EXPLORE THE APPLICATION OF RIGHT BRAIN/LEFT BRAIN APPROACHES, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON CONCEPTUAL AND STRATEGIC THINKING IN COLLABORATIVE MODELS.
THE INITIATIVE

For over 75 years, the School of Art at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) has provided a nurturing environment, encouraging students to express their creative voice in a school where art is innovative, vibrant, and full of possibilities. Through the generosity and vision of Rick Valicenti comes the Rick Valicenti Collaborative Teaching Initiative (RVCTI). This initiative supports a one-of-a-kind art-focused teaching structure to provide collaborative learning experiences for students and faculty from across the BGSU campus. The RVCTI gives the BGSU art faculty (instructor, lecturer, tenure-track and tenured) opportunity to propose and implement a Spring term collaborative course that embraces team-teaching experiences for unique learning content and hybrids with intimate course enrollment sizes.

The 2017 RVCTI recipients were Jenn Stucker, associate professor and division chair of Graphic Design, and Kirk Kern, lecturer and director of the Hamilton Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, for their course Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations in Whole Brain Problem Solving. This unique team-taught class sought to combine differing thinking approaches together for the purpose of understanding collaboration and finding ways for innovation. The class size of 24 was represented by 12 from the School of Art and ten from the College of Business, as well as a student from the College of Technology and another from the College of Education and Human Development. Four of these students were also current or former Hatchlings who competed in The Hatch in 2016 and 2017.
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS IN WHOLE BRAIN PROBLEM SOLVING

In this course, the students were challenged by developing and expanding their understanding of creativity and strategy for the purpose of maximizing their potential for solving problems to improve the human experience through collaborations of “right brain/left brain” thinking. We approached our exploration through analyzing and revealing different cognitive mindsets, through channeling and unifying these perspectives to problem solve in innovative ways, through the evaluation of current design and business discourse, through participating in lively conversations, and project based activities about contemporary social issues. The coursework included a heavy emphasis on collaboration through the mixing of business and design students aimed at innovating for today’s complex problems.

The course operated in three types of activities: (1) three in-class exercises for fostering dialogue and collaborative exchange; (2) comprehensive, mixed discipline, four-member team projects aimed at social issues and; (3) a fast-paced, mixed discipline and gender, two-member collaboration focused on an innovation and implementation strategy.

The semester started with a series of exercises based on the Work On Purpose (WOP) curriculum for breaking the ice, revealing our own vulnerabilities and defining our motivations for action. Working from a framework of WOP’s Moments of Obligation the students engaged in dialogue for defining today’s most pressing social issues. Six social topics were identified as meaningful and necessary for the four member teams of six groups to respond to; mental health, the environment, fake news, the heroin epidemic, campus navigation and microaggressions. Through these topics the students explored the challenges and opportunities for action by engaging in design thinking activities and proposed ideas for change. The semester concluded with a fast-thinking innovation deliverable that could be realized in the marketplace.
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS IN WHOLE BRAIN PROBLEM SOLVING

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“...This class puts you in a corner and really tests you to think, to be creative and come up with something worthwhile. And I didn’t realize how creative I was until I was pushed to come up with something and make it realistic.”

– John Hannah, Senior, Business Major
What was the essence of the Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations in Whole Brain Problem Solving course?

Jenn Stucker (JS) // The ‘essence’ comes down to four basic ideas we had when developing this class. First, we wanted to bridge the gap between design + business studies at BGSU. Our disciplines are kindred spirits that work together all the time, so I really see this as an opportunity that should continue to be supported. Of course our main goal was to build a better understanding of collaboration. There is a difference between contribution, like a skill share, versus collaboration, which is really about a mind share for problem solving. Third, we hoped to inspire innovation and engage in new ways of thinking. From my perspective, as a designer, we are in constant need and demand because our usages, technology, and society are constantly changing, therefore we must be fluid in our responses and design for the now and the future. Finally, we wanted to challenge students to solve real world problems of value. This generated rich discussions and revealed their uncertainty for solving big issues like the heroin crisis or waste, but we wanted to empower students to realize that someone has to pick up the baton to make change, so why not you?

Kirk D Kern (KDK) // The essence of the course revolved around the learning idiosyncrasies of two differing groups of students; graphic design and business. What we discovered is that graphic design and business students had divergent perspectives on how to solve problems and create solutions. However, when mixed into groups the whole brain dynamic became apparent. The problem solving and solution-creating activities became much more robust and unique, leading to fascinating outcomes.
What were the goals and learning objectives?

**JS** // Collaborative work is hard, so our goal was to make this process a more attractive approach to problem solving. Students will certainly tell you that collaborative projects make them anxious because of the work share and commitment. To combat this fear, we laid out our expectations for them:

1. Honor and respect each other and the process of the class. This is why we worked hard at the beginning with the WOP exercises to help the students ‘see’ each other better.
2. Be present, physically, but more importantly cognitively. This class was going to be hard, so we didn’t want just a body in the room. We wanted a mind that goes with it.
3. Be empathetic :: to each other, to your audience and the solution. How is anyone going to solve real world problems if they are not understanding of others?
4. Commitment :: uphold the responsibilities you take on. We wanted to make it clear from the start that the whole team is counting on them.
5. Remember everyone is creative. Knowing half the class was comprised of graphic designers, we wanted to convey the idea that designers weren’t the only creatives in the room. We are all creative, we just have different skill sets in applying our creativity.

**KDK** // Jenn Stucker had designed this course and was to co-teach it with Susan Kleine. After Susan’s departure from BGSU, I stepped into her role. My goals and objectives were pretty simplistic; support Professor Stucker in her mission and be the voice of business to students who had little exposure to commerce. What I became was a partner who enjoyed teaching and learning from our students. Therefore, the original goal of bringing a diverse mix of students together to learn about researching contemporary social and business issues, exposing them to design thinking and developing outcomes via oral and visual presentations were met.

**THE OBJECTIVES**

**Gateway :: Pill Distribution**

**Social Issue :: Heroin Epidemic**

Frank Nagyvathy, John Hannah, Cary Thompson and Victoria Pryzblyski

**FILM + TEXT REFERENCES, INFLUENCES AND INSPIRATIONS**

- Design & Thinking: A Documentary on Design Thinking by Mu-Ming Tsai
- Designing Business and Management by Sabine Junginger & Jürgen Faust
- 101 Design Methods by Vijay Kumar
- Work on Purpose by Lara Galinsky with Kelly Nuxoll
- Visual Research by Ian Noble and Russell Bestley
- A More Beautiful Question by Warren Berger
- A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future by Daniel H. Pink
- The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage by Roger L. Martin
- Change by Design by Tim Brown
- Design Integrations: Research + Collaboration by Sharon Poggenpohl & Keichi Sato
“The objective is to enlighten people about the issues and to call attention to the absurd amount of waste; that is the seed of a revolution.”
– Rick Valicenti, Founder of Thirst Design + BGSU Alum ’73
What were the successes and learning outcomes?

JS // Successes came in many different forms. Sometimes success was robust discussions like the ones we had about what is truth in regard to fake news or discussing the nuances of microaggressions. Other successes were when two disparate people came together on a project that, for a minute, you thought would never happen. The biggest success I experienced was when students began to realize that they don’t have to be on the sidelines of the world they live in. For an educator, it can’t get much better than that.

For the learning outcomes, it was important to remind ourselves about bridging the gap between the disciplines. We had seven outcomes we set forth to accomplish. (1) Analyze the hallmarks of “whole mind” design thinking and innovative problem solving; (2) research and identify contemporary business, social, & community opportunities for innovative problem solving; (3) identify and describe, in depth, target audiences; (4) understand and demonstrate the ability to apply visual studies; (5) develop a toolkit for design thinking like empathy mapping, persona profiles, journey mapping, and ideation (6) be able to participate and contribute to class discussions and critiques and; (7) express both verbal and visual presentation skills. Through these outcomes we worked toward creating a common ground for our unique languages.

KDK // This class experiment was a success! The dichotomy of the students was a challenge, but it became clear that these students were open and interested to learn about each other’s areas of study. They learned to assess and utilize each other’s talents (in the applied learning assignments) to leverage the best possible outcomes. They gained understanding and began to value their collaborators. This class gave the students an insight into how teams operate in today’s work environment.
How was collaboration initiated, employed and supported by student to student, student to teacher, and teacher to teacher?

**JS** // It was important for Kirk and I to cultivate positive conditions for inspiring and sustaining collaborative experiences, so we presented the class with five guidelines for collaborating: (1) embrace and enjoy entering into something new; (2) learn the languages :: differing fields have differing terminology; (3) differing fields move at differing paces; (4) develop relationships :: trust + respect + reciprocity + no ego and; (5) recognize when things are going awry :: reassess + iterate. For this class we knew we needed to model the way, so we also held ourselves accountable to these same guidelines no matter who we were interacting with.

**KDK** // Collaboration between students was interesting. Both groups, graphic design and business, tolerated each other at the beginning of the semester. However, as the course advanced, the students began to appreciate opposing viewpoints from their colleagues. In my opinion, you cannot collaborate until you appreciate. Our students worked on a social issue project that forced them to listen to each other and join forces to reach the desired outcomes. As for student to teacher collaboration, Jenn and I were always engaged, challenged and assisted by our students. Working with and collaborating with our students was special. We would often offer differing viewpoints on topics based on our expertise. It was fun and a great learning experience for our class! Jenn Stucker is a rock star! Her energy and attentiveness to student success is admirable. We worked well together! We faced adversity from time to time, but worked together for the betterment of the class.

**THE PROCESS**

**COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT SURVEYS**

During the semester we asked students to reflect on the collaborative process through surveys. Some of their answers are quoted throughout this document. Here are some of our questions:

- What would a successful group project look like or would be to me? How would I participate in its success?
- How has working with students in a different discipline been challenging as well as enlightening?
- How has this course made me think differently about my role in social issues?
- How has this course made me think differently about my ability to innovate?
- How has this course empowered me as a problem-solver, creative thinker and collaborator?
- Describe the experience of having team-teachers from different disciplines?
I now know that I harness the ability to create with very little to go off of. Innovation is no longer something I am unable to do.”

– Ryan Pietrowski, Junior, Graphic Design Major

Locus is a three sided, touch screen information center which integrates navigation via a campus map, campus communication and community advertisements. By harnessing the power of the sun and community advertisements, Locus will run in an energy efficient manner by reducing operating costs by up to 75% only activating when people are present. This system will not only make the campus more beautiful, but also more energy efficient. Locus will be made of a matte black frame structure and non-reflective screens to minimize impact to the surroundings.

Locus is an triangular shaped pillar that is 7.5 ft tall. This solution is a standard message board that has been transformed into a triangular shaped pillar with three digital screens that are not only simple to use, but eco-friendly as well.
Locus :: Solar/Responsive Signage

Social Issue // Campus Navigation

Ryan Pietrowski, Rebecca Schmucker, Khory Katz and Paige Draheim

Innovate with Purpose : Iceolate Wine Carrier

Egg carton inspired, customizable and biodegradable packaging
Ryan Pietrowski + Paige Thomas

Expenses:

- Manufacturing Costs: $1,200 per 1000 units
- Marketing Costs: 10,000/yearly
- Fixed Costs: $2,064
- MSRP: $11.99
- Cost of Good: $1.20
- Wholesale Pricing: $6.00
- BE Analysis: 430 units

Sales Forecast/3 Year Expense Projection:

1st year:
- 2,000 units sold
- $10,000 Marketing
- $2,400 Manufacturing
- Total: $12,400 Revenue: $9,600

2nd year:
- 10,000 units sold
- $10,000 Marketing
- $10,000 Manufacturing
- Total: $20,000 Revenue: $48,000

3rd year:
- 22,000 units sold
- $10,000 Marketing
- $17,600 Manufacturing
- Total: $27,600 Revenue: $65,600

Product
Iceolate is a universal (individual) wine bottle carrier that is crafted from a material called NycoFoam.

Reason
This material not only acts as packaging, but allows insulation and protection from external forces.

Measurements
- Cylindrical shape
- 13 inches tall
- 4 inches wide
- Inside width
- 3.5 inch diameter

Lid specs
- 0.5 inch tall
- 0.25 inch extrusion with a .25 inch lip

Importance
The most important part of this innovative design which sets us apart from competitors in the market is the fact that the carrier is 100% biodegradable.
“Seeing everyone in class, myself included, tackle big issues and problem solve in a way that seems feasible in real life, makes me realize that it’s actually possible for me to make a difference.”

– Meghan O’Brien Junior, Graphic Design Major
Innovation with Purpose: The Collected Good

Hub website for product searches with social good initiatives

Emily Frasier + Jake Kielmeyer

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS IN WHOLE BRAIN PROBLEM SOLVING
What was the benefit of team-teaching for yourselves and your students?

JS // I can’t say enough about what a great experience this was for me. After Susan Kleine left BGSU, I am grateful Kirk stepped up to teach with someone he barely knew. He made this experience so pleasant and I know I now have a new friend and collaborator. Our conversations in planning, problem solving and pivoting were with ease as we fully embraced being responsive to the climate of the students’ uncertainties, frustrations and fears. For the students, getting input from two points of view forced them to define their own position. Kirk and I also didn’t hide from the students in letting them know that this was all an experiment and that we were modifying as we went. It was true collaboration in action and we never took for granted their trust in us.

KDK // I had the great pleasure of being ‘forced’ to work with someone who I knew little about. I knew Jenn Stucker was respected by students and her colleagues, but I did not know the width and breadth of her knowledge. Jenn was amenable, flexible and wonderful to teach with during this course. The benefit for our students was differing perspectives. Jenn’s background is in design and mine is in entrepreneurship and business... it was the best of both worlds for our students. They got double the input & twice the intellectual horsepower in the same class. What a value!
How did the Rick Valicenti Collaborative Teaching Initiative (RVCTI) benefit your goals?

JS // I am deeply honored to have our course selected for this initiative. There are many challenges logistically for a team-teaching course to occur in academia and the RVCTI makes this possible. Prior to this initiative, I wouldn’t have thought that team-teaching outside of my discipline would have been a real opportunity. Through this, a real sea change of possibility is at our feet in regard to opening doors with the College of Business and beyond. Further, from a student perspective, it is rare to have such an opportunity to have the knowledge bank of two educators in one class and with an intimate class size as well. I believe the students found our similar and sometimes oppositional commentaries to be quite valuable in drawing their own conclusions. The small class size also made for an intimate and trustworthy space. I am infinitely grateful for the experience of exposing my own teaching style to another and conversely learning from them.

KK // Rick is great man. Although I do not know him well, I watched him interact with our students in class. His comments were “spot on” and helped motivate our students. They wanted Rick’s approval, which I thought was intriguing. Rick’s vision for undergraduate students and in preparing them for the future is refreshing. This team-teaching opportunity was invaluable for all of us.

“I loved being able to get to know two super motivated and inspiring individuals with different backgrounds and education. I know whatever path I pursue I can make a difference in the world, my hometown, or even just BGSU.”
– Rebecca Schmucker Freshman, Business Major
On March 27, our generous supporter and BGSU alum, Rick Valicenti attended the Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations in Whole Brain Problem Solving course to offer feedback and insight on the in-progress work and the social issues at hand. His comments and critiques were invaluable to the students as they continue their journey to approach tough topics. We deeply thank Rick for his time, kindness and support of the BGSU School of Art curriculum and the spirit of team-teaching.

If you would like to join Rick Valicenti’s efforts in supporting exceptional learning opportunities for students and faculty, please contact the School of Art at BGSU by emailing the Director, Dr. Katerina Ruedi-Ray at krray@bgsu.edu for more information.

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