Colaboratory: Design Collaboration for the Greater Good

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COLABORATORY: DESIGN COLLABORATION FOR THE GREATER GOOD

by

STEPHANIE ARENDS NEAL

(Under the Direction of Onyile Bassey Onyile)

ABSTRACT

A university campus is comprised of countless students enrolled in an array of degree programs that logistically creates a diverse population that can and should culminate into a dynamic professional network for graduates. How can higher education capitalize on this melting pot to provide experiences for students and fuse this network? A place, where students collectively solve problems by applying knowledge from their degree-specific areas, will foster interdisciplinary collaboration. By requiring working-relationships between students that benefit their community, a design center will provide students with experiences across disciplines that mirror a real-world, collaborative work environment while they identify opportunities and solve a professional caliber graphic design solutions for their portfolio.

The benefits of an interdisciplinary design center are numerous. For a generation of students who value service learning and embrace the concept of ‘working for the greater good,’ these students crave to realize their possible impact in their local and global communities and will thrive in such an experience. Pre-professional students who participate in the design center will develop necessary skills in leadership; gain a greater understanding of their transferrable skills, and cultivate a network of individuals and references for their professional career.

INDEX WORDS: Design, Graphic Design, Design Center, Interdisciplinary, Experience, Leadership, Transferable Skills, Collaboration, Higher Education
COLABORATORY: DESIGN COLLABORATION FOR THE GREATER GOOD

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS

STATESBORO, GEORGIA
COLABORATORY: DESIGN COLLABORATION FOR THE GREATER GOOD

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my sons, Jack and Luke, and all of the creative hearts that understand that not all who wander are lost. Do what makes you happy, color outside of the lines and love thy neighbors.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my husband Bryan, my sons Jack and Luke, my parents, my brother and my countless family and friends who have supported my creative endeavors. It has been a long road, but it’s still only the beginning. Additionally, thank you to Professor Leigh Thomson, Professor Santanu Majumdar, Dr. Todd Deal, Dean Patrice Jackson and Dean Christine Ludowise for their suggestions, lessons and encouragement through my Master of Fine Arts degree.

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Most importantly, thank you to my dear friend and design confidante until the end, Lindsay Tyson - we made it.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Historically, graphic designers focused on enhancing the visual presence and functionality of a wide range of commercial products or services, as the messenger for education and even propaganda protagonist. Acknowledging the powerful impact design can have, organizations began using design thinking to tackle complex social problems. Corporations also have adopted methods as an approach within management. Why? The designer’s techniques and skills used in completing their work is an extensive multifaceted experience. Scientific and cultural research, demographic analysis, emotional manipulation, formal visual organization, and an assortment of dissemination methods are but a few design practices. Within this context, the contemporary graphic designer’s role has expanded into a broadly defined, human-centered creative problem solver that is now a role model to other professions.

Professional graphic designers working in the field frequently find themselves in situations where it is essential they collaborate with engineers, scientists, marketers or communication specialists on various solutions – and vise versa. Similarly, the workforce within corporations, non-profits and higher education are comprised of experts hailing from different backgrounds. Collaboration skills, for survival and the greater good, are essential. This thought it supported by Sir George Cox in his Cox Review in Creativity in Business, “We need business people who understand creativity, who know when and how to use the specialist, and who can manage innovation; one of the challenges is to get business people, engineers, technologists and designers to understand one another better and to speak the same language.”

1 The Cox Review of Creativity in Business (United Kingdom) aimed to identify how best to strengthen the
Design tools have been adapted and extended into a distinct new discipline: design thinking.\textsuperscript{2} Design thinking, in its simplest form, is a process—applicable to all walks of life—of creating new and innovative ideas and solving problems. It is not limited to a specific industry or area of expertise. Meanwhile, discovering and understanding personal leadership strengths and those of team members is vital to the survival of collaboration. Rather than a lead position within a business or organization, the perspective of leadership within this thesis refers to character strengths and skillsets not directly related to their area of study.

CHAPTER 2
DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

The problem this thesis seeks is to solve the absence of interdisciplinary collaboration across the Georgia Southern University campus community, a liberal arts university where students across campus, although in different degree programs, not only share the same interests but are seeking to address the same types of problems our society faces. This thesis, *Colaboratory: Design Collaboration for the Greater Good*, examines how interdisciplinary collaboration, with visual communication at its core and using design thinking as a guide, will ignite social change within a community and inspire positive human behavior. When formally organized into a unit of higher education, collaboration will shape graduates who are workforce-ready leaders by developing students’ transferrable skills through creative-, research- leadership- and experience-based solutions that help solve, or call attention to, local, national, and global issues while educating the community of the value of design.

It is my observation that pairing individuals, who are driven by the same subject matter yet offer different skillsets, will generate a wider range of possible outcomes than if an individual attempts to solve a problem on their own. When a subject needs context, other disciplines are indispensable, forcing boundary changes. At their best, interdisciplinary programs go beyond intellectual integration to create a community of learning among faculty and students. This climate fosters group norms supportive of creative intellectual inquiry and facilitates approaching the same or related problems at different levels of analysis.

A four-year institution must capitalize on their network of a blended student, professional and faculty population by developing an interdisciplinary design center that
fuses the network of students and engages students in resolving global challenges by incorporating design thinking with degree-specific knowledge. Students within a university are working towards a common goal – a college degree that leads to a fruitful career. To provide students with holistic preparation for their careers, it is imperative to provide relative experiences and educate students how to interact and collaborate with peers to succeed professionally. More often than not, students in higher education do not have distinct opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers on major problem-solving projects.

By learning and connecting with each other to benefit local and global communities, graphic design students working in a design center will integrate their training in design thinking with the expertise of other students from diverse disciplines to embrace a classroom experience that connects theory and practice. Throughout the design thinking problem-solving process, students will engage with one another and discover their leadership qualities and how to best use their strengths to interact with team members to best achieve their solution. Furthermore, students will understand what their transferrable skills are and how knowledge acquired through other experiences or how natural talent can be applicable to their current setting.

My interest in interdisciplinary design collaboration was piqued during a course I took early in my graduate program of studies titled Design + Culture. All of my peers in the course had graphic design backgrounds, each with their own unique strengths and specialties, and we worked together for an entire semester on a global, social-awareness project, creating a powerful campaign, that none of us knew much about to begin with.

The project broached a human atrocity, the North American child sex trade, and became known as American Sex. This was important to the group after discovering that
our own Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, which is only 200 miles away from Georgia Southern University, is a major hub for trafficking children. Collectively, we created printed artifacts, mock products, online avenues and simulated environments to engage with the community. The project branding components provided a platform for each group member to demonstrate his or her specific skill set. Witnessing the interaction between six very different people with a specific the communal effort, shared goal and ultimately a successful outcome is what inspired the direction of this thesis. However, it begged the question, “how would a collaboration like this differ when further emphasizing collaborators’ various skill sets?”

I further explored the idea of ‘collaborating for the greater good’ by working with a member from American Sex and fellow MFA candidate, Lindsay Tyson, to address various problems ranging from social awareness to community advancement through a prototype design center we created the coined Colaboratory.
CHAPTER 3
HISTORICAL REFERENCE, METHODOLOGY, PRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS

HISTORICAL REFERENCE

The idea to collaborate in an interdisciplinary setting is not new. Interdisciplinary environments have been thriving in the workforce, healthcare research and education. However, there are other viewpoints regarding interdisciplinary environments. In 1991, Marilyn Stember, PhD\(^3\) addressed interdisciplinary settings in higher education through her article “Advancing the Social Sciences Through the Interdisciplinary Enterprise.” Stember references that interdisciplinary research and educational programs were launched in limited ways after World War II. The interdisciplinary experience in universities is only a few decades old. She defines an interdisciplinary setting as a complex endeavor that seeks to clarify relationships, processes, values, and context using the diversity and unity possible only through collaborative approaches. To do so successfully, Stephen H. Cutcliffe suggested that it ‘means developing an understanding, both generally and in specific instances, about what values are, how people come to hold them, and how values evolve. It means understanding the genesis and function of societal institutions in the political, economic, and cultural realms. It means understanding in some general sense the internal essence and operation . . . with major current concepts and methodologies, with design and modeling strategies in the disciplines being studied. It also requires a holistic understanding of the complex interactions among these diverse components. And as if this were not enough, it also implies the study of these complexities as reflected in art, literature, philosophy, and history as well as through contemporary political, economic, and sociological analyses.’

Interdisciplinary collaboration holds great promise for understanding

\(^3\) Marilyn Stember is a professor emerita of University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.
the holistic complex of interrelationships. The challenge is to increase our capacity for truly interdisciplinary work.⁴

Lindsay and I sought to create a design center with an interdisciplinary and collaborative problem-solving environment. This driving concept that is the foundation of the Colaboratory is not uncommon, in fact interdisciplinary work environments has been trending for a while. In 2007 *BusinessWeek*’s Bruce Nussbaum stated that,

> Innovation is no longer just about new technology per se. It is about new models of organization. Design is no longer just about form anymore but is a method of thinking that can let you to see around corners. And the high tech breakthroughs that do count today are not about speed and performance but about collaboration, conversation and co-creation.

> Innovation, design and technology are all flowing into one another to form a single river of roaring change radically altering our culture, and especially our business culture.⁵

On the other hand, Elaine Howard Ecklund⁶ suggests universities abandon disciplines all together. She believes disciplines create boundaries faculty and students can’t think outside of and it is only through non-disciplinary research that we will find answers to pressing questions such as how to battle cancer, combat environmental devastation and understand religion.⁷ I disagree with her viewpoint reflect the phrase, ‘Jack of all trades, master of none’. It is imperative that a collaborative setting utilizes

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⁶ Elaine Howard Ecklund is an assistant professor of sociology and director of the program on religion and public life at Rice University’s Institute for Urban Research.

individuals for what they can uniquely bring to the table.

Nussbaum’s allegory specifically describes the interdisciplinary collaboration in which I am interested. Interdisciplinary environments integrate knowledge and methods from different disciplines while using a real synthesis of approaches, like design thinking. Thinking like a designer can transform the way organizations develop products, services, processes, and strategy. Developed by IDEO, design thinking is an interdisciplinary process that Tim Brown, president and CEO of IDEO, defines as “a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s skillsets to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.”

This approach also allows people who aren’t trained as designers to use creative tools to address a vast range of challenges.

Today, university campuses are familiar with collaboration. Several campuses boast design centers as well. Many of these collaborative centers focus on design thinking, and cross-, multi- or interdisciplinary settings with an emphasis on building a relationship with the community. Over the span of our research, state schools, private institutions and d-schools continued to develop design centers as a supplemental learning tool and avenue to build relationships with their community. Each of these design centers epitomizes collaboration in their own way. Some centers focus on limited degree area collaborations such as engineering and interior design, while other centers truly are interdisciplinary with visual communication at its core. In addition to design centers, many schools also have courses or programs that stress using your talents to benefit the greater good. Design for the ‘greater good’ refers to actively participating with accountability in the positive growth of social, economic and political change in society.

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It is the graphic designer’s duty to be creative problem solvers who create awareness and inspire social change through design. Brown states that, “the rise of design thinking corresponds to a culture change, and what excites the best thinkers today is applying their skills to problems that matter. Improving the lives of people in extreme need is near the top of that list.”

Through research, it became apparent that some of the interdisciplinary design centers addressed problems facing the greater good of their community, however they did not claim if they enabled their students’ leadership strengths. In the following sections I will address the importance of coaching students how to learn about their skillsets and leadership-strengths, and how leadership is applicable to the Colaboratory.

**METHODOLOGY**

While researching design centers already in place, it was clear students were provided creative opportunities, however it was not evident if and how they facilitated the collaborations, enhanced individual skillsets or prepared students for professional

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9 The design thinking process moves problem-solvers through three main phases:
PHASE 1. INSPIRATION. The foundation of the rest of the process, this phase encourages problem-solvers and designers alike to learn how to better understand people by observing their lives and daily activities, to not only listen to their feedback, but hear about what makes them tick and what it important to them.
PHASE 2. IDEATION. First, users must begin to process Phase 1 to start generating ideas, identify opportunities, test ideas and refine solutions. Design thinking requires an interdisciplinary group of individuals to provide cross-functional insight into each problem by varied perspectives as well as constant and relentless questioning. No matter how obvious the solution may seem, it is important to keep every possibility open for discussion. Looking at a problem from more than one perspective always yields richer results. Throughout this stage, it is necessary to research; promising ideas must be further explored. Even the strongest ideas can be fragile in their infancy. Design thinking allows their potential to be realized by creating an environment conducive to growth and experimentation, and the making of mistakes in order to achieve unconventional results. Students will be challenged to solve applicable problems, to understand how their work starts with an idea and is resolved publicly.
PHASE 3. IMPLEMENTATION. Bring the solution to life by executing the chosen idea. At this point in time, enough research and exploration has been conducted to ensure success. Therefore, commit resources to achieve the early objectives. Learn and understand the market to maximize the solution’s impact.
development. It is my observation that established design centers do not emphasize the responsibility of educating and instilling and/or identifying leadership skills in their participants. Leadership has nothing to do with seniority or hierarchal positions within a company, nor does have nothing to do with job titles or managing people. Leadership is a process of social influence that maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal.

With interdisciplinary collaboration and social awareness in mind, the Colaboratory was specifically developed to add an additional dimension to Georgia Southern University, provide creative opportunities for students across campus and to educate the community about the value of creative thinking through service projects by capitalizing on current strengths within the University. Georgia Southern houses the Office of Leadership and Community Engagement, an active department throughout the southeast. Their mission is guided by the principles of transformational leadership\textsuperscript{10}, integrated learning, service and leadership to empower students to become active, global citizens who lead with a lifelong commitment to service. Their core values are to

- foster creativity and innovation to develop cutting edge, benchmarked experiences;
- encourage the open, courteous expression of thoughts, opinions, and ideas;
- provide opportunities to serve, meeting the legitimate needs of others;
- model active citizenship, leadership and stewardship; and to
- cultivate an educational environment that inspires students.

Once the parameters encompassing interdisciplinary collaboration, greater good and leadership were clearly defined, the thesis statement started to take shape. Overall, the day-to-day operations of the Colaboratory are like that of any other professional design

\textsuperscript{10} Transformational leadership is an approach that causes positive change in individuals and social systems.
agency. Teams must engage with the community, utilize and build their network and seek problems to address, just as an agency would seek clients. Once a problem is defined, a design brief is created. The design brief is a crucial document that specifies what the project goals are and within what timeframe. It answers simple questions such as ‘who is the client, what do they do, who needs to know and why should they care?’ The brief also contains necessary information to inform the team of necessary information such as the client’s competition, goals and how they will be measured, budget and previous materials created, if any. The design brief also creates a foundation for the team to further research possibilities.

Once the design brief finalized, student teams must work together, by way of design thinking, to develop a solution. Design thinking, a collaborative effort, is a framework for ingenuity. It can generate excitement for new ideas, leading to solutions that address unmet needs. Just as business intelligence\(^1\) can be the enabler for faster, better-informed decisions, design thinking can be the driver for better-designed solutions for products and services.\(^2\)

It is throughout this process that students learn how their transferrable skillsets impact a group effort. By incorporating and stressing leadership abilities into the Colaboratory, the design center becomes more successful when compared to those offered by other universities. In the following section I will introduce leadership-strengths and how these skillsets inform collaboration.

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\(^1\) Business intelligence, or BI, is an umbrella term that refers to a variety of software activities, including data mining, online analytical processing, querying and reporting. (Mulcahy 2007)

Collaboration is a positive environment, but it can get tricky very quickly. If there is more than one student representing the same discipline, they will be challenged to balance their style, opinion and their workload. Different styles and opinions can break the consistency of campaign and it can be difficult to assign items on a to-do list. Egos will consistently have to be checked. It is essential when working in a team setting that participants of the team must acknowledge their own and each team member’s personal strengths. For example, while all participants may have a personal connection to the task at hand, one team member may excel at organization, one may be proficient in relationship building and another in strategic thinking. That being said, students from the same discipline can also favor alternative areas within their program of study. For example, graphic designers vary in concentration and ability; some focus solely on branding whereas others tend to excel designing for the web. This can work to an advantage when delegating touch points of the project. In addition to tangible abilities, individuals need to learn early on what their intangible skillsets are and are not, and how to utilize them in a team setting to benefit the collaboration.

Within the context of this thesis, these types of skillsets are considered leadership strengths. Strengths are the unique combination of talents, knowledge and skills that every person possesses. Teams that focus on their strengths are twelve and half percent more productive than teams that do not. Learning how to utilize these leadership strengths and how they interact with other leadership strengths will make a group work more efficiently – both physically and mentally. As part of the Colaboratory experience, participants will learn how to use their skillsets while also learning how to better

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understand themselves and identify the characteristics or strengths they have that will benefit the group as a whole. This process will help them work collaboratively within the design center and also in their future professions.

In 2001, Gallup, Inc.\textsuperscript{14} introduced the world to the Clifton StrengthsFinder, which is also utilized by the Office of Leadership and Community Engagement at Georgia Southern University. The StrengthsFinder assessment has four major ‘leadership domains’ – executing, influencing, relationship building and strategic thinking. Per Clifton’s StrengthsFinder:

Individuals who excel in the \textbf{executing} leadership domain know how to make things happen; they implement a solution and will work tirelessly to get it done. Leaders with the strength to execute have the ability to “catch” an idea and make it a reality.

Those whose themes are represented within the \textbf{influencing} domain help teams reach a much broader audience and are always selling the team’s ideas. This person takes charge, speaks up and makes sure the message is heard.

\textbf{Relationship} builders are the essential glue that holds a team together. Without these strengths on a team, the group is simply a composite of individuals. In contrast, leaders with exceptional relationship building strength have the unique ability to create groups and organizations that are much greater than the sum of their parts.

Team members whose strength lies in \textbf{strategic thinking} are the ones who keep the group focused on ‘what could be.’ These individuals are constantly absorbing and analyzing information and helping the team make better decisions. People with strength in this domain continually stretch the team’s thinking for the future.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Gallup, Inc. is an American research-based, global performance-management consulting company founded by George Gallup in 1935.

People use these innate traits and abilities in their daily lives to complete their work, to relate with others, and to achieve their goals except most people don’t know what their strengths are or have the opportunity to use them to their advantage. People who do focus on their strengths every day are six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs. They are more productive too, both individually and in teams.¹⁶

As part of the Colaboratory experience, participants take the StrengthsFinder assessment to learn how to better understand themselves and how to use their leadership strengths to benefit the group as a whole. To demonstrate this concept, my Colaboratory counterpart and myself took the assessment within the duration of our research. As students would do in the Colaboratory, we openly shared our outcomes allowing us to

¹⁶ Gallup Strengths Center, “About.”
understand our working relationship and how our strengths played off of one another.

The outcome of our assessments (Figure A) immediately exposed a fault in our collaboration – we lacked the executing domain and to work more efficiently, we would benefit by adding a team member with a strong executing domain to keep the team on focused on our goal.

The four main leadership domains are an easy way to quickly categorize an individual’s skillsets. However, the domains can be broken-down into thirty-four ‘strengths’ and further analyzed to understand the individual strengths of each member.

Once this was done, Lindsay and I learned how our own strengths worked with one another’s top five strengths (Figure B) to maximize the efficiency of our efforts and after reviewing our assessments, Dr. Todd Deal, Director of Leadership and Civic Engagement
at Georgia Southern University stated,

The really cool thing about strengths is that different people use different strengths to accomplish the same task at hand. It is true that as a pair, you are not energized by the details of doing the task, but you do have the talents to complete the goal.

Both of you are big picture types with a focus on making things better and coming up with ideas to do so. You likely energize each other in conversations about these ideas. As a pair, you have great talents for sharing your ideas with others and convincing them to get on board and go with you. You believe in what you are doing and are passionate about it. One of you also has strong team-building talents, which certainly will work in your favor.

However, your team is in need of an executor to keep the team on task and moving forward. My guess is that you all can tend to get sidetracked with your big ideas. Let the Activator [leadership theme] drive the bus when this happens.

Deal’s predictions were valid. While both team members had big visions, I utilized my personal relationships within the community to seek out opportunities for the Colaboratory. After discussing viable options, Lindsay and I then worked with community members to creatively solve the task at hand. My Activator strength helped get the team’s vision off the ground. However, Lindsay, who is more articulate and confident, utilized her command strength and became the spokesperson during meetings. Together we worked for creative, alternative means to identity solutions for the task at hand and during this, I was able to identify and suggest areas in which each team member excelled and could focus their energy. Lindsay utilized her competitive strength to measure our progress towards deadlines and when situations or questions arose during projects, she stopped me from getting distracted by making the decision to move forward. Because both Lindsay and myself had futuristic strengths, we constantly asked the ‘what
if…’ question. This is a crucial question in design thinking and while it made for endless possibilities, we found it prolonged the production of each solution.

Discovering transferrable leadership skills allows team members to know when to take a step back and let another team member lead charge, how to work with or around, team members’ strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly, become self-aware of our own personalities. In the article, 7 Leadership Skills Fostered in Art Education, Stacey Goodman, an artist and art educator wrote,

Students who are nurtured through the arts must ultimately turn inward and know themselves, face their demons, and ultimately discover their own potential. While we celebrate collaboration and group effort, those approaches are more successful if each person in the collaboration is capable of self-reflection and gaining self-knowledge.

Leadership is most needed when facing a complex problem or a new experience that can't be easily quantified. Students are not exempted from the challenges faced by adults, and in their education, they learn about intractable problems such as economic inequality or global climate change.

We need people who have the skills and abilities to work well with others, and to step forward and lead with new ideas and initiatives. No matter the subject we teach, it's important that we support students in developing to be those necessary heroes.17

Though Goodman’s article is referring the students in grades kindergarten through high school, his points are valid and applicable to college students as well.

CHAPTER 4
COLABORATORY

The previous chapter discussed the research of other design centers and unique items within the proposed design center at Georgia Southern University such as design for the greater good and amplifying leadership strengths. This chapter briefly revisits the purpose of the Colaboratory and introduces its visual identity system.

The responsive idea of an educational graphic design center that emphasizes collaboration and career development quickly morphed into a prototype design center called the Colaboratory. The meaning behind the name is simple. It was devised from multiple words that best illustrate the intentions of the design center: co, collaborate and laboratory. The word signifies togetherness, partnerships; working with one another; and a place, situation, or the like, conducive to experimentation, investigation and observation.

Branding the Colaboratory was a joint effort. The visual identity is made up of both a logo- and wordmark. To develop these marks, the collaboration went through rounds of sketches ranging in design trends, word play, symbolism and typographic options. In the end, together Lindsay and I elected the final logo based on its underlying inspiration.

Substrates such as fabric and paper have been a part of human life for thousands of years. Not only are they strong because of the resources woven together to create it, but also because of hands that created them. The logomark, inspired by the materials used and the process of creating paper and fabric, is made up of four segments that represent a thread, as it is a microscopic view of woven fabric. Without these woven pieces working together, the end goal would not exist. This is symbolic of the interdisciplinary and team-
driven setting of the Colaboratory. Each colored segment represents a different thread.

The colors, or threads, signify the four core components in the collaborative design center:

- **Experience**: Green represents growth and inspires compassion;
- **Creativity**: Orange is the color of risk-taking and social communication;
- **Research**: Blue is symbolic of honesty and wisdom; and
- **Leadership**: Gray, a derivative of black, is sophisticated and associated with authority.

The overall shape teases the notion of a circle, which would allow it to roll or spin with ease. Instead, the shape of the Colaboratory logo is asymmetrical with semi-hard edges, yet not squared off corners. This evokes the challenges students will face when learning to work in a collaborative setting. However, the shape also adds movement. The logo leans to the right, suggesting it may start to roll, allowing the logo to progress, as the
problem-solving tactics and students will within the Colaboratory. The non-circular fashion also provides a moment to pause and address situations, without impeding the forward movement. The three segments within the four quadrants represent the three phases of design thinking and the secondary lines suggest repetition. Once the students starting learning about one another and how their leadership strengths can benefit the team, their process will become easier each time it is done as well as their move from student to profession after graduation.

The Colaboratory uses Neutraface18, the primary typeface also used by Georgia Southern University. With the goal of implementing the Colaboratory into the University, Lindsay and I opted to use this typeface so the Colaboratory branding would have a visual connection to the institution in which it is housed. The Colaboratory wordmark (Figure D) is bold and dominant; the weight of the letters implies strength. The sans serif typeface is contemporary and endorses the progressive thinking within the Colaboratory. The characters are orange, the primary color in the Colaboratory brand, and stands for the optimistic and courageous personality traits expected within the Colaboratory.

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18 Designed by Christian Schwartz at House Industries in 2002.
CHAPTER 5
COLLABORATIVE DESIGN EXPERIENCES

A design center creates an environment for real-world experience and fieldwork opportunities, and enhances interdisciplinary participation between all degree areas across a college campus while cultivating community relationships. Within this chapter, I will discuss and analyze four collaborative design experiences that are comparable to work that would take place within the Colaboratory at Georgia Southern University and what impacted each solution.

It is within the framework of the Colaboratory and experimental campaigns, this thesis explores how collaboration enhances student’s creativity, how designing for social change impacts society; and how these collaborative experiences and leadership opportunities will better prepare students for success beyond the classroom. The following sections will further analyze the outcomes of the four experiences and how it was confirmed through collaboration that

1. through **American Sex**, guerrilla marketing can introduce a social epidemic;
2. by creating a visual platform for **Team OCEAN**, it is possible to increase service in a community;
3. a rebrand for the non-profit **Hearts and Hands Clinic** could advocate for our neighbors' well-being; and
4. design of an outdoor environment at **The Therapy SPOT** can nourish a child’s growth.
PROBLEM: Child sex trafficking is occurring everyday in our own backyard. Atlanta is the number one hub for sex trafficking in the United Sates of America. Because of this, there is a need to educate the public about this issue.

SOLUTION: Create a guerilla marketing campaign designed to educate students at Georgia Southern University about a social epidemic existing in their communities.

Fueled by six marketing tactics from the book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* by Robert B. Cialdini, myself and six other graphic design candidates created American Sex to educate a local community of child sex trafficking occurring in our own backyard. The group went on to introduce and educate the University’s traditionally aged male and female students of the social epidemic through guerrilla marketing. The team set their eyes on college-aged students, who are the future leaders of our respective communities. The majority of the students attending the University are from Atlanta, where the problem is taking place. Whether or not they are from Atlanta, it is important they know that a major hub for children sex trafficking is located in the state of Georgia. Approximately 2 million children are subjected to prostitution in the global commercial sex trade. Atlanta's illegal sex industry generates around $290 million a year; a big part of Atlanta's draw is the airport, which is the busiest in the world. The goal was to utilize various modes and methods of communicating to the student body.

The group took advantage of human nature to bring awareness to the child sex trade by creating printed artifacts, artificial products, online avenues and simulated environments to engage with the campus community. Together, the team created a

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19 Dr. Robert Cialdini is the seminal expert in the field of influence and persuasion, and what moves people to change. The book details the most common approaches to influencing the decisions of others.

marketing plan, a product and bogus promotion materials. Each team member separately designed a logo for the campaign, reconvened, critiqued each logo, consolidated strong ideas and together, the finalized the American Sex logo. Through these conversations we learned more about one another and each other’s skillsets. Although each group member had an undergraduate degree in graphic design, each had other skills the campaign would benefit from - whether it be writing, web development, relationship building, idea generating, photography or infographic design. Because of this, each team member’s proficiencies delegated their workload once the concept, brand and marketing plan were finalized.
How can you get the attention of a college-aged student? Sell sex, of course. However, this sex was non-descript. To reach a wider audience, five sexual products were created. The American Sex ‘flavors’ (or products) were names of people specifically chosen using the top names from the then current U.S. Census: Jessica, Matthew, Ashley, Christopher and Brittany. These names provided a level of comfort for the viewers, as chances were they knew someone with one of those names. In addition, each of the flavors offered different experiences for the prospective buyer.

The primary artifact in the campaign was a tin can that was designed to attract the target audience. The package and design, through color, pattern and placement was designed to resemble then-current, high-end packaging similar to perfume or boutique body care. While a subtle clue on the package suggested it contained a child, it was only once the user opened the tin, received a message to visit the American Sex website at wideeyedproject.com. Once there, and following the steps to purchase a flavor of American Sex, they discovered the process was a metaphor for purchasing a child.
Figure F - American Sex: Landing Web Page

Figure G - American Sex: Educational Web Page
Impact to the society (success) was measured by feedback received from the target audience and by the amount interaction on the website. The *American Sex* website received 2,239 Unique Visitors in just one month. 271 of those visitors revisited the site. Through email and social media, we received feedback such as the message from Michael Anthony Cardinal, “Way to make a statement and bring the truth home. Effective. All I want to do now is help!”

Through American Sex, we discovered that combining graphic design solutions with standard marketing tactics exposes a social epidemic within a community. It was the success of the project and team setting is what made American Sex the springboard for the Colaboratory. The following sections will discuss the three main experiences Lindsay and I pursued under the concept of the Colaboratory. These sections will review the background of each solution while analyzing the visual outcome.

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TEAM OCEAN
(OCEAN CONSERVATION EDUCATION ACTION NETWORK)

**PROBLEM:** Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Naples, Florida, needed to inform visitors how their behavior impacts the surrounding environment.

**SOLUTION:** Develop an educational campaign to address responsibility and help build accountability among visitors to the Rookery Bay Reserve. The Team OCEAN identity and social awareness campaign was created to develop emotional intelligence within its community.

The Colaboratory joined forces with south Florida’s Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to further develop Team OCEAN, an educational volunteer group to address responsibility and build accountability among visitors to the area. This campaign was devised to raise awareness for not only Team OCEAN’s efforts, but to also make visitors aware of their surroundings and the impact their decisions have on the environment.

The Team OCEAN effort is a boat-based volunteer program supported through a partnership between the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Florida Sea Grant and other local community donors. Team OCEAN volunteers conduct education and outreach programs designed to promote sustainable practices by local boaters. They make weekly visits to high-use areas in the Reserve providing information to fellow boaters and ensure they are being responsible visitors. Volunteers share information on ‘Leave-No-Trace’ practices, boating safety, conservation and marine recreation in effort to help keep Rookery Bay a pristine wilderness experience.

Unlike American Sex, the Colaboratory was able to utilize specialized personnel as resources within Rookery Bay to aid in creating Team OCEAN. Paid employees and volunteers within the Rookery Bay network were able to educate the Colaboratory on the task at hand, how the visitors operate, what the major issues were and how they needed
help to alleviate the workload on the overworked volunteers. Once this conversation between the two entities began, identities were sketched and provided to Rookery Bay.

Employees of the estuary shared the sketches with the volunteers to receive feedback, allowing volunteers part-ownership of the project.
In the end, volunteer feedback from the initial sketches led the direction of the final logo. The Team OCEAN logo (Figure H) is comprised of land, the two major forms of wildlife – birds and fish – that are indigenous to Rookery Bay’s environment. The boat signifies both volunteers and visitors. The spring-like lines also add an element of movement, which is playful and elevating, and was inspired by rippling water, the fragmented sunlight that shines through the water onto the ocean floor and the mangroves present in the estuary. The color palette reflects Rookery Bay’s environment.

- Blue is symbolic of the waters of Rookery Bay;
- tan denotes the landscape surrounding Rookery Bay; and
- red represents awareness, impact and compassion.

These colors are spread across the symbol in an upward diagonal to represent positivity and the growth of stewardship within the estuary.
While the visual identity was imperative to Team OCEAN, the Team OCEAN process and experience is vital to the lifecycle of the volunteer–based program. Because of this, the Colaboratory developed the ‘I am Team OCEAN’ campaign (Figure I). This initiative was created to educate visitors to Rookery Bay, convert people from being visitors of the park to stewards of the environment, grow their volunteer base and raise awareness regarding ethical boating practices. To call attention to, celebrate the campaign and connect it back to Team OCEAN at Rookery Bay, a simple ‘I AM’ was inserted into the current Team OCEAN logo.

Because of the limited number of Team OCEAN volunteers, the first step in the ‘I am Team OCEAN’ campaign was to create educational pieces to assist volunteers in educating the community of Rookery Bay’s ‘ethical boating practices.’ The goal for the informative pieces was to create stylized posters not normally seen at public places such as boat launches and marinas. Through research it was noted that current educational posters were predominately placed at boat launches. The current posters lacked basic principles of design such as hierarchy or emphasis. Boat launches are high paced areas where users are quickly moving their vehicles in and out of the water, and the posters
currently place were busy with highly detailed illustrated images, not conducive to a fast-paced audience. Rarely were posters found in areas where people were not as rushed such as parks or picnic areas, bathrooms, restaurants, bait shops and local sporting good stores.

The Team OCEAN posters are minimal. They are easy to read, straight to the point, using only the Team OCEAN color palette, an environmental fact relative to Rookery Bay’s message educating visitors in the park. To safeguard the viewer isn’t overloaded with content, the amount of information used on the Team OCEAN posters is limited while poignant. The red, which was introduced to the campaign through its identity, remains present within the educational materials to highlight ethical boating practices and other important messages. Each of the posters is set up in similar fashion, upholding the Team OCEAN brand, further building relationships with its viewers.

The Colaboratory researched supporting facts to accompany several of the ethical boating practices provided by Rookery Bay. These facts were chosen to associate feelings or physical ailments that humans could relate to. Using the rule of thirds in the composition to create emphasis on both the message and the graphic, the posters invoke empathy. The graphic focal point in each poster is a bold silhouette used to call attention to the poster. Each is centered, flat and in solitude, giving the viewer a sense of hopelessness and loneliness. This triggers the viewer to feel deeply and will later provide an opportunity for the viewer to remember the message when found in a relatable scenario. Points made within the posters are also reiterated by word of mouth via Team OCEAN volunteers in the area.
More than one million birds and 100,000 marine mammals die a slow, agonizing death each year from marine debris.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (January, 2014)

**Ethical Boating Practice**
Retrieve cut or snagged fishing line to prevent entanglement.

Figure J - Team OCEAN Educational Poster – Fishing
Watercrafts accounted for approximately 18% of reported manatee deaths in Florida during 2014.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (December, 2014)

Ethical Boating Practice
Navigate properly for safe boating and protection of submerged habitats.

Figure K - Team OCEAN Educational Poster – Boating
Once shorebird parents are frightened from the nest, exposed chicks or eggs can succumb to the heat of the Florida summer sun in as little as five minutes.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (March, 2012)

Ethical Boating Practice
Observe marine wildlife from a distance to ensure their estuary stay unharmed.

Figure L - Team OCEAN Educational Poster – Wildlife
In 2014, over two hundred bags of litter and debris were removed from Rookery Bay Reserve’s South Key Island and Cape Romano alone.

Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (December, 2014)

**Ethical Boating Practice**

Prevent litter in the area by tying down and packing out what was brought into the area.

Figure M - Team OCEAN Educational Poster – Litter
The first poster (Figure J) created in the series reminds those fishing to retrieve cut or snagged fishing line to prevent wildlife entanglement. The silhouette of the egret first brings the viewer’s attention to the beak, snared with red monofilament. The red line is tightly wound around the egret’s beaks signifying stress and then finally loops carelessly around its long neck foreshadowing the egret’s future of not only starvation but also asphyxiation. Because the egret is depicted while still alive, it allows the viewer to envision the egret’s struggle to remove the entrapment not allowing it to eat. In addition, the standing position allows the viewer's eye to continue moving down the page. The waterfowl’s shadow, a sharp circle at the base of its feet, represents a hot day, at high noon, and is meant to prompt the viewer's thirst to provide the viewer another chance to sympathize with the animal. Finally, the eye is drawn to the informative section below the egret, ‘more than one million birds and 100,000 marine mammals die a slow, agonizing death each year from marine debris,’ making them cognizant to retrieve cut or snagged fishing line to prevent entanglement of animals in the estuary.

The second poster (Figure K) reminds boaters that there is more than meets the eye in Rookery Bay, and like the first poster, the lines lead the viewer through the page. Continuing to use the same two-thirds composition, a lone, wounded manatee is highlighted on the poster. Red, indicating blood, is used again to highlight the negative effect of careless visitors in Rookery Bay. The manatee, which is lingering just below the surface of the water, casts a shadow below. While the shadow stresses the manatee’s presence at the top of the page, it highlights the educational content at the bottom of the page. In 2014, watercrafts accounted for 18% of manatee deaths in Florida alone.24 This

23 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (January, 2014)
detail is intended to remind boaters that humans and wildlife alike enjoy Rookery Bay and that it’s necessary to navigate for safe boating but more importantly, to protect submerged habitats.

There are numerous adverse effects of getting too close to wildlife. For example, once a shorebird parent is frightened from its nest, exposed chicks, or eggs, can succumb to the heat of the Florida summer sun in as little as five minutes. While this is just one example, the third poster (Figure L) reminds on-shore visitors to observe marine wildlife from a distance to ensure their estuary stay unharmed. Here, a spotlight shining straight into a bird’s nest reminiscent of Charlie Harper artwork represents the hot Florida sun. Again, the vertical lines of the spotlight enable the viewer to unknowingly look the poster over from top to bottom. The nest is dominant in the foreground while off in the distance a bird flies away. Although chicks and eggs are not visible, a nest is symbolic of family; the small bird accentuates the abandonment of the sole nest.

Lastly, the Colaboratory learned that over 200 bags of trash were removed from a small area of Rookery Bay in 2014. This educational fact targets the leisurely boaters who spend the day anchored at the island fraternizing with other boaters. It is important to tie down and pack out everything that is brought into the area. The fourth poster (Figure M) does not have the implied vertical lines like the other three posters. However, the sharp, jagged lines caution viewers of possible garbage near their feet, also reminding them not to litter. The implied horizontal line suggests the expansive ocean and amount of trash that has been found in the area by volunteers.

While the posters raise awareness to those utilizing Rookery Bay National

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Estuarine Research Reserve, a human touch point is a memorable experience. On any given day a person is exposed anywhere to 5,000 and 10,000 marketing messages; while printed artifacts are important in advocating a message, they are also easy to dismiss.

Therefore, Team OCEAN’s volunteers seek to build relationships and verbally educate visitors to Rookery Bay. There is a reason for the saying, ‘scratch each others backs.” Humans are hardwired to return favors and pay debts; when given something, a person feels obligated to do something in return. Therefore, using the reciprocity tactic from Cialdini’s *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, volunteers mention to visitors, that for a minute of their time, have the chance to receive free Team OCEAN swag. Once the visitor is committed to the conversation, the volunteer will introduce the importance of Team OCEAN, discuss ethical boating practices and shares volunteers opportunities.

Following, the now-informed visitor has the option take the ‘I am Team OCEAN’ pledge, vowing to abide by the ethical boating practices shared by the volunteer:

Within Florida’s Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and beyond, Team OCEAN members vow to:

- navigate properly for safe boating and protection of submerged habitats;
- secure loads before coming up to speed to reduce marine debris;
- keep pets on a leash or at home to reduce disturbances to wildlife people;
- observe marine wildlife from a distance to ensure both you and the wildlife stay safe;
- retrieve cut or snagged fishing line to prevent entanglement;
- prevent litter by packing out what you bring in.

In return, the now pledged visitor receives an ‘I am Team OCEAN’ sticker to place on their boat or car. While the red initially represented important messages, once a

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pledge is made, the color signifies they have taken the pledge and have vowed to be stewards of the environment. Those who take the ‘I am Team OCEAN’ pledge are now able to receive promotional campaign items such as shirts, can coolers and floating key chains (Figure N).

Figure N - Team OCEAN: Promotional Items
sticker and example of application (top), can cooler (bottom left) and floating keychain (bottom right)
Not only do these promotional items reciprocate the pledge, but they also echo the Team OCEAN message amongst peers throughout the estuary. These items maximize the footprint of the Team OCEAN mission without overworking the small amount of volunteers. Brooke Carney, Rookery Bay’s Coastal Training Coordinator stated that the ideas and efforts of the Colaboratory were far greater than her team had envisioned. They assumed a logo and a sticker alone would provide a platform for Team OCEAN volunteers to relay ethical boating practices to park visitors. They did not consider a campaign to recruit volunteers and stewards or using artifacts, instead of volunteers, to make park visitors aware of their environment.

Reflecting on her experience with the Colaboratory, Brooke Carney, a biologist and science communications specialist for Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve said that

Collaborating with a team of creatives made Rookery Bay Reserve's outreach efforts far more effective than without. I was introduced to what a complete outreach campaign can look like visually - which is much broader than enlisting a designer to make a nice brochure.

As a team of professionals from different backgrounds, we challenged each other to think outside of our respective boxes. We worked together to shape messages and uniquely connect with our target audiences in meaningful ways.

The result was beyond anything I could have produced or even commissioned on my own.

It became evident that through the Team OCEAN campaign, Rookery Bay team members discovered that it is possible to increase awareness and educate a community about environmental issues through graphic design, while educating team members of the impact of design.
To date, Team OCEAN volunteers have reached thousands of local boaters through individual contacts on the water, at beach island locations, boat ramps and at local boat shows. With the addition of the Team OCEAN visual identity and the ‘I am Team OCEAN’ pledge mechanism, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve’s educational efforts have already begun being utilized in other areas of south Florida. Due to the success of the program, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection intends to make Team OCEAN and the ‘I am Team OCEAN’ pledge a statewide initiative.
HEARTS + HANDS CLINIC

**PROBLEM:** The Hearts and Hands Clinic was not receiving the recognition, attention or support they needed due to a weak visual identity and limited brand.

**SOLUTION:** A new brand identity was created to assist the non-profit clinic, to educate the community about their services and garner exposure to gain financial assistance.

Located in Statesboro, the Hearts and Hands Clinic’s mission is to promote healthy living and health education by providing free primary health services for citizens of Bulloch County who are medically uninsured and have an income at or below 200% of the federal poverty guideline. The clinic’s purpose is not to enable, but to serve the community by providing support for individuals as they seek ways to better themselves. The clinic lives by their mantra, “we take our hearts and using our hands to give hope.”

Coincidentally, the Hearts and Hands Clinic began as a student-lead idea from Georgia Southern, who was involved with the University’s Leadership and Community Engagement Office. The student, Andres Montes, spearheaded the initiative with the help of other students and community volunteers. The clinic opened its doors in 2010 in an office of a local church. Since then the clinic was able to move into its own space located in downtown Statesboro. While the success of the clinic is evident by their growth and ability to serve the community, it also serves as an example to what forms of initiatives can be tackled within a design center.

Unfortunately, the original logo for the Hearts and Hands Clinic (Figure O) did not receive the same amount of attention as the development of the day-to-day operations. It lacked the versatility of a primary and secondary logo or tagline. Nor was the logo constructed using industry standard file types and its wide, panoramic composition limited its placement in order to preserve legibility. Unfortunately, this made
the brand inconsistent because as it was difficult for the clinic to use across their artifacts. Even though the purpose behind the brand has significant meaning, an inconsistent brand fails to receive the recognition, attention or support it needs, and is deserved.

Therefore the Colaboratory created a new brand identity to assist the non-profit clinic to educate the community about their services and garner exposure to gain financial assistance. Executive director of the Hearts and Hands Clinic, Urkvia Andrews, approached the Colaboratory for assistance. She was new to both the position and the clinic. In her short time there, she realized the clinic needed to advance its image. Although they make great strides and are well respected within the community of Bulloch County, financial resources didn’t take them seriously. Andrews wanted to start with a refreshed brand.

The primary goal for the Colaboratory was to provide the Hearts and Hands Clinic an updated look and feel to its visual identity. The clinic needed a brand that would be more respected. Indeed, visual identity is important as they it is heavily relied upon to convey the message of the business or organization. An organization must develop a visual identity, based on a unique design and well-defined graphics. Consisting of the name, logo, font family and color palette, the visual identity is the story of the organization and the values that it wishes to convey. It is also one of the fundamental strategies of communication.
The Hearts & Hands Clinic
Taking our Hearts and using our Hands to give Hope

Figure O - Hearts + Hands Clinic: Original Logo

Hearts + Hands Clinic

taking our hearts + using our hands to GIVE HOPE.

Figure P - Hearts + Hands Clinic: Redesigned Logo

Figure Q – Hearts + Hands Clinic: Tagline
It was important to the Colaboratory to pay homage to the original Hearts and Hands logo. The name of the clinic tells a story that the Colaboratory wished to convey across the brand. Through sketches and idea generating, the Colaboratory created the logo referenced in Figure P. The logo design has an organic quality that has inferred human characteristics meant to inspire hope. Together a community, by way of an altruistic student-lead concept, built the Hearts and Hands Clinic from the ground up. The gestural hands not only imply a caring touch, but also signify the people who constructed the clinic.

The heart signifies the foundation of care the clinic was established on and the benevolence for those who enter the clinic. The hands protect the heart just as the community shelters their neighbor. The hands hold the heart just as the community supports their neighbor. Unique to the Hearts and Hands Clinic logo is the hand-watercolor aspect of the heart. This organic element, too, signifies the volunteers who worked to establish the clinic and the volunteers who currently work to continue the clinic’s offerings to the community. They are holding and protecting the heart while the watercolor heart suggests warmth and care. The new colors representing the clinic are symbolic in their own right.

- Red represents compassion as it’s symbolic of emotion and caring;
- grey represents the foundation and commitment necessary to support the community’s needs; and
- blue denotes tranquility, trust and stability, and the hope the clinic references in their tagline.
Figure R - Hearts + Hands Clinic: Select Stationery - letterhead and business card (front and back)
Once finalized the Colaboratory disseminated the logo through a stationery suite that included an appointment card, business card, letterhead, envelope and thank you card. After the new identity was launched, Andrews stated, “Everyone who has seen our new brand loves it! It has become a conversation piece for us. We are excited to release all of our new material with the updated visual identity as we continue serving medically uninsured residents and grow awareness of our offerings.”

Not long after the new visual identity and supporting artifacts were released, Senator Jack Hill visited the Hearts and Hands Clinic, further supporting that an updated visual identity can educate a community and help advocate for your neighbors’ well-being by broadening the reach of the communication touch points.
THE THERAPY SPOT

PROBLEM: The Therapy SPOT had a vacant parking area behind their facility they wanted to convert to an outdoor therapy space for their patients. The therapists had a vision for how this space could work to incorporate various types of therapy, but did not have the skill set or budget to execute their idea.

SOLUTION: An interactive outdoor space designed and implemented for The Therapy SPOT helps children in need of various types of therapy.

Located in Statesboro, The Therapy SPOT is a pediatric multidisciplinary therapy center established in 2007. Therapists here are committed to providing quality therapy services in a fun, family and child-centered environment and provide speech, feeding, physical, and occupational therapy as well as aquatic physical and occupational therapy. The Therapy SPOT is the only clinic in the area that provides these services to the community and take great pride in developing new opportunities for their patients. The owners, Caroline Bowman and Lea Lanier, ensure that every inch of their property is a usable space able to stimulate children’s developmental needs. Bowman and Lanier enclosed six parking spaces in the back of building to create an outdoor space to help children thrive in day-to-day activities and reach their fullest potential. The larger space was essential to bike riding and other activities used in physical therapy.

Bowman contacted the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art seeking help to paint a racetrack within this space for their patients. Lindsay and I met with Bowman and discussed their idea regarding the outdoor space. Following Lindsay and I built upon the original idea and expanded into an all-encompassing area to meet the needs of not just physical therapy, but all of the therapies they offer as well. Below are select highlights of the outdoor area and can be referenced with Figure S:
1. Activities utilizing the exterior fence can easily be modified to fit the needs of the current patient.
2. The classic game of hopscotch was left blank to allow therapists to draw in shapes, numbers or colors depending on the capability of the patient.
3. The racetrack became more than a simple loop. It now helps to not only benefit physical therapy, but it also advances other skills. For example, intersections develop comprehension when listening to and then following their therapist’s directions.
4. The young patients identify with the child-like drawings indicative of coloring books to reduce intimidation.
5. A boldly painted edge calls attention to uneven pavement to reduce mishaps.
6. Various exercises within the pea gravel pit nurture fine motor skills.
7. Sod adds a contrasting texture for sensory play and provides a cushioned area for the tiniest of patients to enjoy.
8. A fence was constructed and painted with a simple barn to not only keep an air conditioning unit out of reach, but to also spark imagination.
9. The musical wall allows children to react to sound and to express themselves, depending on the needs of the patient.
Figure S - The Therapy SPOT: Outdoor Therapeutic Area
Figure T - The Therapy SPOT: Musical Wall
After finishing the installation of the outdoor area, The Therapy SPOT was quick
to take advantage of their new resource. After their first patient, who struggled with
mobility issues, went outside to work on his physical therapy his mother was more than
pleased with the outcome of his session.

For the first time, he was motivated to stand on his own. So much so,
that his mother wants to build him an area like this at their home . . .

The Colaboratory took this area from where just our physical therapy
patients could use it for motor skills, and made it where everyone can
use it, to work on speech and occupational therapy, fine motor and
language skills - they made it a versatile resource for all our
disciplines.27

The process to meeting the needs of The Therapy SPOT was quite different than
previous design experiences within the Colaboratory. This undertaking was unlike most
challenges designers usually face. It broke the barriers of the mold society usually places
designers in. Perceptions of graphic designers were altered. The outdoor space at was an
example of experiential graphic design, a foreign term to the average consumer.

Experiential graphic design involves the orchestration of communication tools to
define an experience, such as; typography, color, imagery, form message, meaning and
technology. This form of design activates, informs, and organizes the way we live, work,
play and learn.28 It was through the outdoor therapy area that the Colaboratory informed
the community of the endless potential associated with graphic design and how the
design of a space aids the development of a child.

27 (Lanier 2015)
28 SEGD - What is Experiential Graphic Design?
EXHIBITION

These four design explorations culminated with a thesis exhibition. To showcase the Colaboratory and its efforts, the team members utilized an off-campus studio to create a physical space that would allow guests to visualize a design think-tank setting. Upon entry, visitors were welcomed to the Colaboratory in a reception area by white leather couches sitting on cement floors anchored with informative metals panels flanked by monochromatic red brick. Although a modest setting, the contemporary juxtaposition against the raw, historic building invited guests to learn more about the space and how it fosters professional experience by stimulating creativity through collaboration.

Moving away from traditional graphic design exhibitions strictly highlighting branded artifacts and promotional items, the Colaboratory showcased eight printed posters in the main room. These posters included an introduction and a snapshot of each collaborative effort: American Sex, Team OCEAN, Hearts and Hands Clinic and The Therapy SPOT. These snapshots were used to educate visitors how collaborative graphic design had ignited social change and inspired transformation in human behavior within their community.

In addition to the hanging artifacts, the Colaboratory not only offered free stickers to each guests, but also created six portfolio books to highlight select pieces of work from each endeavor. The book was partially screen-printed by hand, the remaining pages digitally printed, and bound by hand with a traditional stab binding. This fusion of techniques only further emphasized the meaning behind the Colaboratory brand – that collaborative leadership experiences improve the communities they serve.
HOW CAN YOU
IGNITE CHANGE,
INSPIRE HUMAN BEHAVIOR,
IMPACT LIVES +
YOUR COMMUNITY?

BY DOING WHAT YOU DO BEST.
(with help.)

Figure U - Colaboratory: Promotional Poster
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

It is important to not only prepare students with tangible skills to succeed within their area of study, but it is imperative to emphasize their intangible qualities as well. An interdisciplinary setting allows for participants of all backgrounds to work together to reach a common goal. In true interdisciplinary efforts, all participants must have the common goal of working holistically, taking into account the contributions of others in making their own contributions. Collaborative settings provide an indispensable career-oriented experience for students and afford them a network for future opportunities.

Graphic design educator Ellen Lupton wrote an article for AIGA stating that,

Students create social networks in school that can last a lifetime. The people you hang out with are a source of artistic inspiration, healthy competition and informal education that could be more important than what you officially learn in class. You can work with your schoolmates to create magazines, websites and events that will bring together even more people, yielding an organic, underground design community. Working with a group, you can take on freelance projects that might be too big to pursue alone, and, after you graduate, your collaborators can continue to provide a network of support or even the basis of an independent business.

The social network created in an interdisciplinary university setting provides unlimited opportunity and lessons competition between same-degree alumni, especially when trained in the same goal-driven creative processes.

Design thinking along with hands-on experience, empowers students with creative-based solutions. Colaboratory: Design Collaboration for the Greater Good was a successful experience in that our success was not only a personal validation that collaborative design thinking with experts from all walks of life is powerful, but it was
also validated by the progress made by the solutions we created and from the feedback Lindsay and I received from project managers.

Moreover, success was measured by the ability to work collaboratively on the thesis and end positively with each client, and especially the collaborators. The latter solidifies that understanding each team member’s leadership strengths provides opportunity for an efficient, transparent working relationship (Figure V).
two INNOVATORS are better than ONE.

Figure V - Colaboratory Promotional Sticker
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