dialogues between individuals negotiating their differences while creating their shared voice and vision” (John-Steiner, 2006, p. 6).

Once the group has agreed on all the points, I document the exercise by taking a photo of the whiteboard or chalkboard and posting it to our online classroom space. Recording and sharing the record of the information is important to help the individual student’s memories and the collective memory of the group (Straus, 2002). “Memories can actually fade and erode over time and they can be reshaped into memories of events that did not actually happen. Also, when a person remembers some event from the past, the very act of remembering reshapes the memory itself” (Wyre, 2011, p. 20).
In the past, I have found this to be a powerful exercise. It helps set the tone for the entire semester. For example, when a student is not pulling his or her own weight, one of their classmates will refer to the class expectations and will remind the student who is slacking that he or she agreed to fully contribute. The students start to hold each other accountable, thus the quality of work and the amount of collaboration increase.

These were the expectations that the junior graphic design students set for themselves for the spring 2011, Professional Practices in Graphic Design course:

- Participation/constructive critique
- Participation ideas
- Positivity
- Strive for excellence
- Passion
- “Bring it”
- Elevating each others environment
- Support not enable
- Share knowledge
- Individual research
- Make it fun
- Participate beyond classroom
- Be open for suggestions
- Honesty

“The collective is, in the most basic sense, a group constantly playing with and reimagining its own identity” (Thomas & Brown, 2011, The New Collective, para. 4). For this reason, I allow the students to revise the expectations set on the first day during any point of the semester; however, any changes require the collective’s consensus.
Professional Practices in Graphic Design Course

The Professional Practices in Graphic Design course is a junior-level graphic design course. The UTC Catalog describes it as: “Design problems specific to the concerns of professional practice. Emphasis on client work, budgeting, planning, presentation and teamwork. Work leading to significant portfolio development” (2009, para. 1).

Each year within the Professional Practices in Graphic Design Course, I set up the course so that we work with “real world” clients. When referring to the “real world” I often use quotations because students live in a real world and I do not like to belittle their sense of place in the world. As Robinson (2011) states, “Thinking of education as a preparation for something that happens later can overlook the fact that the first sixteen or eighteen years of a person’s life are not a rehearsal. Young people are living their lives now” (p. 66). However, most people define the “real world” as the professional world that exists beyond and after a student graduates from college.

Within this course, students work with professionals on real, living projects. Students work with community partners, as well. This type of experiential learning helps students to meet the University’s and the Department’s missions and goals to actively connect and engage in meaningful ways with the Chattanooga community.

I have taught this course since I started teaching at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. It is taught during the spring semester. Each year, the course turns out very differently. This is because each year there are different students with different skill-sets and different personalities. The variation also comes from having different course clients, client expectations, deliverables due, community partners connected, and resources available. The change also comes from me continuing to learn and to develop from teaching this course.
History: Past Projects

*TakeRoot (2008)*

The students enrolled in Professional Practices in Graphic Design in spring 2008 worked directly with Leadership Chattanooga, the City of Chattanooga, and vendors to create and produce a holistic branding solution for Take Root, a tree-planting initiative. Take Root and the students’ involvement continue to be featured in media outlets and as of December, 2011, $402,300 has been granted to the city to help with the initiative. The project demonstrates how a united community can create substantial and sustainable, positive change.

During the semester, I scheduled visits to multiple printing facilities. The students were able to see the printing of the Take Root project materials. Through these field trips the students were better able to understand the printing process and were able to see how the printing process works firsthand. They were able to tour facilities of various size with different types of equipment. They were able to directly interact with pressmen, the people who run the printing presses.

The Professional Practices in Graphic Design students’ Take Root project was featured as the only student work exhibited as part of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) exhibit, *Design @ Work* at the AVA Gallery. The students were responsible for mounting the artwork and writing the artist’ statement. I also arranged for UTC graphic design students to help install and deinstall the exhibit. Students learned from curators from both the Cress Gallery and AVA Gallery how to properly hang an exhibition. The deliverables for the client through the Take Root initiative were: name, tagline, logo, colors, typography, brochure, letterhead, note cards, envelopes, banners, posters, donation cards, t-shirts, and style guide.
TasteBuds (2009)

Building on the success of the 2008 Take Root project, I worked with Leadership Chattanooga to engage in a second project with a new group of local leaders on a community project. Students enrolled in the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course during spring 2009 worked with Leadership Chattanooga to create the entire TasteBuds initiative. They designed and produced the following deliverables for Leadership Chattanooga as the course client: name, tag line, logo, look and feel guide, pocket guide, banners, t-shirts, magnets, bumper-sticker, stickers, website, PowerPoint templates, and e-blasts. The students also wrote and distributed press releases and conducted media interviews. In addition, they organized and held a press conference for the public release of the TasteBuds initiative.

Through the TasteBuds initiative, the students were able to work directly with a local printer, Williams Visual Solutions (WVS). As a class, we visited WVS, met with various members of the WVS team, toured their facilities, and worked with the WVS team to create appropriate and well-produced printed pieces.

Throughout the semester, we met with the client who consisted of various Leadership Chattanooga and Crabtree Farms team members. There were eight Leadership Chattanooga team members and three major Crabtree Farms team members. We met with various team members each week to make sure that we stayed on track. Leadership Chattanooga members also met with students to share their expertise in areas such as public relations, marketing, legal issues, business, design, and development. Students were able to present their designs directly to the client.

AIGA is the professional association for design. In the spring 2010 semester, students enrolled in the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course developed all the branding and graphics for the AIGA National Leadership Conference, Engage. Students were able to work directly with local printers, Blair Digital and National Print Group, to produce graphics for the conference. Deliverables included: logo, color scheme, typeface choices, t-shirt, maps, tabletop numbering system, schedule, question card, transit card, banners, and other supporting materials. Students were also able to work directly with AIGA national’s staff and board, and the students pitched their design concepts to them. This allowed them to develop their presentation skills. Students attended the conference and helped to run the conference where more than 200 AIGA chapter board leaders representing 65 chapters were in attendance. Students were able to connect with these national design leaders in significant ways.

Professional Practices in Graphic Design Course Conclusion

The Professional Practices in Graphic Design course allows students to participate in experiential learning. These experiences help them to make meaningful connections while honing their craft. Students are able to be leaders and are also able to work with community and industry leaders towards a greater good. This study explored concepts of leadership, community, collaboration, learning, and experiential learning within the context of the Professional Practices in Graphic Design spring 2011 course.
DATA-DATA: Analyze

“Why am I experiencing my practice in this manner” (Peters, 2009, p. 153)?

Assumptions about the Practice

“Everyone leads. Leadership is an action everyone can take, not a position few can hold,” states Paul Schmitz, executive director of Americorp (Kamenetz, 2010, “Support many paths,” para. 9). Every day, there are opportunities to lead, to mentor others on leadership, to create opportunities for other people to lead, and to support other leaders. Li (2010) defines open leadership as, “having the confidence and humility to give up the need to be in control while inspiring commitment from people to accomplish goals” (“The new rules”, para. 2). I work hard to ensure that my students are afforded meaningful ways to engage in leadership—every student has opportunities to lead. I have to be the leader that Aguanno (2005) described, “someone who keeps the spotlight on the vision, who inspires the team, who promotes teamwork and collaboration, who champions the project and removes obstacles to progress” (p. 121). I have to be a leader who relinquishes control to the team and trusts team members (Aguanno, 2005).

The challenge is how to incorporate “real world” leadership opportunities into the curriculum. It is important to include such opportunities while students are still in the classroom, because today’s students are tomorrow’s leaders. Meaningful and true to professional experiences that are nurtured in the classroom today help to develop students who are better prepared to work collaboratively, think critically, and be lifelong learners tomorrow. Professionals and educators need to encourage this type of learning in the classroom in order for graduates to be the type of future employees and colleagues industry
professionals and community members wish to work with professionally. Piaget was quoted by Jervis and Tobier (1987) at the Education for democracy proceedings from the Cambridge School conference on progressive education (1987),

> The principle goal of education in the schools should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done; men and women who are creative, inventive and discoverers, who can be critical and verify, and not accept, everything they are offered. (“Education for democracy”)

Each professional has a responsibility towards the advancement of his or her field. This means that each professional has a duty to share his or her knowledge with future professionals, many of whom can be found in the classroom. College students are looking for guidance and for support from professionals—they are looking to connect with professionals. This means that by connecting with college students and sharing professional knowledge, professionals can have a positive influence on the next generation of creatives.

Social constructivism is the theory of knowledge that seems to best describe how people learn together, whether in person or online. When you engage with people, you build your own insight into what’s being discussed. Someone else’s understanding complements yours, and together you start to weave an informed interpretation. (Bingham & Conner, 2010, p. 10)

Collaboration is a simple yet powerful step—a step that each professional can take. Together industry and academia can walk a path where we support the future of our community by supporting the people that will soon join us as professionals within it.

A growing body of scholarship suggests potential benefits from these forms of participatory culture, including opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, a changed attitude toward intellectual property, the diversification of cultural expression, the development of skills valued in the modern workplace, and a more empowered conception of citizenship. (Jenkins, 2009, pt. Executive summary, para. 7)
Collaborating is what we do as creatives, often because: “Collaboration brings small sparks together to generate breakthrough innovation” (Belsky, 2011, Leveraging communal forces, para. 2). As creatives, we work with artists, copywriters, vendors, clients, and strategic partners towards accomplishing a shared goal. Thus, solely assigning individual classroom projects to university students is a disservice to the students and to the community. Although collaboration happens in the professional realm, it does not often happen within the educational realm.

...we don’t know how to collaborate {...} our schools focused (and still do focus) on teaching us content, not process. In school, we were taught what to learn—what facts and formulas to memorize—but we were rarely taught how to learn. (Straus, 2002, p. 5)

Through practical application we can provide college students with the tools and skills needed to work together effectively, instead of producing students who are not prepared for the demands of the professional world. As Rogers (1969) states, “Real curriculum integration occurs when young people confront personally meaningful questions and engage in experiences related to those questions-experiences they can integrate into their own system of meanings” (p. 162).

As creative professionals, we often work with other people on creative problem solving, yet college students do not often get this experience while they are in a school environment.

What has to be done must be learned by practice. Artisans do not detail their apprentices with theories, but set them to do practical work at an early state; thus they learn to forge by forging, to carve by carving, to paint by painting, and to dance by dancing. In schools, therefore, let the students learn to write by writing, to talk by talking, to sing by singing, and to reason by reasoning. In this way schools will become workshops humming with work, and students whose efforts prove successful will experience the truth of the proverb: ‘We give form to ourselves and to our materials at the same time.’ (Herbert, 1995, p. 21)

This is one reason that “real world,” collaborative outreach initiatives are so important and should be included in a creative curriculum. As Einstein as quoted in Carroll (2007, p. 3) wrote, “Learning is experience. Everything else is just information” and as Strong (1995) stated,
“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do” (pp. 155-156). I found there are many benefits to college students that come from experiential learning. For example, college students:

- get an idea of the various aspects of design;
- start to understand the time and resources it takes to get an actual project completed;
- get to work with business people creating professional level of work;
- hone communication skills;
- learn how to listen to a client and to create deliverables to meet the client’s needs;
- make local connections with professionals, vendors, partners, and community leaders;
- have the opportunity to work in group environments; and,
- learn leadership skills and get to put these skills into practice.

College students feel better about themselves and their contributions to society when they work on initiatives that have a positive effect within their community.

Students’ abilities to acquire organized sets of facts and skills are actually enhanced when they are connected to meaningful problem-solving activities, and when students are helped to understand why, when, and how these facts and skills are relevant. (Leonard, 1968, p. 77)

Through connecting with the community and learning by doing, students at the university level have meaningful learning experiences that lead to a deeper understanding of being. “Experiencing things enlightens us and enables us to affirm life in a profound way. Without such experiences, we are apt to maintain superficial standards and fail to win through to deeper experiential truths” (Strong, 1995, pp.155-156). Through group community engagement initiatives, college students are able (often for the first time) to understand that they can be more than who they thought they could be, and they realize that they can make a substantial positive influence on their own lives and on other people’s lives.
Concerns

I am concerned that people might view experiential learning through connecting with the community as me trying to gain personal attention. I worry about this because community-engagement initiatives often bring good media coverage. I work towards solid media coverage because one of my goals is to feature how my students, my department, and the university are helping the community through outreach initiatives. The media coverage is not for personal gain, although the coverage has highlighted what I do in a positive light. Many people “do good” to glean some benefit, even if it is just recognition that a good deed has been done or if it helps people feel better about themselves. However the act of doing good work while connecting and helping others is often its own reward. Science shows that an “Elevated vagus nerve activity {...} orients the individual to a life of greater warmth and social connection” (Keltner, 2009, p. 242). An increase in vagus nerve activity creates a change in a person that has him or her caring for others more than for himself or herself. From this we can deduce that people do gain a positive physical change from doing good for other people. In essence, we are “wired to be good” (Keltner, 2009, p. 240).

Even though doing good is not often a truly selfless act, does doing good for a selfish reason make it unethical? If so, I imagine that most people live unethical lives. I enjoy doing “‘good work’: work that is excellent, ethical and engaging” (Gardner, 2007, Respectful and ethical, para. 3). I know that other people benefit from my actions. This is what keeps me serving my core values. However, I know that I benefit from my actions as well. Whenever I help people, I help myself to feel good about my actions and myself. Does this make my actions unethical? Does this mean I should stop doing good? I do not think so. Rachels states “...that we always do what makes us feel good” and goes on to note that,
The second argument for Psychological Egoism appeals to the fact that so-called altruistic actions produce a sense of self-satisfaction in the person who performs them. Acting “unselfishly” makes people feel good about themselves, and that is the real point of it. (2010, p. 27)

On some level, I understand that in every selfless decision I make in service to someone else, I also serve myself. However, this is not my main objective. I do not go around thinking, “Wow, if I help this person do this, I am going to get this other thing in return.” Although my vagus nerve might be wired this way, my conscious intentions are not. However, I have been doing good for so long that I have come to realize that the more good that I do, the more good returns to me. So I cannot in all honesty say that my selfless acts are not selfish in some ways. I just do my best to do the good that needs to be done and to be open to the good that will eventually come my way. In this way, goodness flows through an ecosystem. I feel very comfortable being a part of this ecosystem. I often find myself acting as a servant leader and I tend to put the needs of followers before my own (Greenleaf, 1977, Spears 1995). In the past, I have been an undergraduate student who has followed my professor, my leader, and I find myself wanting to provide opportunities for my students that I did not have myself. In my role as an educator, I do not always see myself as a leader; instead, I see myself as a servant to my students and to the greater community. To serve my students and my community, I create experiential learning opportunities—opportunities where academia, industry, and community come together to serve a greater purpose. Through these opportunities, I take risks, albeit calculated risks, but risks nonetheless.

A leader ventures to say, ‘I will go; come with me!’ A leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success. A leader says, ‘I will go; follow me!’ while knowing that the path is uncertain, even dangerous. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 29)
In every connection I make and have my students make to the community, there is a risk. The more people involved with a project, the greater the chance for something to go wrong or for some misunderstanding to occur. One of the major risks associated with increasing the number of people connecting with students through an experiential, project-based initiative is the tendency to want to overorganize the group. With the increased number of people comes a perceived need for increase in organization of the people. However, through the fields of science, organization, and design, we discover a recurring theme: collaboration and engagement with others in non-traditional organizations that lack clear hierarchy and set structures create opportunities for learning, leadership, and innovation. Looking at organization through a scientific lens, Wheatley (2006) states,

> We believe that in order to maintain ourselves and protect our individual freedom, we must defend ourselves from external forces. We tend to think that isolation, secrecy, and strong boundaries are the best way to preserve individuality. But this self-organizing world teaches that boundaries not only create distinctions; they are also places for communication and exchange (see Margulis and Sagan 1986). Because system members engage in continual exchanges among themselves and with their environment, the system develops greater freedom from its environment. (p. 85)

This risk of over-organizing exists. We know it is prevalent within organizations and once we recognize this, we are able to move beyond the need to force a false sense of security and control through over-organizing. Instead, we can embrace the inherent beauty of the chaos. We can allow people working together to find their own organization. This can be a very fluid organization. There are no set leaders. There are no set followers. Instead, there are people working together towards a common goal. These people are smart and talented and find times when they are called—either internally or by their team members—to step into a leadership role. They are people who will learn that leadership is often about letting others lead. In these ways,
they will be an essential part of a leaderless organization. Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) researched “leaderless organizations” and found that, “…in many arenas, a lack of traditional leadership is giving rise to powerful groups that are turning industry and society upside down” (Introduction, para. 10). Neumeier (2009) views organizations through the eyes of a designer and states, “Designful leaders are adrenalized by the ambiguity and uncertainty that come with constant change. They’re driven to CREATE [sic] wealth instead of merely unlocking it. And they’re willing to trade the false security of best practices for the insecurity of new practices” (Designing the way forward, para. 13). However, even within leaderless organizations, there is still leadership. The style of leadership that might prove to help strengthen the relationships between academia, industry, and community is servant leadership. As Whetstone (2002) wrote,

> The servant leader focuses on himself as a person and how he can beneficially serve others, whom he values for their dignity as persons, helping them to exercise freely their personal subjectivity and autonomy in a morally responsible manner. He seeks to build true community, one involving full participation and solidarity. (p. 390)

> Traditional education embraces traditional organizational and leadership structures. These structures are not well suited for leaderless or organic organizations. Instead, traditional academia is focused on hierarchy and structure. The difference between a traditional academic setting and the current state of innovative organizations increases as academia rejects change and looks inward to find stability. This is the gap that can often be found in education. By looking inward, academia becomes further removed from the realities of the state of the changing world.
Doubts

My doubts about experiential, project-based learning come in forms of questions. I find myself asking questions like:

• Will college graphic design students be excited to learn through experiential learning?

• Will we be able to pull off a project-based initiative?

• Will value be created for college graphic design students, for the community, and for myself?

• Will meaningful connections be made between academia, industry, and community?

• Will there be enough resources and support from academia, industry, and community?

• Will the people that we connect with for this experiential, project-based learning initiative find this to be an authentic and positive experience?

Interests

Within my fields, I have many interests. For this study, I was interested in knowing if connecting and collaborating with industry professionals and community partners through an experiential, project-based learning initiative created meaningful learning and leadership experiences for college students.
DATA-DATA: Theorize

“What am I going to do (about the problem or issue, or to take the particular initiative identified above)” (Peters, 2009, p. 154)?

Development of a Practical Theory

As a child, my mother taught me to plan to do at least three good deeds each day and even now, years later, I put on my invisible hero-cape looking for ways to do good. I gained a sense of responsibility for not only myself but for the world around me. I learned that random acts of kindness make a difference. Examples of random acts of kindness are:

• slowing down to allow another driver into a lane of traffic before you,
• bringing a coworker his or her favorite kind of coffee or tea,
• sharing an umbrella on a rainy day, and
• holding a door open for someone with full hands.

Doing good and being kind are partially about being aware—aware of the words we speak and the actions we take. With some thought, we can weave this type of thinking and action into our business and educational choices. We can take the idea of random acts of kindness and amplify it. With this amplification, we can be a new kind of superhero—a knowing adult who intends goodness.

Like superheroes, we create our own code of conduct to live by. Through my experience working both as an industry professional and as an educator, I have determined that there are four steps that are necessary for people to align their actions and their core values. These steps are:

• Passion
• Purpose
• Promise
• Pursuit
Together these steps create a map—a Map$^4$ Awesomeness (Jensen-Inman, 2011). Collaboration with industry professionals and community partners through an experiential, project-based learning initiative will create meaningful learning and leadership experiences for college students and provide them the opportunity to follow the Map$^4$ Awesomeness. When traveling to a new destination it is often helpful to have a map to guide us through our journey.

This is the reason I developed the Map$^4$ Awesomeness. In December 2010, I wrote an article titled Go Forth and Make Awesomeness for an online “advent calendar for geeks” (24 ways, n.d.). The summary for the article:

Leslie Jensen-Inman delves into doing good: ‘Tis the season to embrace your inner superhero, set core values, and use the web to make a positive mark on the world. Get out your Underoos and capes—we’re going on an adventure. Impress your friends with your superpowers to use the web for good. (24 Ways, n.d., para. 20-21)

Within the article, the topics that I delved into were serious, but the language was playful—intentionally playful. When considering my voice for the article, I considered my target audience—“the selected segment of a total population to whom a text, message, or product is primarily directed” (target audience, n.d.). As situational leadership theory suggests, by meeting people where they are, I am better able to reach them (situational leadership theory, n.d.). My audience for the 24 Ways article was web geeks—people on the web who wanted to gain specific knowledge but who wanted to gain this knowledge in an entertaining way. This audience was not academic and would not like to be preached to. Using fun and engaging language throughout the article was appropriate. This type of language is also appropriate with undergraduate college students. For example, at the end of each class meeting, I say to my students “go forth and make awesomeness.” This phrase has stuck with my students who often refuse to leave the classroom until I declare, “go forth and make awesomeness.”
Passion: Embrace It

“The only passions, great passions, can elevate the soul to great things”
(Diderot, n.d., para. 4).

The first step—the first P in the Map\textsuperscript{4} Awesomeness—is Passion. It is important to embrace the pure energy that we feel about a topic, a cause, an experience, and/or a person. To help determine what we are really passionate about, we can ask ourselves some simple questions that often have complicated answers. This is an exercise that we can do by ourselves, with our best friends, with our spouse, with our colleagues, and with our students. However, I suggest that we work through the questions with people whom we trust in an environment that feels safe. To determine our passion we need to honestly answer a few questions:

- What makes us the happiest?
- What excites us the most?
- What do we want to spend our energy doing?
- What do we dream about doing?

Passion is our starting point on the Map\textsuperscript{4} Awesomeness. To fully answer these questions, we need to have a brainstorming session with our team.

Like most problem-solving methods, brainstorming involves multiple steps—multiple heuristics. Brainstorming involves, first, purging or expressing out loud all the ideas that come into your head; then listing or recording them on a sheet of paper; and, at the same time, deferring evaluation, or not judging them until later. Brainstorming and other problem-solving methods then can be understood as ‘molecules’ made up of smaller ‘atoms.’ These atoms, or heuristics, can be used by themselves or recombined into many other methods. (Straus & Layton, 2002, p. 24)

Brainstorming is where we let ideas flow. It is important to give equal weight to the things each person says. We may not hear everything we thought we might hear—that is okay. Our goal is to have a brainstorming session that is free-flowing and honest. If we are working by
ourselves, the goal is to resist the urge to censor ourselves. We must just let the ideas flow. Through the brainstorming session, we consider keywords that might help embrace our passion—keywords like: exploration, creativity, fun, design, diversity, and freedom. We need to determine our Passion keywords because, “Self-acceptance is the basis for confidence and personal power. When an individual knows his starting point, he can better travel the road ahead” (Bellman & Ryan, 2009, p. 63). At this point, we take our list of Passion keywords and put it aside to focus on Purpose.

**Purpose: Define It**

“Great minds have purposes, others have wishes” (Irving, n.d., para. 1).

Purpose helps us to define and shape our energy, our passion. Purpose is the reason something exists, why something is done, or why something is made. Purpose is intention and is the harness for passion. It gives meaning to passion’s energy. Within this step we ask ourselves more questions. This time we are focusing on our Purpose. To determine our Purpose—the second P in the Map4 Awesomeness—we need to honestly answer a few questions:

- What are our priorities?
- What do we value the most?
- Who do we want to spend time with?
- Who do we dream about being?

Again, we need to just let it flow. There are no right or wrong responses. While brainstorming, we consider keywords that might help define our purpose—keywords like: learning, community, connecting, and education. Determining our purpose is important because, as Wheatley (2005) states,
We experience a deepening confidence that purpose has shaped our lives, even as it moved invisibly in us. Whether we believe that we create this meaning for ourselves in a senseless world, or that it is offered to us by a purposeful universe, it is, after all, only meaning that we seek. Nothing else is attractive; nothing else has the power to cohere an entire lifetime of activity. (p. 134)

Delving deep into ourselves to determine our purpose helps us to create intentionality—a knowing—that in-turn creates a powerful force (Senge et al., 2005). “For meaning…remains rooted in the sensory life of the body—it cannot be completely cut off from the soil of direct, perceptual experience without withering and dying” (Abram, 1996, p. 80). This powerful force becomes solidified in the third P in the Map$^4$ Awesomeness and acted on in the fourth P in the Map$^4$ Awesomeness. At this point, we put our Purpose keyword list aside so we can focus on the third P in the Map$^4$ Awesomeness—Promise.

**Promise: Foster It**

“Happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one’s values” (Rand, 2011, para. 1).

In order for us to move forward we have to make a promise, and we have to foster that promise. A promise is commitment to ourselves, to others, and to the world. To develop our promise—the third P in the Map$^4$ Awesomeness—we combine our Passion and Purpose. Remember the keywords that we considered in the first two P’s of our Map$^4$ Awesomeness? Remember those questions that we asked about our passion and our purpose? Remember those Passion keywords and Purpose keywords? It is now time to revisit them as a whole. Then we distill the answers to determine our core values.
Look at a company like Apple. In 1997, during a presentation, Steve Jobs stated Apple’s core values in a simple, yet powerful, sentence: “We believe that people with passion can change the world for the better” (R., 1997, video). Apple fan or not, those are powerful words. When creating the third P—Promise—there are no set rules: while Steve Jobs summed up Apple’s core values in one sentence, Zappos, an online shoe and apparel store, has ten core values:

- Deliver WOW Through Service
- Embrace and Drive Change
- Create Fun and A Little Weirdness
- Be Adventurous, Creative, and Open-Minded
- Pursue Growth and Learning
- Build Open and Honest Relationships With Communication
- Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit
- Do More With Less
- Be Passionate and Determined
- Be Humble (Zappos Family Core Values, n.d., para. 2)

Apple’s and Zappos’ core values—their Promise—are both valid approaches. A promise becomes a mantra. It is something that we can easily repeat to ourselves and to others. It is something we can wake up in the morning feeling proud of and can remain excited to have on our minds as we go to sleep at night. Waking up and going to sleep, we are happy that these are our core values. The more that we repeat our words, the more our thoughts become our reality.

The key about making a promise is keeping it, while the key about keeping a promise is creating a promise that supports our passion. As Brooks & Brooks (2011) put it:

Reason and emotion are not separate and opposed. Reason is nestled upon emotion and dependent upon it. Emotion assigns value to things, and reason can only make choices on the basis of those valuations. The human mind can be pragmatic because deep down it is romantic. (p. 112)

A promise is more than a goal—it is intention. “A goal is something to be achieved, often vaguely stated. An intention is a specific action taken to get to the goal.
Having and sharing our intention is powerful because it creates clarity (Senge et. al, 2005), which allows for a clearer idea of which action to take.

**Pursuit: Engage it**

“Happiness is not achieved by the conscious pursuit of happiness; it is generally the by-product of other activities” (Huxley, n.d.).

Having passion, purpose, and a promise is wonderful, but what is truly powerful is when we put our passion, purpose, and promise into action. This action is the fourth P in the Map ⁴ of Awesomeness—Pursuit. It is how we take our Passion, Purpose, and Promise and put it to work. Since we have created and shared our intention—our promise—we can choose to act in ways that reflect our values (Senge et. al, 2005). Many pursuits are collaborative and the very nature of action creates opportunities for experiential learning.

**Community**

There are many definitions for *community*.

The word *community* is derived from the Latin *cum*, meaning ‘with’ or ‘together,’ and *munus*, meaning ‘gift.’ *Communitas* carried the connotation “fellowship” or “a community of relations or feeling,” and the Latin *communis*, conveyed a sense of ‘commonness’ or ‘public, general, shared by all.’ (Community, n.d., Online Etymological Dictionary, para 1)

While a biological definition of community states that, “the organisms living in a community interact with one another, often affecting each other’s abundance, distribution, adaptation or existence” (Community, n.d., Biology-Online), community can also refer to a group
of people living in a geographical area who share a common language, culture, or traditions (Hoggett, 1997). Although “community” can be defined in a number of ways, for this study, “community” will refer to McMillan and Chavis’ (1986) four-part definition:

- Membership—“the feeling of belonging or of sharing as sense of personal relatedness.”
- Influence—“a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members.”
- Integration and fulfillment of needs—“the feeling that member’s needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group.”
- Shared emotional connection—“the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences.”

For example, as educators, our classroom becomes our community and learning “becomes a lifelong interest that is renewed and redefined on a continual basis. Furthermore, everything—and everyone—around us can be seen as resources for learning” (Thomas & Br, 2011, chap. 1, The Moral of the stories, para. 8). This type of thinking—thinking of learning as part of a community—is studied by Graves, who defines a learning community as “an inherently cooperative, cohesive and self reflective group entity whose members work […] toward common goals while respecting a variety of perspectives, values and life styles” (1992, p. 94). Harada, Lum, and Souza (2003) have also studied community-based learning. Together, they developed a chart to demonstrate the paradigm shift from a traditional learning experience to a community-based learning experience. Their chart has been recreated as Table 1 on the following page.
Table 1 Paradigm Shifts: A Comparison of Traditional and Community-based Views of Learning and Teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Community-based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students or workers are passive recipients of information.</td>
<td>Students or workers are constructors of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on isolated skills, final products.</td>
<td>Focus is on process as well as product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning is primarily an independent activity</td>
<td>Learning emphasizes social engagements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis is on acquiring bits of isolated information.</td>
<td>Emphasis is on making connections, fostering inquiry and problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplines are viewed as discrete entities.</td>
<td>Disciplines are viewed as intertwining studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum is built around textbooks, guides.</td>
<td>Curriculum evolves from real-life concerns, student questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information is largely restricted to classroom resources.</td>
<td>Information access includes global sources of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation is summative and final; it focuses on grades.</td>
<td>Evaluation includes formative assessment; it focuses on self-improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is limited, if any, time for reflection.</td>
<td>Reflection is integral to the process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The power of ten working interactively will almost invariably outstrip the power of one looking to beat out the other nine” (Davidson & Goldberg, 2009, Networked learning, para. 19).

Collaboration is a major aspect of a “real world,” group, community, engagement project. Rosen (2009) defined collaboration as: “Working together to create value while sharing virtual or physical space” [sic] (p. 8). As there becomes a “rise of the tacit workforce” and an increased need for employees to navigate “a complex set of skills such as problem solving, judgment, listening, data analysis, relationship building, and collaborating and communicating with coworkers,” there is a greater need to integrate learning opportunities for these skills within the university environment (Meister & Willyerd, 2010, p. 20).

Schools and universities are realizing that establishing collaborative work styles in the classroom not only prepares students for an evolving work environment, but also helps them learn more effectively. In a parallel paradigm shift, the focus is moving from teacher to student, from delivering knowledge to facilitating the acceptance and integration of knowledge. (Rosen, 2009, p. 85)

During classroom collaboration, the educator needs to step back from the traditional role of educator—educator as the all-knowing—and instead embrace his or her role as a facilitator of knowledge (Deiser, 2009). This new role celebrates “a more inductive, collective pedagogy that takes advantage of our era” (Davidson & Goldberg, 2009, “Pillars of institutional pedagogy,” para. 7). Siemens as quoted in DIY U: edupunks, edupreneurs, and the coming transformation of higher education (Kamenetz, 2010) states, “Given the abundance of information and given the connective and social opportunities around technology, perhaps the teacher’s role is one of multiple nodes amid an overall network” (p. 111). The challenge is that because of the Internet the world is changing quickly, but academia is slow to adjust course (Davidson & Goldberg, 2009). However, a
“...company can’t ‘will’ itself to be agile. Agility is an emergent property that appears when an organization has the right mindset, the right skills, and the ability to multiply those skills through collaboration” (Neumeier, 2009, p. 21). I worry that universities will resist the idea of change, and I am not the only person with this concern. David Wiley of Brigham Young University has stated, “If universities can’t find the will to innovate and adapt to changes in the world around them, universities will be irrelevant by 2020” (Kamenetz, 2010, p. 83). To meet the needs of changing work and social expectations, universities will need to become more comfortable with and more proactive in creating and managing collaborative ventures (Daniel, 1996).

Throughout the life of an experiential-learning, project-based initiative, college students collaborate with a number of people. College students collaborate with the educator, the client, and the community. Community collaboration can take many different forms. College students might need to go to local businesses and talk with them about getting involved with the outreach initiative. College students might also need to interact with the city council, the mayor, and other political and professional community leaders.

Many projects are enhanced when individuals of different economic, social, ethnic, and/or racial backgrounds roll up their sleeves and work together to find solutions. Studies document that the opportunity to rub shoulders with individuals from significantly different backgrounds is one of the greatest benefits of life at select undergraduate schools. (Gardner, 2007, “Multiperspectivalism”, para. 6)

College students might have to plan, attend, and participate in an event that supports the outreach initiative. For example, students might have to collaborate with vendors and partners outside of school. Students might have to go to a print shop to make sure that printing is going smoothly, visit a web design and development company to produce a website, or work with other vendors and partners to get the project completed. Collaborating with vendors and partners is a
great way to provide students with opportunities to meet local business leaders and to start to cultivate relationships with professionals. I recognize that:

...the right teacher may not be the one encountered in a classroom. The right one could be a parent, a friend or peer, or even a book. Ideally, all the influences are on the same page, but the individuals involved each have myriad beliefs affecting what is taught. (Wyre, 2010, p. 7)

It is also good for college students to be able to see the design and development process and how every company has a slightly different way of planning and executing a project. Creating these types of opportunities help college students live in a participatory culture. Jenkins (2009) defines participatory culture as one with

1. relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement
2. strong support for creating and sharing creations with others
3. some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices
4. members who believe that their contributions matter
5. members who feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least, they care what other people think about what they have created).

(Participatory culture, para. 1)

The very nature of a group project means that students will have to collaborate with each other and work together as a group. “A group is [...] not basically a collection of individuals; it is the interdependence found in all the relationships of the individuals and their environment” (Schellenberg, 1978, p. 79). Learning is elevated when individuals work together as a collaborative group (Smith & Knapp, 2011, p. 175).

According to the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, the types of skills that students need in order to succeed in the field of design are diverse.
They need not only know the latest trends in design and the latest technologies for development, but they also need to be able to lead and be able to collaborate. Collaborative projects that engage the greater community and that help college students to hone their leadership skills are the type of projects that need to be integrated into curriculum to help make the university experience relevant to today’s working environment (Jenkins, 2009). As Gardner (2007) states,

I discern two legitimate reasons for undertaking new educational practices. The first reason is that current practices are not actually working. We might think, for example, that we are educating young persons who are literate, or immersed in the arts, or capable in scientific theorizing, or tolerant of immigrants, or skilled in conflict resolution. But if evidence accrues that we are not successful in these pursuits, then we should consider altering our practices […] or our goals. The second reason is that conditions in the world are changing significantly. Consequent upon these changes, certain goals, capacities, and practices might no longer be indicated, or might even come to be seen as counterproductive. (“The old and the new,” para. 2)

Learning

“Learning from others is neither new nor revolutionary; it has just been ignored by most of our educational institutions” (Thomas & Brown, 2011, Peer-to-peer learning, para. 2).

When we look at the world through a lens of learning, it creates an exciting world. If everything and everyone are a resource for learning, that means that everything and everyone are gifts in our lives. For me, every connection that I make is purposeful. Each conversation is a contribution. Every moment is an opportunity—an opportunity to learn, to be inspired, to share, and to grow.
Experience is, for me, the highest authority. The touchstone of validity is my own experience. No other person’s ideas, and none of my own ideas, are as authentic as my experience. It is to experience that I must return again and again, to discover a closer approximation to truth as it is in the process of becoming in me. (Rogers, cited in Kirschenbaum, 1979, p. 25)

This experience for learners goes beyond the classroom. We are not confined to a traditional classroom setting to learn. The entire world is our classroom (Thomas & Brown, 2011). We have opportunities to learn at home, at the market, at work, and at school. When we look at our entire community as a place of learning, new opportunities to learn are revealed. “Learning activities will still take place in traditional ways in buildings, but suddenly, the total learning-context is as big as the community” (Tucker, 1993, p. 2). This has been a key aspect of learning since humans congregated and created communities. However, now we have even greater opportunities for learning through community. Because of technology we are able to connect with people at any point of the day or night. We are able to be members of new communities and work collaboratively in new ways. We have access to knowledge both already gathered and knowledge that we can easily gather ourselves by getting online and posting a question and being open to the responses that we receive. Since everything and everyone are opportunities for learning, the Internet provides us more diverse opportunities for learning than ever before. This also means “The ability to knit together information from disparate sources into a coherent whole is vital today” (Gardner, 2007). This is one of the challenges we—as learners—face. With everything and everyone as a resource for learning, with our ability to connect with more things and more people than ever before, and with our average life expectancy increasing, we are faced with the challenge of coalescing more information than ever before. Finding ways to take these strands of learning and weave them into larger moments of meaning is quite a challenge and quite an opportunity.
We are faced with this question from Thomas and Brown (2011, Arc of life, para. 4):

“What happens to learning when we move from the stable infrastructure of the twentieth century to the fluid infrastructure of the twenty-first century, where technology is constantly creating and responding to change?” Like many questions, its answer is not clear, yet. The clarity of time and distance might afford the clearest answer. However, it is important to pose the question and to search for the answer(s). The opportunities we have for learning are morphing.

In the future, we need a less ritualistic, more deeply internalized form of discipline. Such a disciplined individual continues to learn, but not because she has been programmed to spend two hours a night hitting the books. Rather, she continues to learn, to develop her disciplinary understanding, for two other reasons: (1) she realizes that, given the accumulation of new data, knowledge, and methods, she must become a lifelong student; (2) she has come to enjoy—indeed, she has become passionate about—the process of learning about the world. (Gardner, 2007, The other kind of discipline, para. 3)

We need to acknowledge this transformation. To gain the most from this transition we must not fear the transformation but instead we must embrace and grow with the change. “...change forces us to learn differently. If the twentieth century was about creating a sense of stability to buttress against change and then trying to adapt to it, then the twenty-first century is about embracing change, not fighting it” (Thomas & Brown, 2011, p. 43). We must be willing to make our own transformation—a transformation that will lead to more stands of learning and greater moments of meaning. We must keep asking the questions and being open to knowing that we do not know all the answers. We also need to accept that, “making knowledge stable in a changing world is an unwinnable game” (Thomas & Brown, 2011, Making change visible, para. 3).

From a very young age, I remember my father saying, “I always want to be learning. When I think I know it all, I might as well be dead, because it is the journey of learning that makes living worth while” (N. Jensen, personal communication, n.d.). This is a strand of
learning that weaves its way into nearly every moment of meaning that I craft. It is a message I share with others and it becomes interwoven into their moments of meaning. Sharing my fathers words—his insights—I share what has been sparked in me and then the information sparks something else in others. Our ideas build from others as we learn from and with others; learning is collaboration. “Participatory culture shifts the focus of literacy from individual expression to community involvement. The new literacies almost all involve social skills developed through collaboration and networking” (Jenkins, 2009, p. xiii).

*Experiential Learning*

“Schools must be a microcosm of society, giving the students life experiences that will enable them to adjust in their adult lives” (Smith & Knapp, 2011, p. 152).

The Association for Experiential Education (2007) states:

Experiential education is a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposely engage learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values. (p. 1)

“Learning through experience is a continuous process which every individual lives through and, as such, learning is an extremely complex, dynamic phenomenon” (Cope and Watts, 2000, p. 107). An important aspect of learning through experience is reflecting on the experience. As Dewey (1966) stated:

In general it can be said that things we take for granted without inquiry or reflection are just the things which determine our conscious thinking and decide our conclusions. And these habits which lie below the level of reflection are just those which have been formed in the constant give and take of relationships with others. (p. 18)
This also means that relationships with others become a vital facet of learning and creativity. “Collaboration is the secret to breakthrough creativity” (Sawyer, 2007, p. ix). As Thomas and Brown (2011) point out:

For most of the twentieth century our educational system has been built on the assumption that teaching is necessary for learning to occur. Accordingly, education has been seen as a process of transferring information from a higher authority (the teacher) down to the student. This model, however, just can’t keep up with the rapid rate of change in the twenty-first century. It’s time to shift our thinking from the old model of teaching to a new model of learning. (chap. 2, para. 1)

It is important for students to learn by doing and not just learn by being told (Schön, 1990). One of the reasons this is important is because in doing there is rarely a right answer; thus, doing requires learners to make decisions and evaluate risks (Duckworth, 2006, p. 63). These types of actions help college students learn in new ways and help college students to construct new meaning. As Itin (1999) points out:

Experiential education is a holistic philosophy, where carefully chosen experiences supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis, are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results, through actively posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, constructing meaning, and integrating previously developed knowledge. (p. 93)
CHAPTER II

PARTICIPATING IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

DATA-DATA: Act

“What specific steps would I need to take to apply my practical theory in this situation?” (Peters, 2009, p.154)

Plan of action

My plan of action was to explore whether connecting and collaborating with industry professionals and community partners through an experiential learning, project-based initiative would create a meaningful learning and leadership experiences for college students. One way I create experiential learning opportunities to improve leadership skills is through the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course. I use this course as an opportunity to meet the university’s and department’s missions, as well as the objectives of the course.

Why This Plan of Action

I learned of CreateAthon onCampus at an AIGA (the professional association for design) conference in 2008 when I presented the Take Root project as part of a panel presentation. One of the other panel presenters was educator and designer Peyton Rowe, who presented her work
on CreateAthon onCampus. We immediately connected through the work that we were doing with our undergraduate college students.

CreateAthon onCampus is a 24-hour, work-around-the-clock creative blitz during which student teams provide non-profit marketing services on a pro bono basis. Since the program’s creation in 2007, 264 volunteers have served 46 nonprofits, delivering projects valued at over $700,000 – all to help nonprofits do their jobs better. (CreateAthon OnCampus | Home, n.d., para. 1)

CreateAthon onCampus grew out of an initiative by Riggs Partners, a full-service creative marketing consultancy, who gather creative professionals once per year for 24-hours to focus on all of their pro bono work for the entire year at one time. This helps them work efficiently to provide their creative services to non-profits, who would not normally be able to afford their services. Holding the event for 24-hours helps Riggs Partners to work on all of their yearly pro bono work at one time, which also helps their paying customers understand that they will not be available for a short time but will be back to work the next week. The 24-hour CreateAthon event has had additional benefits; it has been a good media story and each year gets strong media coverage, and Riggs Partners have been able to get creatives from different companies to work together for the greater good. CreateAthon onCampus grew out of the desire of Peyton Rowe to provide college students the opportunity to work together with professionals for a greater good of the community while working on “real world” projects.

I know that previous Professional Practices in Graphic Design client projects were exactly what the UTC students and I needed when we undertook them.

Knowing is having facts, skills, and conceptual understandings we have acquired as a result of doing in the past. Taking action right now, in the present, with the knowledge, skills, and conceptions, is doing, and is the most important time because it is the present we live in. (Newell, 2003, p. 18)
My confidence in my teaching abilities and my connections within Chattanooga grew, in part, due to the previous three-years of working with professional clients and community partners through the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course. In November 2010, I officially reached out to Peyton through email to ask her about holding a CreateAthon onCampus event at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Since CreateAthon onCampus would be such a huge undertaking, I needed to make sure that I was prepared for such a large event, that the students had become accustomed to the course having a “real world” project, that I had the proper resources (experience, time, money), and that I had support from local industry and community partners. In November 2010, I determined that these requirements were met and moved forward with CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. I emailed Helen Johnson, the Co-Founder of CreateHere, to see if she would be interested in working with me on this initiative.

CreateHere is a Chattanooga, TN nonprofit; a group of residents and new recruits working for arts, economic, and cultural development in the urban core. We put creative processes to work and connect locals around pressing issues, including safety, education, jobs, and talent retention. Our projects include a leadership development fellowship, a small business planning course, a grants program for creatives, and Stand, the world’s largest community visioning effort.

What inspires our work? A belief that place-making and connectivity are the source of innovation. Chattanooga is full of people with ideas, passions, and skills bigger and more diverse than our own. We work to connect, to support, and to build. (About, n.d., CreateHere.)

Helen and I had worked together in 2008 on the Take Root Professional Practices in Graphic Design course project. She was the team leader for Leadership Chattanooga who was the client for the project. During the summer of 2010, we met and discussed the potential of us working together and bringing UTC students and CreateHere Fellows into a collaborative, project-based environment. In my email to Helen I wrote, “I hope that you’re still interested and
that we can work on this together. I think it will be a lot of fun and super rewarding.” Helen’s response, “You know it! I’m definitely in:)” (“Createathon ?,” 2011). During the fall 2010 semester I met and emailed with Peyton and Helen quite a bit about CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. Our emails used language like “We’re both so stoked!” (Jensen-Inman, “CreateAthon update,” 2011) and “this could be really cool and I’ve had some ideas about how we might reach into the community with it” (Jensen-Inman, “CreateAthon update,” 2011) and “I’m THRILLED!” (“Beginning thoughts re CreateAthon,” 2011). Through these meetings and communications Helen and I determined that we would structure CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga differently than any other CreateAthon onCampus. The CreateAthon onCampus’ that happened before on other university campuses usually had between seven and twelve clients whose students created deliverables. There were no themes to these clients except that they were all non-profit. Helen and I determined that it would be best for CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga to have a single theme, “education.” In an email that I wrote on December 1, 2010, to Peyton and sent to Helen as well, I wrote:

As part of a recent, huge community survey called STAND (http://www.chattanoogastand.com/) 26,263 Chattanooga residents determined that education is one of the top challenges we need to face as a community. There are many reasons for this (I’ll spare you the details for now). There has been a big push from many different areas within the community to focus on improving education. It's a challenge that even my students keep bringing up in class.

Helen and I believe the best way to get community involvement and support for the first CreateAthon Chattanooga is to have all of the clients be apart of improving education in Chattanooga. The clients would possibly be local schools that need a new identity or have a specific design/design thinking challenge to overcome. This will help us to get clients asap so we can plan for the quickly approaching Spring semester. This approach will also help us to get a lot of media attention, which should help support our efforts and CreateAthon in general. We are going to focus on education helping to improve education. We are excited by the potential of focusing on education—people will want to get involved because it’s such a hot topic in our community right now.
I hope that all of this sounds good to you. I know it might be a slightly different approach by focusing on one core topic but we think this is the way to make the biggest impact and splash in and for Chattanooga.

We are pooling our resources and will have mentors (See Appendix A) for the students. Helen and I plan to meet next week to keep everything moving forward.

Thoughts? (“CreateAthon awesomeness:),” 2011)

Helen followed up my email with a message for Peyton (on which she copied me) that stated,

I’ll jump in and echo Leslie’s enthusiasm. We had a tremendous conversation and both left excited about the potential of this event to energize the community on many different levels. I’m a very vocal advocate of the power that design and the creative process have to address big challenges and have high hopes for the impact of this event. CreateHere has done several events with an accelerated timeline and we have been extremely pleased with the results. The Create-A-Thon seems like another fantastic model and I’ll look forward to the planning process with both you and Leslie. (“Re: CreateAthon awesomeness:),” 2011)

Helen and I did not have to wait long for Peyton’s response, which was, “I am BEYOND excited. be-YOND. in fact, I am speechless which anyone who has talked to me for 2 minutes knows, that is QUITE an accomplishment” [sic] ((“CreateAthon awesomeness:),” 2011). Peyton continued, “I think your plan is BRILLIANT” [sic]. Then she wrote, “My vision for all variations on CreateAthon - agency, college, ad clubs, AIGA, corporate - is for groups to be empowered to find ways to adapt the model to serve local communities the best without losing the core of CreateAthon. What a phenomenal example” (“Re: CreateAthon awesomeness:),” 2011). With Peyton’s blessing and full support we were on our way to developing a different version of CreateAthon onCampus—a CreateAthon onCampus tailored for UTC and Chattanooga.

In the end, CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga would have one client—Dalewood Middle School. The decision to have one client versus several clients came about for a number of reasons; one of the reasons was because Chattanooga and Hamilton County residents expressed
Concern about the state of education within the County. In 2009, 26,263 Hamilton residents participated in Stand, “a community vision effort” (Stand | Our Story, n.d.) conducted by CreateHere. “Stand started with a four-question survey and an initial goal of collecting responses from 25,000 residents across the Chattanooga region” (Stand | Our Story, n.d.). When responding to the third question—“What challenges must be addressed?”—68.83% of Hamilton County residents who participated in the questionnaire listed education as one of the biggest challenges that the Chattanooga community faced (Results for category “public education: General,” n.d.). Participants referred to “our pittiful public educational system” [sic] and that, “the public schools are abominable and there seems to be an anti-education bent to a large majority of the population” (Raw responses in the category “Public education: General,” n.d.).

From the Stand responses, Helen and I saw the need to act within the educational sector of our community. At first, we thought we would work with four different schools within the Hamilton County School system, but after meeting with the Director of Communications for the school system and after meeting with various principals for schools within Hamilton County, we decided that it would be best to focus our efforts on one school—a school that had a principal who wanted to be involved with CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. The decision to focus on Dalewood Middle School was made. This decision would help us to concentrate our resources; this focus would also help give the media a solid piece to cover, which was important to us because we hoped that media coverage would help put a lens on the educational challenges in the greater Chattanooga area. We also hoped that introducing Dalewood Middle School to professionals, community partners, and the general public would help shift the community’s perceptions about education within Hamilton County. We hoped that this initiative would help people to see that there is hope
within the school system and that we needed to face the educational challenges, head on, together. Dalewood Middle School is located in the city of Chattanooga. We choose to work with a city school mainly because of comments from Stand that stated that residents wanted good schools and decent education for their children in all areas of Hamilton County and not just in the suburbs (Raw responses in the category “Public education: General,” n.d.). Logistically, it also made sense to work with a school in the city because the University is located within the city. Dalewood Middle School is a fifteen minute drive from The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Course Planning and Implementation

Pre-CreateAthon onCampus

The Professional Practices in Graphic Design course met on Tuesdays and Thursdays for two hours and forty minutes each class meeting. Within the course, the students and I used Basecamp (basecamphq.com), an online project management tool, to stay connected outside of regularly scheduled class time.

Participants

Seventeen students (fourteen women and three men) enrolled in an upper-class (junior level) graphic design course titled Professional Practices in Graphic Design served as participants in this study. Students were at least nineteen years old and the oldest student was forty-one years of age. All students were Caucasian. During my time at UTC in the Department of Art, the majority of graphic design majors have been Caucasian. This class
had more women than men. This has been true for this course in the past; however, this class had many more women than men compared to past classes of the course.

CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was a 15-week, semester long project focused on collaboration between students and the local creative, business, and educational communities. As a group of seventeen students and a professor, we ventured on a project for a real client who had real deadlines, deliverables, and expectations. During the 24-hour intensive CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience, 34 UTC students, and 45 professionals worked together to develop concepts for 320 Dalewood Middle School students and the faculty and staff who support the Dalewood Middle School students.

UTC students worked directly with CreateHere, the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, and the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, vendors, and partners to create and produce a holistic branding solution for Dalewood Middle School, a school that struggles with low reading levels and high-risk students. The mission of the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga “is to encourage giving and inspire action to improve lives in the Chattanooga area” (“Community Foundation Greater Chattanooga,” n.d.). The mission of the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, Inc. “is to enable African-Americans and other disadvantaged persons to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights” (“Mission and history,” n.d.). Through the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative we endeavored to meet the missions of all the organizations that were involved.
Course.

On the first day of the semester, after the whiteboard exercise, I let the students know that we had to rely on each other to produce a successful project and to gain the most from this course. I explained that we are only as strong as our weakest link, so it was in our best interest to ensure that there were no weak links. I explained that we must help each other to succeed. This seemed to resonate with the students. They seemed to support each other and tried not to allow any of their classmates to be a weak link. For example, one student was having trouble with his car. He was having to take the bus. Taking the bus was causing him to be late to class. When his classmates realized why he was late to class, they created a schedule for taking turns picking him up and driving him to class. Instead, they supported each other and worked to make sure that everyone was included and that everyone succeeded. Students learned to rely on each other and to work together as a team. It was important to make this a component of our moral responsibility from day one of the course in order for them to bond as a group.

At the beginning of the semester, while I was discussing each student’s moral responsibility to be strong team members, I was also considering my role as a leader of the class. I realize that Lao-tzu’s statement; “A wise leader is like water” is appropriate. Lao-tzu continues by stating,

Consider water: water cleanses and refreshes all creatures without distinction and without judgment; water freely and fearlessly goes deep beneath the surface of things; water is fluid and responsive; water follows the law freely. (Wren, 1995, p. 70)

Each of us has the opportunity to be like water—to reach out to our college student community, to offer them project-based learning and leadership experiences, to guide them, and to mentor them. It takes each of us moving together, helping to carry and transport our college
student community to the places they need to go. It is up to each of us to help create a place where students can fully immerse themselves in learning—to help them find the nourishment they need to help our community thrive. People say, “Universities often fail to live up to the hopes of the communities that support them” (Daniel, 1996, p. 1). This might be true; however, communities need to engage with and connect with the universities to offer authentic support and experiential learning opportunities for both students and educators.

In the classroom, I have to be like water. I do my best to support all of my students and help each to succeed. Through the past Professional Practices in Graphic Design course, I have come to understand that no matter how many meetings with our Professional Practices’ client and no matter how specifically the project is laid out, the project will change and I have to be able to respond like water would. Sometimes, I must be like a stormy ocean and repeatedly crash, powerful waves upon the group; while other times, I am still and create an area for reflection. It is my responsibility to understand what the group and individuals in the group need from me throughout the lifecycle of the project. It is also my responsibility to model how to be okay with a project when it is so fluid.

“Knowing reality means constructing systems of transformations that correspond, more or less adequately, to reality” (Piaget, 1971, p. 15). This is what the Map 4 Awesomeness achieves—it meets people where they are—it allows their reality to be the framework for their actions. “...we may say that we become ourselves through others...” (Vygotsky, 1966, p.43). In his book The designful company: how to build a culture of nonstop innovation, Neumeier (2009) wrote,
designers don’t actually ‘solve’ problems. They ‘work through’ them. They use non
logical processes that are difficult to express in words but easier to express in action.
They use models, mockups, sketches, and stories as their vocabulary. They operate in
the space between knowing and doing, prototyping new solutions that arise from their
four strengths of empathy, intuition, imagination, and idealism. (p. 50)

Through CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, Helen and I created an environment
that would be similar to a professional work environment so the designers, the students, could
work through the problems to find appropriate solutions.

During the spring 2011 Professional Practices in Graphic Design course, I assigned
students to teams; however, I chose not to assign team leaders. In the past, I had assigned team
leaders, which had worked well but at times created tension between team leaders and team
members. Through the years of the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course, I realized
that my idea of “leadership” was a bit narrow in scope. Some part of me thought that leadership
was performed by leaders. I realized that this is often not the case. Often, within the Professional
Practices in Graphic Design course, “leaders” seemed to emerge even though they were not
assigned leadership roles. In the spring 2011 Professional Practices in Graphic Design course, I
wanted to see what leadership would still exist if group leaders were not assigned but were
instead able to emerge naturally. Other reasons that I did not assign team leaders were: this group
of students was filled with leaders; I wanted to see if leadership would happen naturally; I
wanted to see if students would respond better if there was no assigned leadership.

I also realized that Rost (1995) was correct when he stated, that there are “four essential
elements” that must be included in the definition of leadership. He wrote:

1. The relationship is based on influence. If we conceive of leadership as an
influence relationship, then two things follow. It is multidirectional
because influence can go any which way, not just from the top down. It is
noncoercive because the relationship would turn into an authority, power,
or dictatorial relationship if coercive behaviors were used. Influence means using persuasion to have an impact on other people. However, persuasion must not be limited to just rational discourse.

2. Leaders and collaborators are the actors in this relationship. If leadership is what the relationship is, then both collaborators and leaders are all doing leadership. There is no such thing as followership. That is not to say that all actors in the relationship are equal in influence as such can almost never be the case. When there are multiple actors, the influence patterns of these people are inherently unequal. Obviously, some relationships will be flatter than others. All leadership relationships need not look (or be) the same.

3. Leaders and collaborators intend real changes. Intend means that the changes the leaders and collaborators promote are full. Intend means that the leaders and collaborators do not have to produce changes to do leadership, only intend them and then act on that intention. The intention is in the present, the changes are in the future. Real means that the changes are substantive and transforming. Pseudo changes do not qualify for a relationship to be called leadership.

4. The changes the leaders and collaborators intend reflect their mutual purposes. The changes must not only reflect what the leaders want but what the collaborators want. As a result, the mutual purposes become the common enterprise of the leaders and collaborators because the s are forged in a noncoercive, influence relationship. (Rost, 1995, p.139)

Originally, for the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga preparation, there was the CreateHere group and there was the UTC student team that was divided into three smaller teams. Helen and I originally thought that there would be three teams each with a “screen” sub-team and a “print” sub-team. We thought that the “screen” sub-team would work on deliverables that would be viewed on screen, for example, a website or videos. We thought that the “print” sub-team would work on deliverables that would be printed, for example, letterhead or posters. We thought that each team would have eight student members, with each sub-team having four student members. We also thought that each sub-team would have two mentors. Mentors would be industry professionals who would work with students
to help them navigate the design process. We also planned for a fourth team, a
documentation team. (See Appendix F)

What we originally planned is not what actually ended up happening. In reality, all
individuals (students, industry professionals, and community members) moved in and out of
teams and went where their skills were needed, when their skills were needed. We all worked
together, as a larger team, for a common cause—the collaboration between the groups is what
would make the project truly successful. As Deci (1996) wrote,

The competitive spirit that stimulates short-term drive among high achievers can
also lead to burn-out and resentment. In contrast, a spirit of collaboration—when
one person’s contribution (supported by others) reflects well on the entire team—
generates a connected, productive, and friendly workplace where open systems
and information sharing replace self-protective strategies. (p. 80)

Even though plans changed and the experience was fluid, participants were given an
itinerary of the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga event. This helped participants feel
secure about the process involved in this event. They were able to see that there was a sense of
organization to the event. As Straus (2002) wrote, “People become anxious in the face of too
much uncertainty. Before agreeing to collaborate, they will probably want some sense of what
they’re getting into” (p. 8). By providing an itinerary, we provided an opportunity for
participants to get a sense of the entire 24-hours. Throughout the experience, for the most part we
kept to the schedule; however we were not beholden to the schedule. We let participants know
that the itinerary was a plan of action but would be adjusted as needed. In this way, we helped
guide participants’ expectations. By setting expectations we were building loyalty from the
participants (Lublin, 2010). Participants were comfortable knowing that someone had thought
and was thinking about the organization of the event. This freed them to not worry about small
details and instead enabled them to focus on collaborative problem solving. “Effective collaborative problem solving requires that the whole group stay focused and together in the same phase” [sic] (p. 64). Because UTC students created structure and the understanding that the structure is fluid, participants were able to problem solve more effectively as a team.

Another aspect that would make the project successful was creating an opportunity for students to engage in meaningful learning and leadership. They were collaborative team that performed collaborative problem solving.

Meaningful learning engages the emotional, the feelings; it is just-in-time, authentic, and transformative, in that the learner wants to know now about something of importance at the point at which they presently are in their journey! Engaging the whole person in authentic experiences allows for a young person to not only know and do, but to be someone. (Newell, 2003, p. 17)

Students worked on many aspects of pre-CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga planning. They created a spreadsheet to help them keep track of the various planning responsibilities. These tasks (See Appendix G) included things like designing and printing name tags for all the students, industry professionals, and community members who would participate in the 24-hour creative blitz; contacting the company that services the University’s printers in make sure that the printer in the Fine Arts Center was properly cleaned and prepared for sustained, heavy use; and, developing an itinerary (See Appendix H) for the event. Students were able to experience firsthand how a 24-hour event is often a 24+ hour event. Through the planning stage, students were able to take ownership of the event. “In general, the power of collaborative action comes from inclusion, not exclusion” (Straus, 2002, p. 8). One student wrote in a blog (See Appendix A) post, “Each team, print, screen and documentation has been working together to gather and prepare our resources. When each team has reached a conclusion, we gather as a
collective group to discuss our progress” (Worley, 2011b). Even when students broke out into smaller teams, they still came back together, as a group, to share what they accomplished, what they were working on, and what their next action steps would be.

Much of what the students worked on required meeting with industry professionals and community members. This is another aspect of meaningful learning and leadership—the connection between students, industry professionals, and community members. The UTC students, the CreateHere team, and I went to visit Dalewood Middle School. It was important to do this to help gain an understanding of the school’s needs. UTC students, CreateHere members, and I visited with Dalewood Middle School pupils (See Appendix A), faculty, and staff. We also looked at the physical structure of the school. We took notes and photos of what we experienced. This would help us to consider very specific solutions for Dalewood Middle School. We were able to be present in the space in which we were going to use design thinking to help change. This was important to help us to visualize the space. It was also important for students to talk with and really listen to the people who use the spaces within Dalewood Middle School. To truly develop appropriate design solutions, the students needed to hear from the people who regularly use the space. One student wrote about the experience of the site visit and posted it on the blog,

We had the privilege of meeting the principal and art teacher. I was blown away by these two amazing people! The passion and enthusiasm they have for their students and teaching in general was palpable. It was thrilling to see in their eyes and hear in their voices the hope and dreams they have for their students. (Pfeiffer, 2011a)

Another way students connected with people outside of the classroom was by sharing their experiences with the community. “It fosters community ownership of a project as a way of instilling pride in it and maximizing the likelihood that it will be well loved, well used, and well
maintained for years afterward” (Lublin, 2010, 100). To help achieve this, Helen and I developed opportunities for UTC students to talk with local news organizations. On March 31, 2010, a reporter, Mary Barnett, visited the Professional Practices in Graphic Design class. She interviewed the entire class and me as a group. One student wrote a blog post that stated,

And then came the most interesting question I thought she asked; ‘What can you as design students do for Dale-wood Middle School?’ That struck me as an odd question at first. And then I realized that most people don’t really have a good idea of what graphic design is. (CreateathonCHA, 2011k)

The student continued in the blog post, “...we told her that we do not think we can magically make everything better overnight. Instead, we aim to do all we can to help, so as to start making things better” (CreateathonCHA, 2011k). Through statements like this, I began to understand that my students were experiencing CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga on a deeper level than just another in-class design project. Instead, this learning experience was helping them hone their communication skills by requiring them to answer challenging questions from a professional reporter. They were also seeing their roles as designers and realized that they were creating change within the community. One student posted in a blog post, “It is no longer about my needs or wants, it is all about a middle school filled with kids who have so many futures in front of them” (Savage, 2011a).

Although connecting with industry professionals and community members was an important aspect of creating a meaningful learning and leadership experience, another important aspect was creating time for students to connect with each other. For example, one day during the preparation phase for CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, I walked out of the classroom for a few minutes and left the students working together. When I returned, the students were really excited. They asked if they could pitch an idea to me. I said, “Yes.” They went on to tell
me their ideas and asked if they could create a campaign to help brand the entire CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga event. They went onto explain that they wanted to design and get t-shirts printed for them, the community members, the industry professionals, and the entire Dalewood Middle School student body, faculty, administration, and support staff. They wanted to create a positive message that would unite everyone involved with the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga event. The students described the “I CAN” Campaign to me that day. I thought it was a solid idea and gave them approval to move forward with executing their idea. They created a logotype and chose colors for the campaign. They mocked up t-shirt designs. Then they chose one t-shirt design to pitch to Helen. The final t-shirt design had a rectangle tint of the color blue where each individual could fill in what he or she could do. For example, someone could fill in the t-shirt to say “I CAN graduate”. Helen was able to secure funding to buy the t-shirts. Through this experience, I learned that sometimes it is best to leave the room and let students explore ideas on their own. As Rogers (1982) stated, “As I began to trust students… I changed from being a teacher and evaluator, to being a facilitator of learning” (p. 26).

The “I CAN” Campaign became an integral part of the entire CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience. Students would later write in a CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga 2011 summary packet:

UTC students developed the “I Can” campaign before CreateAthon, which became the driving force for all things related to the event. The campaign is born of a desire to inspire and motivate the students of Dalewood. Our goal is to show the students that they are capable of anything they set their mind to, and “they CAN” do it. The “I Can” campaign is also a phrase that UTC students used to be role models about what young people can do with their lives. The goal of “I Can” is self-empowerment and urging students to really believe in themselves and focus on the positives of life. It’s not about what you CAN’T do, it’s what you CAN do. (packet_no_cropmarks-4.pdf, p. 4, 2011)
Students were very excited to see the printed t-shirts. A couple of students picked up the t-shirts from a local t-shirt printer and brought them back to UTC. The students sorted the t-shirts by size and made sure they were packaged to be given to the different people who would be wearing them. While some students were sorting the t-shirts, one student was cutting down cardboard to put between the t-shirts so that people could write what they could do without the ink seeping through from the front of the t-shirt to the back of the t-shirt. While all of this was happening, another student was taking photos of her classmates sorting and cutting, and another student was writing and posting a blog post.

CreateAthon onCampus

After all the preparation, the day to start CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga arrived. There was much anticipation from the participants. I was so excited that it was challenging to sleep the night before. The details of the event kept racing through my mind. Did we remember the nametags? Did the t-shirts arrive at Dalewood Middle School okay? How was the pep rally going to go? The pep rally was one of the ways we worked to connect with the Dalewood Middle School community. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga students arrived at UTC at 9:00am if they were carpooling to Dalewood Middle School together. If they were not carpooling they arrived at Dalewood Middle School at 9:15am. By 9:15am, all UTC students, myself, many of the industry professionals, and community members met up in the Dalewood Middle School parking lot wearing our “I CAN” t-shirts. We all walked into the school together. One of the administrators had us line up in a single line and raise one hand to signal us all to be quiet and orderly. It was very
much like being back at middle school. It was a pleasantly nostalgic moment. It was also the last moment of quiet we had for the next 24+ hours.

In our line formation, we walked from the front lobby to the gymnasium. We were on our way to set up for the pep rally that took place between 10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. We set up video cameras, photo cameras, chairs, audio/visual equipment, and a podium. Then UTC students, industry professionals, and community members sat down on the bleachers. We positioned ourselves to be sprinkled through the bleachers. This way more Dalewood Middle School students would have opportunities to connect with their guests, us. This also afforded UTC students, industry professionals, and community members to really connect with Dalewood Middle School students. Later, UTC students would tell me that this was one of the most meaningful moments of the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga event. They were able to answer questions that the Dalewood Middle School pupils had. For example, one UTC student said that a Dalewood Middle School pupil was surprised that the UTC students called me, their professor, by my first name. The UTC student was then able to describe the culture of the Department of Art at UTC. There were small moments that were actually large learning moments like this throughout the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience. It would be impossible for me to capture all of these moments. That is one of the benefits of the UTC students being able to blog whenever they felt like it about whatever they felt like. One of the UTC students took advantage of this opportunity and wrote and posted detailed information about the kick off of the 24+ hour creative blitz aspect of the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga event.
After the pep rally/kickoff, the Dalewood Middle School pupils went back to class while UTC students, industry professionals, and community members had a large group meeting. In this meeting Helen, Peyton, and I shared how the day was scheduled and what to expect. We also rallied the group to be even more excited. We took a group photo and then divided up into smaller teams.

To work through brainstorming and concept development, each smaller team met in the space at Dalewood Middle School that related to the design work they would be creating. Then UTC students, industry professionals, and community members met in the Dalewood Middle School cafeteria to eat lunch. At 1 pm, everyone finished eating and drove to the UTC Department of Art building, the Fine Arts Center. This is where participants worked on creating design solutions to meet the needs of Dalewood Middle School.

We took over the entire two floors of the Department of Art’s space within the Fine Arts Center. One room was the computer lab. Another room was the large room with rolling tables. Another was a smaller room with static tables pushed together to create a large rectangle. One room had about six computers and a number of large tables. One room was a lecture room that was turned into a quiet rest area. Another room was a large room that was cleared out in order to be able to hold yoga and massage sessions. One of the largest rooms was the art-education room with long expanses of tables that was used as a food serving and eating station. The final room had a couch, a couple of computers, and a large rectangular table that was a secondary food station. We also used the entire lengths of the hallways, both upstairs and downstairs. The hallways had fixed pushpin boards that we were able to use as oversized mood boards. Mood boards are a collection of colors, inspiration, and design pieces.
that help define the mood of a brand. By having the oversized mood boards in an easily accessible area, a high-traffic area, participants were regularly able to regularly see what the other teams were creating. This was important to maintain brand consistency between all the pieces that were created by all the teams.

The documentation team posted hourly updates on the blog during the 24+ hours of the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga event. Sometimes the updates were written and sometimes the updates were video updates. Sometimes the updates were more serious and sometimes the updates were more fun. There are some updates that include students dancing. The updates show a wide range of the energy that was present and activities that took place during the event. The updates from the students captured the event well. Therefore, from this point forward, I will refrain from commenting on each blog post. I will add information as necessary to help explain our plan of action. For example, for the 4 pm update, the students posted a video that gave a broad summary of some of the things that they had done and some of the things that they planned to do.

At 10:30 am on the second day of CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, UTC students, industry partners, and community members walked from the Fine Arts Center to the University Center where we held a public event featuring the work that we created for Dalewood Middle School. A bus full of Dalewood Middle School pupils, teachers, and their principal came to the presentation. The presentation was also broadcasted live through the Internet so that people who could not physically join us for the presentation could still witness the presentation. Dignitaries from UTC and from the Chattanooga community also joined us for the presentation.
Post-CreateAthon onCampus

After CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was over, I was exhausted. We were all exhausted. When the presentation at the University Center concluded, the UTC students and the CreateHere team returned to the Fine Arts Center (FAC). I stayed at the University Center with Helen Johnson to talk with some of the dignitaries that attended the presentation. After Helen and I answered the dignitaries’ questions about CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, we joined the UTC students and the CreateHere team at the FAC. When we arrived, we realized that all of the cleanup had already taken place. It looked like nothing had happened over the past 24+ hours. The FAC looked cleaner then it ever did. I felt both proud and sad. My students had gone to the FAC and cleaned up without me even having to ask them to do so. We, as a group, had worked together so long on this initiative that the UTC students anticipated what I would ask and they accomplished it without me asking. I was so proud of the students but I was also sad: There was no physical evidence anywhere that this event had taken place. The mood boards had been taken down. The leftover food had been divided up and sent home with students. Most of the students and the CreateHere team had left. I had a profound sense of loss. My exhaustion took over. I went home. I laid down on my bed, fully clothed, sporting my I CAN t-shirt and I slept for 16-hours straight. I woke up and remembered all that we accomplished. Then I checked the blog and checked twitter (SeeAppendix A) to see if it was all a dream or if we had really had such an excellent CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience. The students started posting their reflections of their experiences. When I read their blog posts, I began to more fully realize that yes, they had indeed had meaningful learning and leadership experiences through this experiential, project-based initiative.
Reading the blog posts right after CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga made me realize that the experience was not just a dream. Reading them almost a year later reminds me how meaningful CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga has been for UTC students. I also remember how meaningful it has been for me. I am glad that students decided to write and post their experiences. The blog posts are an easy way to travel back to a time that profoundly changed all of us. After the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course the students were even a more tight-knit group. Almost a year later, they call each other “family.” I currently have this same group of students in a senior level design course. Last week, we talked about their futures, about preparing to enter into the professional world, and about their very hectic final semester of college. I rhetorically asked them: “What is your most valuable resource?” They responded, in unison, “Each other.” I laughed and said, “I was thinking ‘time’ but you’re right. It is each other.”
CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF STUDY

DATA-DATA: Design

“What do I wish to find out about what I plan to do” (Peters, 2009, p. 155)?
“How will I seek answers to my research questions?” (Peters, 2009, p. 155)?

The objectives of conducting this study were to demonstrate that college students’
learning experience is influenced by connecting industry, academia, and community, and that
there are four necessary steps to create meaningful experiential learning: 1. Passion 2. Purpose 3.
Promise 4. Pursuit.

Methodology

For as long as I can remember, the people who know me well have called me a
“researchaholic.” I have always been interested in why things happen and what makes things
work. I enjoy reading and learning about topics and then creating experiments to try to
understand why what I read worked (or did not work) when taken off the page and tested in
reality. However, I would often just start making and then determine how what I was making fit
into a larger picture. When I started the EdD program at The University of Tennessee at
Chattanooga, I was concerned that I would need to stop making in order to research. In my mind,
these were two sides of the same coin but I was worried that other people—like my professors—
would not see this in a similar manner. I was concerned that other people would only see value in my research if it were quantitative—if it focused on collecting and analyzing numerical data (quantitative research, n.d.). Fortunately, qualitative research methods—methods that collect and analyze data that are not numerical—are widely accepted forms of research (Lichtman, 2011).

As a designer, I am constantly creating. It is at the heart of who I am. I choose to make. I choose to do. I must be engaged in the art of creating. As a doctoral candidate, I am constantly synthesizing. I read. I reflect. I write. Yet, I still choose to do.

Through my studies within the doctoral program in Learning and Leadership at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, I discovered the action research methodology, a research method that not only celebrates action but requires action, as well. I realized that the idea of *doing as research* is not a new methodology—many researchers have been using an action research methodology for nearly seventy years. Kurt Lewin created the term “action research” in 1944 and in 1947, stating:

> The research needed for social practice can best be characterized as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice. (Lewin 1947, p. 150)

Thus Lewin believed that action research could, and should, produce change—social change. Lewin’s ideas about action research speak to my desire to create bodies of work that could live within a traditional research form like a book but would not be limited to such a traditional form of research. My exploration into action research had me traveling back and forth through time. Through my time travel, I moved from 1947 to 2007 when Stringer (2007) wrote about action research. It was encouraging to read Stringer’s (2007) thoughts on
action research. I was intrigued by the idea that by observing people in their everyday environments in their everyday lives, solutions to challenges could be discovered. Since the solutions are specific and localized, they are perfectly suited to help people find the solution that they actually need.

Traveling back in time from 2007 to 1988, I realized that Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) took Lewin’s ideas on action research a step further by writing about the importance of collaboration within action research. The idea of working together—the idea of collaboration—is an exciting aspect of action research. I find myself considering whether action research can be action research if it is not collaborative. Could I, for example, have a problem that I needed to research that did not require other participants? Could I find solutions to this fictitious problem without looking to others around me for answers? I have not been able to determine a problem in my own life that would not need some level of collaboration to fully research and create a solution.

Critical aspects of action research are the cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Blum, 1955; Susman & Evered, 1978; Kemmis & McTarggart, 1988). At some point cyclic thoughts and actions become, at the very least, futile, and at the very worst, destructive. These cycles can create a feedback loop that could last an eternity. This is where Peters’ (2009), DATA-DATA action research model helps a practitioner-researcher to find a logical conclusion to his/her research problem. Peters’ model has two parts with a total of eight phases. The first part is DATA1. DATA1 has four phases:
D = Describe: the circumstance that the practitioner wishes to better and the environment in which the practice occurs

A = Analyze: specifies a description of the assumptions around the situation and practice

T = Theorize: a practical theory to make a change in the situation and practice

A = Act: to create a plan of action to change to the situation and practice.

The second part of the DATA-DATA model is DATA2. DATA2 has four phases:

D = Design: what the practitioner-researcher wishes to learn about his or her practice

A = Analyze: the data that have been collected

T = Theorize: to determine what the analyzed data means in terms of the practitioner-researcher’s practical theory

A = Act: to reflect on what has been learned in terms of the practical theory (Peters, 2009, p. 150)

With these two parts, DATA1 and DATA2, Peters successfully merges practitioner and researcher. Peters (2009) believes that action research begins with the perceived need to take action. Peters, like Stringer (2007), believes that the need for action comes from people ingrained in the situation where the challenge exists. Both Stringer and Peters believe that this need comes directly from within the practitioner-researcher (Stringer, 2007; Peters, 2009). Peters’ DATA-DATA model allows practitioners-researchers to employ a cyclical reflective process that allows for exploration yet still provides specific focus and guidance for each phase.

Like the painter who discovers what the canvas will look like one brushstroke at a time, reflection in action combines thinking and doing, always in the moment, often under stress, while the train is still running. (Neumeier, 2009 “Knowing, making,” para. 5)
The DATA-DATA model also supports one of the main goals of action research, which is to act. Through Peters’ model, practitioners-researchers are given more than one opportunity to act and to analyze their actions. Other authors have described the action research methodology using various cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Blum, 1955; Susman & Evered, 1978; Kemmis & McTarggart, 1988). Action research often includes cycles of action (Herr, 2005).

What differentiates the DATA-DATA model from other action research models is that Peters (2009) explains each phase of the DATA-DATA action research model with enough detail to guide the practitioner-researcher and without too much detail to paralyze the practitioner-researcher. The DATA-DATA action research model is a framework that works for the way that I research by doing, and in doing I research. The model embraces a common theme in action research: Working through cycles of action to improves your own practice (Fritzpatrick et al., 2011).

Another aspect of action research that I relate to is the idea of presenting research in the first person. Herr and Anderson (2005) state that, “…action research often uses a narrative style that allows the researcher to reflect on the research process as well as the findings, which seldom can be easily formulated as propositional knowledge” (chap. 1, para. 2). First-person writing helps engage the reader and it keeps the research authentic by acknowledging that the researcher is also the practitioner. It allows the practitioner-researcher to express his or her values and helps the reader to understand that the practitioner-researcher’s values will influence the study. It also helps meet a goal of qualitative research which is to describe and understand the people involved in the research (Lichtman, 2010). This aligns with Marshall and Reason’s (1994) views on action research:
All good research is *for me, for us, and for them*: It speaks to three audiences…It is *for them* to the extent that it produces some kind of generalizable ideas and outcomes…It is *for us* to the extent that it responds to concerns for our praxis, is relevant and timely…(for) those who are struggling with problems in their field of action. It is *for me* to the extent that the process and outcomes respond directly to the individual researcher’s being-in-the-world. (pp. 112-113)

When we consider that action research has three audiences–me, us, and them–practitioners-researchers must consider representing and celebrating all three voices within their work (Lichtman, 2010). In voice, as in other aspects of action research, there is transparency. Action research places value on embracing and sharing the realities of the situation and persons being studied. Feelings, thoughts, and facts from each group–me, us, and them–are all important within action research. It is critical for each to be acknowledged and to be addressed. Throughout this study my voice as the practitioner-researcher and the UTC students voices are shared.

This study used Peters’ DATA-DATA action research model as a framework to view CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, an experiential, project-based initiative, at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC). This case study explored the UTC students’ perception of the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative and the experience created by the connection between academia, industry, and community. Throughout this study, I also delved into my experience as practitioner-researcher with the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative. The DATA-DATA model embraces that, “action research is about two things: action (what you do) and research (how you learn about and explain what you do)” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010, First principles, para. 1).
CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

DATA-DATA: Analyze

“What do the results say in response to the research questions”
(Peters, 2009, p. 155)?

Data Collection

The type of data that can be collected for action research can widely vary (Kemmis & McTarrgart, 1988). This study examined artifacts of the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative including: UTC graphic design students’ public blog posts and UTC graphic design students’ public tweets (See Appendix A).

The essential element of having the students do the explaining is not the withholding of all the teacher’s own thoughts. It is, rather, that the teacher not consider herself or himself the final arbiter of what the learner should think, not the creator of what the learner does think. The important job for the teacher is to keep trying to find out what sense the students are making.
(Duckworth, 1997, p. 133)

In Chapter Two, the students’ blog posts were used to help to explain the plan of action for CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. Now, in Chapter Four, I present and analyze a sample of these artifacts from the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative.
Tweets

After the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience, I collected tweets that use the hashtag (See Appendix A) “createathonCHA” to identify that a tweet was related to the event. I used two different online tools to capture the tweets and information relating to the tweets. These tools were Tweet Book (http://tweetbook.in) and Archivists (http://archivist.visitmix.com).

Blog Posts

The blog posts were written and posted by UTC students using a free blogging platform called Wordpress (See Appendix A and www.wordpress.org). I collected all aspects of the blog posts including the copy, the photos, the videos, and the image captions. I had the videos transcribed by an online service called FancyHands (www.fancyhands.com). I reviewed each video transcription for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Different points-of-view from different UTC graphic design students enrolled in the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course are included in the analysis. I reviewed the data and analyzed the data in relationship to the four themes for the Map^4 Awesomeness—Passion, Purpose, Promise, and Pursuit. I hoped to discover how the four themes of Passion, Purpose, Promise, and Pursuit relate to the UTC graphic design students enrolled in the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course learning and leadership experience. Through reviewing the data I discovered that the four themes of the Map^4 Awesomeness are prevalent.
UTC students naturally capture the four themes throughout their blog posts and tweets. They did not know about the Map4 Awesomeness while they were writing these. I have included excerpts from the data to help demonstrate the relationship between the four themes and the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience. To process some of the data, I used online tools that I did not personally develop. I have included these results to visually show the outcomes of the processed raw data. Below is a brief review of the four themes:

**Passion:** The pure energy that we feel about a topic, a cause, an experience, and/or a person.

**Purpose:** Reason why something exists, why something is done, or why something is made.

**Promise:** A promise is commitment to ourselves, to others, and to the world.

**Pursuit:** How we take our Passion, Purpose, and Promise and put it into action.

For me, the four themes have the following context associated with them:

**Passion:** The future of education, specifically design education.

**Purpose:** Connect academia, industry, and community.

**Promise:** Make Awesomeness. Do Good.

**Pursuit:** CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga.

*Tweets*

Originally, for this study, I proposed to include an analysis of tweets that related to the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative. However, once I delved into the tweets, I realized that they were little more than moments of cheerleading that echoed the content of the blog posts. For example, @CreateAthonUTC tweeted: “We’ve got people from @CreateHere and several
professional mentors here to work for 24 hours for Dalewood!” (CreateAthonUTC- tweets, 2011). Since this content shallowly reiterated the deep blog post content, I have not included an in depth analysis of the tweets. However, one interesting fact that I discovered from using Archivist to analyze the tweets with the hashtag “createathonCHA” was that the top five words tweeted with this hashtag were: “team”, “CHA”, “students”, “awesome”, and “UTCart” (See Figure 2). “CHA” is the abbreviation of “Chattanooga” that people commonly use when tweeting. “UTCart” is the hashtag that people use to signify that the tweet is related to “The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Department of Art”.

![Top Words](image)

Figure 1  Top Words: The top words used in tweets that used the hashtag “createathonCHA”.

Blog Posts

I used an online tool called Wordle (www.wordle.net) Figure 3 to process the words used in the blog posts and to visually show their weight in relationship to other words used in the blog posts. This process creates a word cloud, “A visual representation of the number of times each word in a transcript is used. The higher the frequency, the larger the word is printed. Word Clouds are often used to quickly visualize the content of a specific text” (“Qualitative research glossary,” n.d., para. 106).
Figure 2  Word cloud: The top words used in blog posts shown visually.

As you can see in Figure 3, the words with the most visual weight, thus the words used most often throughout the blog, are: “CreateAthon”, “school”, “made”, “difference”, and “community”. There are other words of importance like: “thinking”, “learned”, “creative”, “event”, “project”, “work”, “group”, “together”, and “accomplished”.

Theme: Passion

In their blog posts, students often referenced watching the movies *The Lottery* and *Waiting for Superman*. Both were documentary films released in 2010 that focused on the lottery system used for K-12 pupils who enter to win a chance to attend top-preforming...
charter schools and public schools in the United States. Both films featured Geoffrey Canada, who is the president and CEO of Harlem Children’s Zone, a non-profit organization that offers free support for educational efforts to children and their families in a specific area of Harlem, New York. Watching these films as a class had a profound effect on the students. One student wrote in a blog post, “after watching The Lottery and Waiting for Superman, I am much more conscious about the state of our schools” (Worley, 2011a) while another wrote, “after watching Waiting for Superman and The Lottery my understanding of education in the USA was drastically changed” (Savage, 2011a). Yet, another student wrote:

> In my own personal blog I’ve been continuously mentioning the movie Waiting For Superman and how it opened my eyes up to further working off self-determination to make changes for the better; and CreateAthon onCampus Chattanooga was filled with amazing people who all believed passionately in the same thing. (Leinart, 2011)

Watching The Lottery and Waiting for Superman helped students to understand the challenge within our educational system, a challenge we face as a nation. Watching these films also helped to motivate the students to want to work towards creating local solutions. We were fortunate to have Geoffrey Canada speak at UTC during the spring 2011 semester. The students and I went to see him present as a group. We stood in line together. We sat together. We held back tears together. We left feeling motivated to make a positive change, together. Watching these films, seeing Canada speak, and visiting Dalewood Middle School changed students motivation from external to intrinsic. For example, after these experiences, students did not ask me how this massive group project was going to be graded. Instead, they asked me how we, as a team, could make the most positive change for Dalewood Middle School. As Deci (1996) stated, “self-motivation, [sic] rather than external motivation, is at the
heart of creativity, responsibility, healthy behavior, and lasting change” (p. 9). This type of self-motivation led one student to post:

It seems that just knowing what kind of issues we face as a society, like a failing education system, and that there are things we as designers can do to try and help, is quite the motivational incentive. (CreateathonCHA, 2011b)

Self-motivation is where passion lives and grows. I could have only told students that the education system in the United States is struggling and they would have listened; however, I do not believe that would have motivated them to want to be a part of making change. Students connected with the idea that the United States’ educational system needed to be changed not only for the betterment of pupils, but also for the betterment of the society by listening and seeing pupils and their parents’ struggles with the educational system. “The story of humanity is one that rests on the never-ending creative tension between the dark pursuit of selfish short-term interests and the shining example of striving toward collective long-term goals” (Nowak 2011, p. 280). Connecting with real people helped students to move from short-term interests, such as what their grades would be for the course, to long-term collective goals that are expressed in this student’s blog post:

The UTC students and a few professionals from CreateHere visited Dalewood Middle School Thursday in preparation for this weekend’s CreateAthon onCampus. We had the privilege of meeting the principal and art teacher. I was blown away by these two amazing people! The passion and enthusiasm they have for their students and teaching in general was palpable. It was thrilling to see in their eyes and hear in their voices the hope and dreams they have for their students. (Pfeiffer, 2011a)

Another student posted, “I’m so excited about CreateAthon! I know it’s going to be great. It’s hard to believe it is coming up so soon! It has been so great to work with such passionate and motivated people” (Worley, 2011a). I found one instance where a student posted a blog post
that mentioned grades for the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course. In this post the student describes what happened between her and one of the Dalewood Middle School pupils who attended the community presentation at the end of CreateAthon onCampus:

Then the best part of it all was when she [the Dalewood Middle School pupil] stood up, unlocked her arms and handed me a painting. She said, ‘Read it.’ I did. Then she waited till I looked back up at her and she gave me a hug. That experience was greater then any grade I could receive from this project. (Wade, 2011)

When it came down to it, grades did not matter. What mattered was connecting with people and working together to make positive change.

Connecting with people played a major role in what motivated the students. As Senge et al (2005) wrote, “there’s nothing more personal than vision, yet the visions that ultimately prove transformative have nothing to do with us as individuals” (p. 131). Through the students’ blog posts there is a defining theme: the most important and most thrilling aspect of the entire semester was collaborating with other people to help Dalewood Middle School. Blog posts included statements like:

The Dalewood Middle School gym was filled with white t-shirts today, all with the message “I Can” on the front. Middle school students, college students, teachers, professors and local professionals created a sea of matching CreateAthon onCampus shirts, and a ton of energy to match. It was an inspiring sight. (Pfeiffer, 2011b)

This might be because “it’s easier to persevere on a long journey when you’re traveling with a herd” (Heath and Heath, 2010, pt. 8, para. 16) or it might be because of our “need for relatedness—the need to love and be loved, to care and be cared for” (Deci, 1996, p. 88). The UTC students’ passion for making a positive change for Dalewood Middle School pupils helped them to connect academia, industry, and community. It was easy for industry professionals and community members to want to get involved with the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga
initiative when UTC students were sharing sentiments like, “I am so excited to get my hands dirty and leap into the madness that is going to go on in 24 hours” (Higgins, 2011a).

Theme: Purpose.

The purpose of developing an experiential-learning initiative like CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga is to connect academia, industry, and community. It serves as a project-based way to have college students, industry professionals, and community members gather at the same table and pool their efforts and resources to solve a common challenge. Since this CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was a part of a design course, design ultimately played an integral part in solving the challenges faced at Dalewood Middle School. Writing about her experience with being interviewed by Nooga.com one student wrote:

We told her [the reporter] we are involved because we want to expand the role of designers in our society. We also talked about how we have realized that, whether we already have children or not, we have a responsibility as members of a community to help in our local schools because the future affects all of us. (CreateathonCHA, 2011b)

Another student wrote, “...our goal is to motivate our community to make a positive impact in our local schools” (Worley, 2011b). Developing an experiential learning, project-based initiative that took students outside the classroom and into the community created an opportunity for students to connect with the community in meaningful ways. In doing this, students were able to create value driven learning. As Caine and Caine (1994) stated, “One soon forgets information after acquisition if there is no attachment to previous concepts of the world, or if the information does not connect on a deeper level.” Caine and Caine continue, “When learners are engaged in deeply felt and meaningful experiences; challenging activities are joyful
and absorbing” (p. 101). Working for the community gave UTC students the opportunity to engage with the community and as a result they were able to absorb learning that went beyond designing for merely a class assignment. Instead, they were designing their community.

Another purpose is to develop substantive relationships from connections between students, industry professionals, and community members. A project-based experience like CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga allows all participants to build a culture of innovation and collaboration. One student posted:

I was shocked to see some of the challenges in our school systems, even here in Chattanooga. I was fortunate enough to go to a school that I thought wasn’t all that bad. I have learned that it is our responsibility as a community to set an example for our students, to provide them with the education and resources that they deserve. I know it’s cliché to say ‘the students are our future,’ but hey, it’s true. If we all chip in, and show our support for our local schools, we can make a positive impact. That was my ah-ha moment. (Worley, 2011a)

Words like “community” and “together” recur throughout the students’ blog posts. The concept of a shared sense of intention, a “we intentionality” (Tomasello, 2009, p. 39) is prevalent throughout the students’ blog posts. UTC students realized that they alone could not make a significant change to Dalewood Middle School. Instead, they realized that it would take collaborating with other passionate people to really make substantive change. One student wrote, “CreateAthon is a huge opportunity for the community to get involved with education.” Then goes on to state, “Each of us have [sic] an opportunity to do the same. To use our abilities to help our children. I am excited to see how CreateAthon can build partnerships between our schools and our community” (Whiting, 2011a). Students even collaborated with industry professionals to write a rap song that included the lyrics: “What do you get when the people come together? A community that keeps gettin’ better, and better, and better...” (CreateathonCHA, 2011a).
Another benefit of connecting academia, industry, and community is that this connection helps college students develop mentor relationships with adults who are engaged in their profession. College graphic design students are often thinking about their careers. Graphic design is a professional degree and:

Once youths begin to think about a career, they pay special attention to adults who are pursuing related work. Whether or not they are aware of it, these adults serve as vivid role models; they signal the beliefs and behaviors, the aspirations and the nightmares, of members of the profession. In regulated professions, specific individuals are often designated as mentors. (Garner, 2007, Vertical support, para. 3)

Creating an opportunity for college students to connect with industry professionals and community members allowed college students to become more aware of the challenges and responsibilities of being a professional. By observing mentors who work in teams, college students quickly pick up social norms of the profession.

Learning is influenced in fundamental ways by the context in which it takes place. A community-centered approach requires the development of norms for the classroom and school, as well as connections to the outside world, that support core learning values. (Bransford & Brown, p. 25, 2000)

Many UTC students commented about the important mentoring role that industry professionals and community members played during the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience. UTC students saw the industry professionals and community members as their mentors, as people there to help them learn about creative professions.

Like the construction of a building, a mentor’s assistance provides temporary support for the learner as skills develop—a new way to think of being intentional with one’s instructional moves. By using this scaffolding, learners can rehearse practices they will be required to perform independently in the future. (Smith and Knapp, 2012, p. 90)
Through the students’ blog post, it is evident that students understood this idea of mentors as scaffolding. For example, one student wrote:

It [CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga] is allowing us to engage not only with Dalewood Middle, but also with the community. We will have mentors from all over giving advice and being a great support system throughout the entire night. (Emerson, 2011)

Throughout CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, students and mentors (both industry professionals and community members) participated in what Rosen (2009) calls, “collaborative chaos.” “Collaborative chaos means the unstructured exchange of ideas to create value” [sic] (p. 12). This collaborative chaos allowed unexpected solutions to the challenging design problems we faced during CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. By not over-organizing and over-structuring, the initiative participants were able to lend their expertise when and where it was needed. When students collaborated with mentors, they were able to glean insights about creating professional level work. They were also able to see professionals giving their time and energy to support the community. As one student posted:

Even more mentors from around the area have come in to lend their expertise and wisdom as we work toward some really amazing things for Dalewood Middle School. (Joseph, 2011a)

Rosen (2009) stated, “Rich, real-time collaboration lets people with a variety of skills and talents come together spontaneously and create value” [sic] (p. 22). Students were able to experience this type of real-time collaboration throughout CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. One student wrote in a blog post:
The biggest point of inspiration for me so far has been the exceptional partnership with our mentors. Over 40 people confirmed to be CreateAthon onCampus mentors during the event, and I can’t count how many mentors have been invested throughout today. From photographers to designers to writers, each mentor is not only an asset to this cause, but have really made themselves essential team members.

They say it’s better to give than get, and these community professionals are leading by example of true giving. (Winn, 2011b)

Even after CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was completed, when students reflected on the entire CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience they often wrote about their mentors:

Our city is full of extremely talented professionals CreateAthon had over 40 mentors involved and many of them stayed the entire 24 hours. They were as committed to the cause as the students were. They gave sound advice, insight into the working world, leadership, and encouraging words to everyone. Meeting these mentors makes me even more excited to get out into the working world because I know Chattanooga has a great camp of professionals to work with. (Pfeiffer, 2011c)

Another student wrote, “I loved the teamwork with my fellow classmates but also with the awesome mentors that took the time out of their busy workweek to dedicate themselves to CreateAthon” (Wade, 2011). As we saw through CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, “Cultures that encourage mentoring often make prime breeding ground for collaboration” [sic] (Rosen, 2009, p. 37). Students noticed and reflected on the fact that many different people with varying expertise levels on many subjects worked together for the betterment of Dalewood Middle School. As one student wrote:

The experience of participating in CreateAthon was like a droplet of water in a lake called “opportunity.” I’ve heard story after story from classmates, mentors and community leaders that the CreateAthon experience changed them. Made them better. Opened their eyes, and helped them realize what they’re capable of: giving back to a community that gives so much to each of us already. This, to me, is what the CreateAthon experience is about: a cause and effect chain of kind
deeds for greater good. My takeaway from the experience, now that the Red Bull has worn off and we’ve resumed normal sleep schedules, is the fact that a group of people collectively came together as one super-unit of designers, thinkers, creatives and egalitarians. (Winn, 2011c)

Statements like this lead me to understand that students experienced what Mead is quoted as saying: “Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has” (Mead, n.d., para. 1).

Theme: Promise

Our commitment to ourselves, to each other, and to Dalewood Middle School is what kept us going even on very little sleep.

It was clear that both students and mentors were eager to do as much as possible in the 24 hour period and beyond to make a positive difference for the students and faculty at Dalewood. This was also the main thing keeping us all awake and going -the knowledge that we can make a difference. (Nikolaeva, 2011)

We were committed to pushing ourselves, our work, and our comfort zones to create design solutions that would support learning at Dalewood Middle School. Straus (2002) wrote about a phenomenon called the Interaction Effect. He stated:

When a group is in alignment about its direction (where it is trying to go), its commitment (the will it possesses to get there), and its capability (the skills and knowledge it has to complete its journey), there is a release of energy. Not only are team members energized by the process, but so is the surrounding organization or community. It’s this energy that fuels an extended collaborative effort and keeps it going during rough times. Through collaborative action, you can produce higher-quality ideas and solutions than you can if you work by yourself. (pp. 3-4)

As a group, we aligned our goals, we made a commitment, we gathered people with varying skills, and then we allowed the energy to drive the experience. “Purpose is a driving force which
gives expression for, or points a path to, the expenditure of the energy which we constitute” (Kelley & Rasey, 1952, p. 61). We committed to our purpose. We made this commitment to ourselves, to each other, and to the world. We voiced our commitment to Dalewood Middle School by blogging and tweeting about CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. We shared our commitment by sharing the story of CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga with the entire community through participating in news articles. We extended our commitment to others by asking them to join us in our promise to use design thinking to create change within Dalewood Middle School. We demonstrated our commitment to Dalewood Middle School pupils by wearing our “I CAN” t-shirts and providing them with an opportunity express what they could do through gifting them “I CAN” t-shirts.

We also demonstrated our commitment to Dalewood Middle School pupils by actively participating in their pep-rally. We were there with Dalewood Middle School pupils to celebrate the commitment we had made. UTC students also demonstrated their commitment by staying the entire 24-hours. There was only one student who left early, but I sent her home because she was sick with a fever. All the other students stayed for the entire duration of CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. During the 24-hours students shared their commitment with the world by posting hourly updates to the blog. One of the hourly updates noted:

As we reach the sunset, we’re starting to find ourselves in need of some extra energy! We’ve worked out a few methods to keep our energy up, and would like to share them with you (for when you do a CreateAthon event, wink wink!).
(Joseph, 2011b)

As demonstrated by the previous blog post, as students shared the story of CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, they encouraged other people to participate in future CreateAthon onCampus’. We reached to the depths of our creative souls so that we could for at least 24-hours achieve, as one student put it, superhero status. In a blog post she wrote:
The way I see it, calling ourselves superheroes isn’t over the top or too much. I mean, what is a superhero? Who do we define as such? To me, a Superhero is someone who saw at least one circumstance to do good in their life and make life better in someway and did so. Whether it comes to helping a child’s education, lending a friend a hand, or even just brightening up someone’s day, anything, no matter how small, is a step in the right direction to becoming your own personal Superman or Wonder Women, or in my case, one of Wonder Leslie’s Awesomenners. (Leinart, 2011)

As superheros do, we made a commitment to serve the greater good of the community.

We made a promise to make awesomeness and do good. We not only made the promise but we followed through with action.

Theme: Pursuit.

Nearly every blog post described some aspect(s) of the actual action(s) that took place throughout CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. Much of the essence of CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was about doing. It was about participating. It was about learning. It was about creating. It was about acting. It was about all of these things combined working for a greater purpose. When writing about being interviewed by the Nooga.com reporter one student wrote:

And then I realized that most people don’t really have a good idea of what graphic design is. And here we are, going beyond the accepted definition of what designers do, and trying to affect change in a local middle school. So, we told her [the reporter] that we do not think we can magically make everything better overnight. Instead, we aim to do all we can to help, so as to start making things better. Many times we have heard that all these schools need is someone to help, someone to take action. So that’s what we are going to do. You see, design is the link between the initial idea and reality. We figure out the who, what, where and more importantly, the how. These are all actionable words. So, we are helping by taking action. It’s what we do. (CreateathonCHA, 2011b)
In essence the student is describing project-based learning.

...project-based learning [is] the primary means by which truly transformational learning [sic] can take place...with skills gained from the project-based approach, learners can actually see themselves making a difference in their world, making it possible for them to make the commitment to transform their attitudes and beliefs and aspire to higher expectations for self and society. (Newell, 2003, p. 9)

Project-based learning is often collaborative learning (Newell, 2003). One student wrote about collaboration of acting together:

How will we get it all done in 24 hours? [sic] By working together! It has been interesting keeping all thirty plus people on the same page. We find it works best for the group to divide into teams to conquer each task that arises. Each team, print, screen and documentation has been working together to gather and prepare our resources. When each team has reached a conclusion, we gather as a collective group to discuss our progress. (Worley, 2011b)

As with other organizations, universities have the opportunity to offer more collaborative project-based learning (Daniel, 1996; Rosen, 2009). Another student’s blog post focused on the act of collaborating in preparation for the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga event:

In preparation for the event, at any given moment, you can find one of my classmates or CreateHere fellows crafting emails to professionals, ironing out logistics, collaborating on design work, or documenting the entire experience. It takes a village to raise a child, and I think the same applies to our CreateAthon projects. It takes a community to raise a school to it’s full potential, and that’s what our courage has led us to do. (Winn, 2011a)

Witnessing other students, industry professionals, and community members acting towards a common goal helps a student to push himself or herself to greater expectations (Nowak, 2011, Tomesello, 2009; Watkins and Mohr, 2001). This student’s blog post captures this idea as well:

...CreateAthon is almost here, this weekend all the collaboration will finally be brought together in our 24 hour design marathon. All the time everyone has put into this project continues to inspire and I’m ready to pull up my sleeves and get some serious design- goodness done. Designing for a good cause is one thing, designing with wonderful people in such a large group is even better. (Savage, 2011a)
Students truly enjoyed collaborating with others to solve problems. Problem solving in a collaborative environment often creates authentic strategies that resonate with participants and creates authentic solutions to complex problems (Straus, 2002).

This week is picking up steam! All of us as a class have been collaborating together to ensure that all of the slack is taken care of. All of us are a team, and we will continually be working to support each other. The process so far has been like a sprint, I hope that we can all keep up that energy during the 24 hours. I know that I will be doing my best to help lighten the mood when at all possible. I am proud of my classmates, all who I consider awesome friends. We all have different experiences and that is what is going to make this such a great project for all of us. (Hysinger, 2011b)

I find the last sentence of the previous blog post to be very profound. On some level this student understands that, “Engaging the whole person in authentic experiences allows for a young person to not only know and do, but to be someone” (Newell, 2003, p. 17). This student has taken this idea a step further and embraces the fact that each student is different and that each student will have a different experience during CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. The student sees these variations as positives not negatives. This was important for the students to understand because each of them would have completely different experiences through CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. There was no way for two students to have the same experiences. This can be scary to students or students can feel slighted, like they missed out on something. However, this class of students embraced the differences and decided that they were where they needed to be, learning what they needed to learn. One of the things that students learned by preparing for CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was that:

Planning for an event like this takes some real skill and teamwork, in which I am learning a ton. I originally thought that this event was just going to be 24 hours, and that was it. I now realize that something this big does not just manifest itself out of thin air, and not only that but I am apart of the process of creating it. I would never have guessed some of the issues that needed to be addressed with an event like this, and has made me appreciate well planned events because it is not
easy. Everyone has been working like crazy apples to make this event the best and most productive 24 hours it can be, I can’t wait for tomorrow and I expect to see and experience some great design work. (Buffaloboy, 2011a)

Students learned this knowledge firsthand. Just the planning for the 24-hour creative blitz took a lot of time, energy, and resources. It took all of us working together for extended lengths of time. As one student posted:

Everyone was extremely motivated, and I think the reason why boils down to two things. First, the kids [Dalewood Middle School pupils]. We had an opportunity to make a difference in their school, and I don’t think anybody wanted to let them down. Second, the community. With so many people willing and eager to participate, it’s almost impossible not to catch the enthusiasm. I may not have expected much at the start of CreateAthon, but I sure am glad I was there to be a part of it. The response from the kids who sent us cards and thank-you’s was overwhelming and humbling. (Whiting, 2011b)

When students experienced how their classmates, industry professionals, and community members were excited and engaged with CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga it fueled their own enthusiasm (Heath and Heath, 2010; Keltner, 2009). Through this experience students, industry professionals, and community members became connected in meaningful ways. One student reflects on his CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience:

Today I get the chance to reflect on my past few weeks of school. It has been a fast pace end of the semester with projects due one after the other but amidst the chaos I was blessed to be apart of my favorite project ever, CreateAthon. If there was a way to describe CreateAthon for me I would say it was an adventure. Honestly to me CreateAthon went by way to fast, 24 plus hours seemed like minutes. I loved it. I felt like I was at home. My friends felt like members of my family and we were all working towards a unified goal together. Words cannot express the feelings that are forever attached to that project. (Hysinger, 2011a)

Since the entire project was collaborative and everyone’s work was interwoven throughout the experience, it seems only fitting to conclude this chapter with a number of brief excerpts from multiple UTC students’ blog posts:
“Through design thinking we all band together as one unified group and made a difference.” (Higgins, 2011b)

“CreateAthon was so much more than a 24 hour blitz. It was something that brought everyone together in so many ways and taught us that even a day can make a huge difference.” (Savage, 2011b)

“It really amazes me to look back and see the kind of power we each have to make a difference in our community, to truly effect some else’s life” (Buffaloboy, 2011b).

“I will proudly say that we are a team, we are brothers and sisters, and together with the community we are Chattanooga” (Hysinger, 2011a).
CHAPTER V

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DATA-DATA: Theorize

“What do the findings mean in terms of my theory of practice” (Peters, 2009, p. 155)?

It was important for my growth within my practice to demonstrate that college students’ learning experience is influenced by connecting industry, academia, and community, and that there are four necessary steps to create meaningful experiential learning: 1. Passion 2. Purpose 3. Promise 4. Pursuit. Using the DATA-DATA action research model, I was able to delve into a specific experiential, project-based initiative: CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. By reviewing my students’ public blog posts and public tweets, I was better able to understand what aspects of the initiative resonated mostly clearly. I also determined that CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was a meaningful learning and leadership experience within the graphic design curriculum at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Reflections on Theme: Passion

Even before CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, the students enrolled in Professional Practices in Graphic Design already had a sense of passion for design. They had
apassion for creativity. They demonstrated this drive to create during previous courses that they took with me. As a whole, even before CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, the students’ work was strong and they were dedicated to developing their design skills. Each student seemed to be called to graphic design. Your *calling* refers to a personal interest, attraction, inclination, drive, or passion that is usually (but not always) of a higher order. It isn’t just something you want to do, but rather something you *need* to do, something that captures your imagination, touches you deeply and absorbs you, whether or not you can explain why. (Millman, 2011, p. 34)

Through the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative, students amped up their passion for connecting with each other and with the community. As Newell (2003) wrote:

> A project-based system, where integrated projects are created around a set of state-established inquiry standards, can either keep alive a passion for learning, or revitalize a passion for learning lost due to matriculation in a large, unfriendly atmosphere. (p. xiii)

Through their work with CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga, students proved that passion can trump experience. Even though there were experienced mentors working side-by-side with less experienced students, it was the students’ passion for helping Dalewood Middle School that fueled CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga.

> If passionate people don’t have the experience to know something, they make it their business to find it out. If they require an expert skill to do a job well, they acquire it. They’re motivated to deliver outstanding work. Passion catalyzes superior performance. (Lublin, 2010, p. 139)

*Reflections on Theme: Purpose*

The students were so passionate about helping Dalewood Middle School through CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga that they shared what they were doing with many people.
They shared with people beyond the UTC community. They shared with their friends and their families. They shared with reporters. They shared with the world through posting blog posts and tweets. Lublin (2010) wrote, “The highest form of passion isn’t talking about something or doing it. It’s spreading the word to others” (p. 148). This is what the students did—they spread the word. They asked people who they knew to be involved. They helped get mentors to participate. They asked local businesses to donate supplies to support CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. They helped other people to become passionate about helping Dalewood Middle School.

Watching *Waiting for Superman* and *The Lottery* as a class, listening to Geoffrey Canada speak, and connecting with Dalewood Middle School pupils gave my students a sense of purpose. We had classes where the students were angry about the state of the educational system and sometimes that anger turned to sadness. As a class the students connected with each other and with me. Students realized that,

This inward-bound journey lies at the heart of all creativity, whether in the arts, in business, or in science. Many scientists and inventors, like artists and entrepreneurs, live in a paradoxical state of great confidence and profound humility—knowing that their choices and actions matter and feeling guided by forces beyond their making. (Senge et al., 2005, p. 13)

Through our experience, we realized that superheroes are everywhere. They are principals, educators, college students, professionals, the community, and middle school students.

**Reflections on Theme: Promise**

As Bauerlein (2008) states:

Knowledge heightens the moral sense that sparks such profitless commitments. It draws people out of themselves and beyond the present, sets their needs in a wider setting than private circumstances and instant
gratification. Tradition raises conviction over consumption, civic duty over personal gain. (chap. 6, para. 22)

The knowledge students gained by watching Waiting for Superman and The Lottery, listening to Geoffrey Canada speak, and connecting with Dalewood Middle School pupils encouraged students to make a commitment to help the community. These opportunities to gain new knowledge created a willingness in students to want to support Dalewood Middle School. “Willingness is a combination of commitment, confidence and motivation” (Wren, 1995, p. 208).

A large part of why this experiential, project-based learning initiative was successful was because of the students’ willingness. Their willingness allowed for meaningful connections and real curriculum integration of CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga.

Real curriculum integration occurs when young people confront personally meaningful questions and engage in experiences related to those questions-experiences they can integrate into their own system of meanings. (Beane, 1991, p. 9)

Make awesomeness. Do Good. As a team, we kept our promise. We did indeed make awesomeness and do good. Then we took our promise and put it into action.

Reflections on Theme: Pursuit

Learning in the academy does not need to be a solo pursuit. It does not to need to be a static pursuit. Instead, it takes community collaborating in an experiential learning, project-based initiative to create meaningful learning and leadership experiences. As Sawyer states,

We’re drawn to the image of the lone genius whose mystical moment of insight changes the world. But the lone genius is a myth; instead, it’s group genius that generates breakthrough innovation. When we collaborate, creativity unfolds across people; the sparks fly faster, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. (2007, p. 7)
The act of working together, as a team, was meaningful for students. It was also meaningful for me. The process became just as important and even perhaps more important than the final deliverables. Harada, Lum, and Souza,


discovered the importance of a child’s genuine ownership in the process. Lum noted, ‘When students are part of the collaborative team, they help to set goals and they problem-solve how to meet these goals.’ Souza added, ‘If students are involved in the planning and learning process, it becomes much more meaningful for them. It is no longer the teacher’s plan, but it is OUR [sic] plan’. (2003, Insights Gleaned, para. 11)

As Csikszentmihalyi (2008) might say, together—the students, industry professionals, community members, and I—we were in a state of flow. We were in “...the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter...” (Introduction, para. 16).

As Csikszentmihalyi also said, “People who learn to control inner experience will be able to determine the quality of their lives, which is as close as any of us can come to being happy” (Introduction, para. 5). The CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative provided each student the opportunity to control his or her inner experience. Each student brought a positive, “I CAN” do attitude to the process.

Reflections on Professional Practices in Graphic Design Course

Over the past five years, the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course has been one of the most rewarding and one of the most overwhelming courses I have taught. However, the benefits for the students have outweighed the strain that preparing and executing the course causes me. I know why educators do not often choose to run a course in this way—it is hard. It takes months and months of preparation. It can take an extended period of time to build the
relationships within the community and to trust the people that you are introducing to your
students. It is both mentally and physically exhausting. Before the students get involved, I set up
the meetings, I respond to the phone calls, and I answer each email. Once the students get
involved, I am still a part of these things. I am helping the students learn how to set up a meeting
with a client, how to have a conversation with a client, and how to correspond with a client. It is
a lot of work. However, I take great satisfaction in knowing that my students have learned. They
have learned how to communicate more effectively, how to lead their classmates and community
in times of change, and how to persevere no matter what life throws your way. Watching my
students transform so much during such a short period of time has been so rewarding for me that
when I start prepping for this course I am excited and energized. After so many years of running
this course as an experiential, project-based course, I also know that at some point during the
course I will feel so tired, worn out, and unappreciated that I just want to crawl under a table and
sit quietly by myself. It is usually right after that moment when something truly spectacular
happens and I am reenergized again.

Reflections on My Practice

My practice has changed because of the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course. It
solidified what I had felt—that connecting academia, industry, and community is a critical
component of curriculum. I now know, more than ever, that when creatives collaborate, they can
change the world. I walk down the streets of Chattanooga and now, five years later, I see
trees that were planted because of the first Professional Practices in Graphic Design course
project I taught, Take Root. The Take Root project that did what its name said it would do—
it took root. The physical landscape of our Chattanooga community has changed because of what we did as a group of design students and community leaders. I see the trees planted because of Take Root and I ask myself, “How awesome is this?” We made a positive, sustainable change and that change was driven by the creative efforts of Undergraduate students. One of the most wonderful outcomes of creating coursework that is project-based is that the outcomes will live on in the community even after the course is completed. Because of this, students feel pride and ownership in their community. They know what they can do when they collaborate: they can change the world.

Reflections on Collaborative Learning

By working with groups like CreateHere, the Community Foundation, and the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) students were able to see that it is important to continue to develop leadership skills. They saw firsthand from industry professionals and community members that, “creating means you need to be continually re-creating yourself by being a life-long learner” (Newell, 2003, p. 37). They were able to see, firsthand, a diverse group of professionals work together to create change in their community. Rost (1995) states, “leadership is not what leaders do but what leaders and collaborators do together—the interaction that goes on among them as they propose significant changes that reflect their mutual purposes” [sic] (p. 2). The students learned not only by watching and listening but by actually connecting and doing. As Aristotle stated, “What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing” (As quoted in Miner & Boldt, 1990, p. 87).
As CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga progressed there were many times that the students took the reigns and led the project. There were several different group dynamics in motion during the initiative. For example, Helen Johnson and I worked together closely to ensure that our teams—the CreateHere team and the UTC team were working well both separately and together. Throughout the semester the teams morphed and changed. People were pulled into groups when more help or different skills were needed. Each student’s experience with CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga was completely unique.

As you might imagine, I support my students. I help them to believe in themselves because “people who believe they have the power to exercise some measure of control over their lives are healthier, more effective and more successful than those who lack faith in their ability to effect changes in their lives” (Bandura, 1997, p.279). Because self-efficacy is important, I often serve as my students’ advocate until they can serve as their own advocate. I have students who have been repeatedly told that they cannot succeed, that they cannot be smart, and that they cannot be leaders. I often work with first generation university students and students whose parents are not always equipped to help them navigate challenges of school systems—parents who were told that they could not succeed, that they could not be smart, and that they could not be leaders. What I have realized is that when students are given the opportunity to prosper and to begin to realize their potential and their worth to the classroom and to the community, they begin to understand that they are successful, that they are smart, and that they are leaders. I serve as my students’ advocate until they can serve as their own. Stetson (1996) is correct, “We are better than we know. If we can be made to see it, perhaps for the rest of our lives, we will be unwilling to settle for less” (p. x). Through education, learners can be urged to go beyond who they are and
what they know to experience mindful and meaningful lives (Greene, 1988). The CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative has demonstrated how a united community can create substantial and sustainable, positive change.

**DATA-DATA: Act**

This is the action step in which the practitioner-researcher turns back to his or her practice and moves on in terms of what he or she has learned from reflecting on their revised theory” (Peters, 2009, p. 156)?

I will continue to live a life filled with passion. I hope that through this process, my students have seen how they can align their passions with their purpose as well.

**Implications on Theme: Passion**
Passion is pure energy.

**Implications on Theme: Purpose**
Purpose is what makes life meaningful.

**Implications on Theme: Promise**
Passion plus purpose is powerful.

**Implications on Theme: Pursuit**
Pursuing our promise is exciting and enjoyable.

I am sure that I could never duplicate the experience of CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga 2011. This does not sadden me, it does not upset me, and it does not worry me. The experience was exactly what it needed to be at the time for all of us who were involved. Although I could see endeavoring in another CreateAthon onCampus experience, I am happy that it would never be the same. The experience would have different people with different skill sets and different personalities. It would have a different client with different deliverables and expectations.
It would never be the same. However, I do believe it could be a positive experience. It would have the potential to bring together people and connect the community through collaboration. It would allow students the opportunity to participate in experiential learning.

Even though I thoroughly enjoyed the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga experience, I have not revisited it for the spring 2012 Professional Practices in Graphic Design course. This decision has a lot to do with the fact that CreateHere has had a Supernova. As CreateHere’s website stated:

What fuels us to work the way we do—quickly, completely, exhaustively—is a self-imposed supernova date. On December 31, 2011, CreateHere will be no more. By design, the organization was developed with a specific timeline: a start-to-finish five-year project.

A definitive end to our work keeps us on our toes and helps us avoid institutional stagnation. What’s more, it pushes us to explore new methods of teaching and sharing: we believe in our programs, and want to see them live on beyond our own supernova date. As such, we graduate initiatives into the community. Among those that have successfully transferred are ArtsMove and Plugdin, both tools to attract and retain driven, creative individuals.

As the clock ticks on our organizational lifetime, we’re looking for partners who share our love for this place and our energy for community renewal. (About | Supernova, n.d.).

Without the support of CreateHere and the energy of Helen Johnson, I was not sure if I could successfully accomplish another CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga. This study helped me to realize that it is vital to have support from the community in order to have a truly successful event. Although, I have other support in the community, as organizations, like CreateHere, dissolve and change so do the types of support. Fortunately, I am accustomed to change. Each year for the Professional Practice in Graphic Design course I choose a different project with different industry professionals and community members. This allows opportunities
for many different people within the Chattanooga community to connect with UTC students. This also allows UTC students an opportunity to build relationships with various industry professionals and community members. This diversity helps to meet the 2008-2013 UTC Strategic Mission.

For the spring 2012 semester, as a class, we will be working with the Company Lab on the initiative 48Hour Launch which is “a weekend-long business start-up experience, designed to inspire entrepreneurial action at the local level” (48Hour Launch, n.d.). The Company Lab began as a CreateHere project. I have worked with the Company Lab on other events that connect industry, community, and academia like internship mixers. I look forward to working with them more extensively within the 48Hour Launch. I am excited to have students connect with the industry professionals and community members in this slightly different format. The good news for my students and for me is that because it is a 48-hour event we are allowed to sleep during the event and we do not have to remain awake for the entire event. Another aspect of 48Hour Launch that excites me and that I hope will excite my students is that the focus of 48Hour Launch. The initiatives created during 48Hour Launch must focus on a single theme: Help envision business solutions that support sustainable growth in downtown Chattanooga. Students will be able to connect and collaborate with industry professionals and community members to help to develop sustainable improvement for Chattanooga.
Implications for Research Practice

Looking at the connection and collaboration between industry professionals, community members, and students is an open field—a field ready to be more fully explored. There are many opportunities for additional investigation. These include:

- A quantitative study on the transformation of students before and after they connect and collaborate with industry professionals and community members.
- A quantitative study on the transformation of industry professionals and community members through connecting and collaborating with college students.
- A qualitative study on the transformation of industry professionals and community members through connecting and collaborating with college students.
- A qualitative study that looks at similar experiential learning, project-based initiatives at the K-12 levels.
- Additional qualitative studies that look at similar experiential learning, project-based initiatives at the university level.

Closing Reflection

Although, the DATA-DATA model requires a rich description of my own personal and professionals experiences that led up to CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga and of the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga initiative, the information I shared through this study is applicable to others. I hope that other educators will review this study and find ways to connect and collaborate with industry professionals, community members, and students. I hope that educators see the value in experiential, project-based initiatives. I hope that educators know that it is possible to develop these types of relationships and projects within a traditional university setting. Sometimes creating experiential, project-based learning initiatives is a challenge but every time the experience is worth the effort. At least it has been for me and for my students.
This study helped me clarify my own practice. I better understand that my role as an educator is really the role of a connector and of a knowledge facilitator. As an educator, I have the opportunity and the responsibility to bring people together to work on a common goal that is bigger than any single person in the group. This common goal is for a greater good. This greater good unites industry professionals, community members, and students. It helps each to feel empowered. It allows each person to embrace their passion, define their purpose, foster their promise, and engage their pursuit. It affords each person and the entire group to make awesomeness and do good.
REFERENCES


Huxley, A. (n.d.). Goodreads | Showing all quotes that contain ‘Happiness is not achieved...tof happiness; it is generally the by-product of other activities.’ *Goodreads*. Retrieved October 30, 2011, from http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/search?q=Happiness+is+not+achieved+by+the+conscious+pursuit+of+happiness%3B+it+is+generally+the+by-product+of+other+activities.&commit=Search


APPENDIX
DEFINITIONS

Blog: a word created from the words: “web” and “log” (Bodnar, 2010, para. 6). Blog posts are information posted to blogs. I have collected the blog posts written about CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga by UTC graphic design students enrolled in the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course and posted on www.createathonchatt.wordpress.com.

Creatives: anyone working in the creative field can be considered a “creative”. This term often includes designers, writers, and photographers.

Hashtag: A hashtag annotates a tweet (Bodnar, 2010, H section, para. 1) it also makes it possible to collect tweets with a specific hashtag. I have collected all the tweets from the CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga tagged with “createathonCHA”.

Mentors: In this study, “mentors” refer to industry professionals and community partners that supported The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, graphic design students by engaging in the experiential, project-based initiative, CreateAthon onCampus at Chattanooga.

Pupils: In this study, “pupils” refer to Dalewood Middle School students.

Students: In this study, “students” refer to graphic design students enrolled in the Professional Practices in Graphic Design course in the spring 2011 semester at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Twitter and Tweets: a platform that allows users to share 140-character-long messages publicly. A Google search for “twitter” returns results that include twitter.com and the description for twitter.com, which reads, “Instantly connect to what’s most important to you. Follow your friends, experts, favorite celebrities, and breaking news” (twitter, n.d.). Twitter users “follow” each other by way of subscribing to each others’ messages. Additionally, users can use the @username command to direct a message towards another Twitter user. (Bodnar, 2010, T section, para. 5)

Wordpress: A free blogging platform
APPENDIX B

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS
GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS
(31 total hours)

English Composition and Rhetoric (6 hours)
☐ ENGL 1010
☐ ENGL 1020

Mathematics (3 hours)
☐ Approved course (usually Math 1010)

Natural Sciences (7-8 hours)
☐ Approved course with or without lab (usually ASTR 1010, ESC 1100, GEOL 1160, GNSC 1150, etc.)
☐ Approved course with lab (usually CHEM 1019, GNSC 1110/1110L, GEOL 1110/1110L, etc.)

Humanities & Fine Arts (6 hours)
satisfied by ART 2140 and ART 2150
(Also satisfies requirements in major)

Cultures & Civilizations (9 hours)
option A: Western Humanities
☐ Approved course, Western Humanities I (usually ENGL 1130 or PHIL 1130)
☐ Approved course, Western Humanities II (usually ENGL 1150 or PHIL 1150)
☐ Approved course, Non-Western Cultures (usually ANTH 2080 or 3110, ENGL 3580, GEOG 1030, POLS 1040, etc.)

option B: World Civilizations
☐ HIST 1010
☐ HIST 1020
☐ HIST 1030

Behavioral and Social Sciences (6 hours)
☐ Approved course, (especially recommended: ANTH 1520, GEOG 1040, PSY 1010)
☐ Approved course, (as above)
APPENDIX C

BFA FOUNDATION COURSES
BFA

A BFA studio concentration guides the student to an immersive study in one of four studio areas: graphic design, painting & drawing, photography & media or 3D. The BFA major engages contemporary theory and practice in their chosen media. By the senior year, students concentrate almost exclusively on studio coursework within the area of concentration, with an emphasis on individual expression, open exploration, and experimentation.

Courses
- 1510 Visual Studies I: Form in 2-D
- 1520 Visual Studies II: Form in 3-D
- 1540 Visual Studies III: Color/Fundamentals
- 1560 Drawing I
- 1561 Drawing II
- 2500 Drawing III
- 2140 The History of Western Art from Prehistoric Through Medieval
- 2110 The History of Western Art from the Renaissance to the Present
- 2500 Portfolio Review
- 3100 Critical Theory for the Visual Artist
- 4010 Visual Arts Internship
- 4910 Professional Preparation for the Visual Artist
APPENDIX D

CORE GRAPHIC DESIGN COURSES
Graphic Design

The graphic design program at UTC recognizes the fact that graphic design as an academic pursuit is tied inexorably to its professional practice and to the terms of that practice. However, we also believe that concerns having to do with vocational expertise should not come at the expense of an introduction to broader more theoretical applications of design. As much as graphic design can be defined by a constantly evolving set of readily definable skills, it also exists as an invaluable tool for analytical a problem-solving in response to any impetus. It is the nature of graphic design, as it's practiced commercially, to have a direct impact on commercial culture and on culture at large by shaping the form and the contexts for our relationships with one another. At UTC, students are given the pragmatic skills to practice design effectively, but they are also introduced to the broader contexts within which design operates and is defined.

Courses
- 2800 Visual Literacy for Graphic Design
- 2710 Typography I
- 3810 Typography II
- 3810 Processes and Materials for Graphic Design
- 3820 Design History
- 3850 Web Media I
- 3710 Typography III
- 3750 Web Media II
- 4850 Graphic Design Workshop I
- 4860 Graphic Design Workshop II
- 4890 Professional Practices in Graphic Design
APPENDIX E

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES OF GRAPHIC DESIGN SYLLABUS
TERM: Spring 2012

COURSE: ART 249C 0

INSTRUCTOR: Leslie Jensen-Inman

TITLE: Professional Practices in Graphic Design

CRN: 20209

SCHEDULE: 12:15 PM-2:55 PM TR, Fine Arts Center 613

CREDIT: 3 credit hours

OFFICE: 336 Fine Arts Center

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

CONTACT: Leslie-Jensen-Inman@unr.edu • 423-425-4178

PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Design problems specific to the concerns of professional practice. Emphasis on client work, budgeting, planning, presentation and teamwork. Work leading to significant portfolio development.

REQUIRED TEXT: The Brand Gap: How to Bridge the Distance between Business Strategy and Design by Marty Neumeier

Graphic Artist’s Guild Handbook of Pricing and Ethical Guidelines by Graphic Artist Guild

RECOMMENDED TEXT: How to be a Graphic Designer without Losing Your Soul (New Expanded Edition) by ADRIAN SHAPIRO

The Designers Company: How to build a culture of nonstop innovation by Marty Neumeier

Zag: The Number One Strategy of High-Performance Brands (Paperback) by Marty Neumeier

Additional texts may be recommended during the exploration of the course.
ATTENDANCE

Prompt and consistent attendance demonstrates professional behavior. In order for you
to succeed in the course and receive the information necessary to complete course
assignments, you need to be present and on time for every class. If you miss a class it
is your responsibility to obtain the notes from a willing, responsible classmate before the
next class. I may clarify details, however, every attempt must be made to obtain general
information from your classmates before discussing the details with me. All work including
sketches, roughs, and research are due on the assigned class date. It is your responsi-
bility to get your work to class even if you cannot be in class personally.

PARTICIPATION

Many of the assignments will have class critiques. The sharing of ideas and opinions are
integral parts of the critique process. Each of you has an obligation to yourself and to your
classmates to attend each class and to share your thoughts. You are expected to give and
receive constructive feedback. Class participation is part of your grade. It is important
that you attend every class in order to be an active participant.

DEADLINES AND
GRADING

All work is due on time as assigned. There will be no credit for late or incomplete work,
unless you can provide time and valid medical documentation. Do not miss a class if you do
not have your assignment(s) to turn in. Come to class anyway, because class participation
is a part of your overall grade.

COURSE
EVALUATION

• 70% Projects, assignments, exercises and exams
• 25% Participation

GRADE SCALE

Most exams and projects will be graded on a standard 100-point scale. Letter grades
receive the following numeric equivalents:

A = 90-100  B = 80-89  C = 70-79  D = 60-69  F = 0-59

A = Extraordinary work. Extra effort. Student's work goes beyond the assignment. Student
pursues concepts and techniques above and beyond the required work for the course.

B = Superior work. Some extra effort. Student pursues ideas and suggestions presented
in class and complete assignments above the required expectations.

C = Required work. Required effort. Student demonstrates their ability to analyze and
participate in class using information gained through lectures, readings, and individual
study.

D = Poor work. Student produces less than the required work for the course. Student
simply rehashes information given in class mechanically and even that does not demon-
strate required expectations for the course.

F = A failure to complete course expected required work with any effort or care.
MAKEUP TESTS/PRESENTATIONS

There are none...unless you are registered to take the exam. Should extenuating circumstances arise, make every effort to notify me by email or call the department of your expected absence before class. And be prepared to bring in the necessary documentation to prove your extenuating circumstance.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

The personal use of all electronic devices during class is strictly prohibited. This includes texting on an iPod, talking on cell phones, checking email on a Blackberry, etc. All such devices must be turned off. Laptops may be allowed, but only when their use is directly relevant to the course, and only with prior approval from the instructor. Failure to comply will result in an absence. Medically necessary electronic devices (such as hearing aids) are exceptions.

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

Let’s face it: technology breaks, servers go down, transfers time out, and files become corrupt. This is going to happen. These are not considered emergencies. They are part of the normal protection process. An issue you may have with technology is no excuse for late work. You need to protect yourself by managing your time and backing up your work.

BROWSER

This course will use Mozilla Firefox as its primary browser. All content created for this course should display as you intended: in the latest version of Firefox. If content does not display as intended in the latest version of Firefox, your grade will be adversely affected.

COURSEKIT

We will be using a course management system called CourseKit. CourseKit will help you keep in touch with your classmates and with me. Updates, assignments, and deadlines/milestones will all take place within CourseKit. It is your responsibility to check CourseKit every day.

PLAGIARISM/COPYRIGHT

It is illegal and unethical to use someone else’s work without properly crediting the source. Plagiarism includes stealing words, ideas, or concepts. If you are not sure whether to credit a source, or to quote or paraphrase, or to use original language, please ask me in advance, or err on the side of citing the source you are using. All work for this course must be original, or you must have written permission to use the artwork. If you are using someone else’s work in part or in entirety, you must include their written permission when handing in your assignment.

LABS

Access to the graphic design computer lab (PAC 4.28) is restricted to students enrolled in this course, and in the graphic design major. This is YOUR equipment, so treat it with respect. Abusing the equipment will not be tolerated and may result in expulsion from the course. Please make an effort to conserve materials such as paper, toner, and printing inks by printing only when necessary, and by printing all drafts in black and white unless otherwise specified.

Lab printers are managed by the university’s GoPrint system. Prints are released from the print server using your Minn OnCard. If you need to print to the university’s Document Source color printer (located in the University Administration Building 2/F), you will need to purchase a Card from the MSA Office.

48 Hour Launch

One of the projects in this course is 48-hour Launch. You are required to attend the 48-hour Launch Pitch Night, which is scheduled for March 22 at 6pm. You are also required to participate in the 48-hour Launch which is scheduled for March 30 at 6pm to April 1 at 10pm.
SUPPLIES
Supplies will be discussed when reviewing individual projects. Some supplies that you will need are listed below:
- binders
- embroidery storage
- prints of projects
- spray adhesive
- blade(s) and knife
- additional supplies will be necessary

ADA STATEMENT
Attention: If you are a student with a disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation in this class or any other class, call the Office for Students with Disabilities at 425-0766 or come by the office in Dink Hall.

STUDENT SERVICES
If you find that personal problems, career indecision, study and time management difficulties, etc. are adversely affecting your successful progress at UTC, contact the Counseling and Career Planning Center.

If you could use the help of a tutor or a workshop to improve your study skills, contact the Student Success Center.

If your grade could benefit from a little one-on-one consulting, contact the Writing Center.

STUDENT SERVICES
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If your grade could benefit from a little one-on-one consulting, contact the Writing Center.

PLEASE NOTE
1. To prevent unclaimed student work from accumulating within the facilities of the Art Department, please be sure to collect your work at the end of the term. After that, you run the risk of having your work thrown out, as we do not have the means to store it.

2. Students are assessed a $25.00 studio fee for all art studio courses. Funds generated from this fee go towards the purchase of equipment, materials, and maintenance necessary to support studio production throughout the department. You will remain responsible for the purchase of studio materials for individuals use as determined by your instructor.

3. I reserve the right to use coursework, in part or in its entirety, with publications, presentations, online, and/or in other exhibits and mediums.

ADDITIONAL
The energy you put into this class and your work will be very beneficial. I am available to help you reach your goals and succeed, but you must put both the effort. If you have any questions, the best way to reach me is through Canvas. The way, your fellow classmates can help you if I am not immediately available. If you need to contact me about a personal situation, you can reach me via email.

This syllabus is subject to change.

Make sure to remain updated by visiting Canvas daily.
APPENDIX F

ORIGINALLY PLANNED GROUPS
CreateAthon

Group #1
Print Team
Mentor #1
Mentor #2
Screen Team

Group #2
Print Team
Mentor #1
Mentor #2
Screen Team

Group #3
Print Team
Mentor #1
Mentor #2
Screen Team

Questions:
How many schools?
What tools do they need?
Who would participate from schools? Principals? Teachers? Students? Parents?

Documentation Team
APPENDIX G

PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>COMPLETION STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name Tags</td>
<td>Create Name Tags/Templates for mentors and students. Figure out printing as well as lanyards.</td>
<td>Laura &amp; Matt</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-Up Posters</td>
<td>Create Posters for students to sign-up to help with CreateAthon set up on Thursday night as well as Saturday morning.</td>
<td>Larry &amp; Lindsey</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Boards</td>
<td>Figure out a way to effectively use mood boards as spaces that document progress throughout CreateAthon. Also create signage to delegate each boards specific purpose.</td>
<td>Summer &amp; Jill</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map Links</td>
<td>Place links to UTC Campus map on Twitter, Facebook, and the blog for visitors.</td>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikon/Printer</td>
<td>Reach out to Ikon to have the Ricoh printer calibrated/cleaned and possibly get someone who works at Ikon to help us in case of a breakdown.</td>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lab Signs</td>
<td>Make signs notifying the seniors to tidy up the lab, and let them know that any food not marked to keep will be thrown out.</td>
<td>Summer &amp; Jill</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightbulbs</td>
<td>Email Cheryl about replacing lightbulbs in rooms we will be using on the track lighting.</td>
<td>Summer &amp; Jill</td>
<td>Email Sent-Awaiting Reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Situation</td>
<td>Notify CreateHere of plan for Breakfast during CreateAthon</td>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga Mats</td>
<td>See if ARC will lend us Yoga mats for CreateAthon</td>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga Times</td>
<td>Figure out when Yoga instructors will be able to come. (Space still being worked out.)</td>
<td>Allison (I do believe)</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Passes</td>
<td>Find out where guests will park, and get ahold of guest passes if need be.</td>
<td>Leslie &amp; CreateHere</td>
<td>Waiting on Reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 students attending CreateAthon</td>
<td>Contact Rodney and figure out details of the students attending the field trip as well as when they will be coming.</td>
<td>Allison</td>
<td>Email Sent-Awaiting Reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASK</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</td>
<td>COMPLETION STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Attending Wrap Up Presentation</td>
<td>Contact Rodney and discuss the details dealing with the students who are supposed to attend.</td>
<td>Allison or Kayla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michel and Gallery Documentation</td>
<td>Email Michel Belknap in reference to her saying there was a teacher that was willing to help document some of the students work, and contact that teacher.</td>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Timeline</td>
<td>Create a Detailed timeline of CreateAthon including food schedule, check-ins, designated breaks, yoga instructor times and any other information.</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Allergies List</td>
<td>Compile a list of food allergies and dietary limitations such as vegan or vegetarian.</td>
<td>Elena</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda for Kick-Off and Community Presentations</td>
<td>Create a plan for each of these presentations including schedule of speakers and topics to be presented.</td>
<td>Kelsey, Elena, Taylor</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-In Table</td>
<td>Have a sign-in Table and someone in charge of nametags for mentors as well as keeping track of liability waiver completion.</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Feed</td>
<td>Figure out how to easily generate a live feed of the Wrap-up presentation. Work with Daniel (?) to accomplish this.</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wordpress Signup</td>
<td>Make sure everyone of the students has became an author on Wordpress.</td>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Building Manager</td>
<td>Leslie will discuss with the building manager where we can do different activites within the building during CreateAthon. (I do believe this is the point of the conversation at least.)</td>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank You Notes</td>
<td>Figure out a system for thank you notes to mentors and everyone who got involved.</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASK</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T-shirt Drop off/Distribution</td>
<td>Discuss figuring out shirt sizes needed for each classroom so they can be organized based on need per classroom. Plan out how to go about this with maybe the printer’s help. Also who will help with delivering/distributing the t-shirts to Dalewood on Thursday.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up Emails: Mentors who haven’t responded</td>
<td>Email the potential mentors who have yet to respond, asking them to participate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up Emails: Mentors who have confirmed</td>
<td>Complete a follow-up email for mentors who have confirmed. Send out after Leslie’s consent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Faculty Invitations</td>
<td>Send out emails inviting Art Faculty encouraging them to come see the CreateAthon process, as well as attend the wrap-up presentation for the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite Reminders</td>
<td>Send out invitation reminders to UTC Faculty and city officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art List Serve</td>
<td>Email those on the Art List Serve in references to CreateAthon and the sign-up sheet for helping out with CreateAthon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuck Cantrell Follow-Up</td>
<td>Follow-up with Chuck Cantrell regarding a university wide email in reference to the community wide wrap-up presentation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Make sure everything is working, fixed, and inline for heavy usage before, during, and after CreateAthon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>COMPLETION STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allison-Contacted Rod</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodney about asking th</td>
<td></td>
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<td>eachers about the sizes.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Still need help dist.</td>
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<td>and plan.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn, Robin, &amp; Amanda</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn, Robin, &amp; Amanda</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
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<td>Dawn, Robin, &amp; Amanda</td>
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<td>Dawn, Robin, &amp; Amanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dawn, Robin, &amp; Amanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elena</td>
<td>Completed for now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

CREATEATHON ONCAMPUS ITINERARY
FRIDAY, APRIL 8th

9:00 am  Arrival at UTC if Carpooling

9:15 am  Arrival at Dalewood Middle School (EVERYONE)
Arrive at Dalewood Middle School
Get “I CAN” t-shirts
Set up in gym for pep rally

10:00-10:30 am  Pep rally
at Dalewood Middle School

10:30-10:45 am  Big group meet
Set out goals for CreateAthon
Group photo with t-shirts

10:45-12:00 am  Brainstorming and Concept Development
Teams meet in the related spaces at Dalewood
Have creative briefs/proposals/project descriptions for each member of group

12:00-1:00 pm  Lunch at Dalewood

1:00-3:30 pm  Continued Project Development and Executions begin
Teams allowed into labs

3:30-4:00 pm  Fun for All
Everyone needs to take a break and have some fun

4:00-5:30 pm  First Review
Teams come with printed pieces to review

5:30-6:00 pm  Fun for All
Everyone needs to take a break and have some fun

6:00-6:30 pm  Teams Regroup
Individual teams regroup to make plan on next actionable steps from the information received at First Review.

6:30-7:30 pm  Dinner

7:30pm-12:00 am  Full steam ahead
By now, work is starting to come alive
Hardcore executions happening
Mentors will help groups with final conceptual details but mostly execution
SATURDAY, APRIL 9th

12:00-12:30 am  **Big Check in**  
Every team hangs work in main area for all to see  
Team Leader gives brief overview of projects to whole group

1:00- 6:30 am  **Full Steam Ahead**  
Hardcore work and finishing  
All work is dummyed, PDF presentation created  
Printouts for Dalewood Principal

6:30-7:30 am  **Breakfast**

7:30-8:00 am  **Big Check in 2**  
Every team hangs work in main area for all to see  
Team Leader gives brief overview of projects to whole group

8:00-9:15 am  **Finishing Details**  
All work is dummyed, PDF presentation created  
Printouts for Dalewood Principal

9:15-9:30 am  **Get ready to leave FAC**

9:30 am  **Leave FAC go to UC Auditorium**  
Prep for community event presentation

10:15 am  **Guests start to arrive**

10:30 am  **Community Event Presentation**

11:00 am  **Community Event Presentation Concludes**  
Light breakfast

11:15 am  **The Big Clean-Up**  
Go back to FAC and clean up

12:30 pm  **Everyone go home and recover:)**
VITA

Leslie Jensen-Inman, assistant professor at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, acts on her passion to improve web education through initiatives such as Teach the Web, the Open Web Education Alliance, the WE Rock Summit and Tour, and InterACT. Leslie is co-author and creative director of the book *InterACT with Web Standards: A holistic approach to Web design.*

Make Awesomeness. Do Good. This is Leslie’s mantra. She believes awesomeness can and should be integrated into every aspect of the creative process. Leslie works with young designers and established professionals to create opportunities to design and produce innovative products that support the efforts of creatives. Visit www.jenseninman.com to learn about the latest adventures Leslie is taking.