

We'd like to thank all the people at the conference and Barbara Sudick for the opportunity to be part of this discussion.

The discipline of graphic design is increasingly complex. Within the education environment the core dilemmas remain the same; To fully educate the designers of tomorrow graphic design programs, especially those that are underfunded or under-appreciated, often need more faculty, more space, and/or more time to cover it all. It is probably impossible to accomplish all our dreams considering the budget circumstances. What other solutions are there versus doing nothing or; the impossible task of doing it all? (which often results in unsatisfying nibbles for both student and professor)

One often mentioned solution is to think of graphic design as a spectrum of specialization. Like law or medicine or many other professions.

When your nose hurts, it is advisable to go to a ENT, although a GP will also help out in a pinch. But what if you have a rare nose disease? or your GP is not a nose expert. This is when a specialist is worth every cent. The same can be said for other areas. Law, business, and even FINE ART have specialists. Why not graphic design? A field that is so important to our social, cultural, and economic advancements.

About two weeks ago, Barbara asked Aaris and myself via email: "Are you supporting specialization or not? Are you each taking a different stance?"

Our position is that we are not "taking sides" but rather expressing a desire to explore this topic more and to encourage discussion on it. Too often it seems designers are very black and white on controversial issues. We feel this is counter productive. Relative to the past 50 or 75 or more years of design education, this is all very fresh stuff - due in part to technology but, if we even remove that boogymen (but perhaps impossible for us to ignore), other complex non technological changes have been part of the ever shifting design landscape in culture, business, and education. Information design, exhibition design, etc. are all growing.

There is great value in retaining traditional graphic design programs. The GPs. But we don't want the discussion today and onward to focus on or only encompass these alone. Design is at a crossroad of opportunity. We feel it is the time for design educators and design leaders to seize the moment and begin more serious discussions about expanding what it means to study design. Discussion that is about the fundamentals and, in some instances, the practical in learning about design. This is perhaps beyond any NASAD and AIGA specifics already developed and implemented - but we welcome any development in the future by NASAD from any discussions that may occur.

There has been an interest in PhD. programs for designers and the development of 3 or so programs in the U.S. This is great. Design is a complex human endeavor and fundamental to who we are as a species and people. The review of how the study of design has grown should be not only at the upper levels but also at the fundamental levels as well.

In todays discussion we are interested in ideas about expanding the undergraduate level of study in graphic design and to look at ways that students can learn the flexibility of the traditional education along with the strong desire by many students and educators to also focus in on an area of interest to them and employers. In whatever form any of this might occur in.