

Assignment 4

Basic Media Design

The two forms of basic print media I designed for individual and group use respectively were

1. a information brochure for an international program in student teaching and
2. a poster/billboard public service message.

1. Information Brochure:

The brochure I designed is for the student teach abroad program at Puerto Rico, which is one of the international student internship programs offered to students in the teacher preparation course. The idea for designing the brochure on this topic stemmed from a poster I had made for the same program in August. Having learnt some principles of visual design, I could now see several limitations in my design of the poster. The medium of the poster itself presented inherent limitations by way of amount of information that could be included on it. On looking back, I think the poster was too 'square' and compartmentalized with block arrangement of visuals, heading separators and text. It had overall visual appeal because of the bright colors, but had too much text for a poster – and not enough information. So I decided to develop the initial ideas into a brochure for this assignment, with permission from the Puerto Rico program coordinator.

The brochure is a simple three fold one with six panels. It was designed in Microsoft publisher using a blank template which gave me more freedom for arrangement.

- The front panel forms the cover page and has more visual appeal and less text.
- The inside left panel conveys the information about Puerto Rico, including geography and location relative to the United States and some boxed text highlighting some interesting aspects of the program.
- The inside middle panel contains the information about the school in which the student internship is to occur and the school mission, which will help students gauge the educational environment they would be working in.
- The inside right panel highlights the application deadline, program objectives and requirements. So these three panels would give the students enough information to find a connect with what they might be looking for in an internship.
- The right fold panel is actually a continuation of the inside panel concluding the information with an invitation, estimated costs and who to contact. However, since this panel folds in and would be seen together with the inside left panel on opening the brochure, it is designed also to be a harmonious continuation of the inside left panel also (detailed below).
- The outside back panel continues the color-scheme of the cover panel and showcases alluring aspects of Puerto Rican landscape and culture.

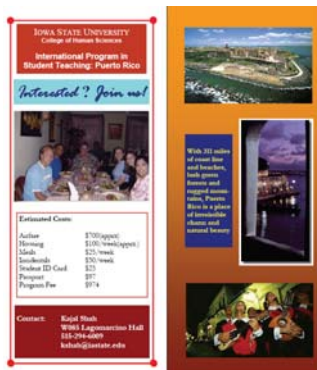
The folding of the brochure presented particularly challenging decisions for the layout and information to be included on the back panel and the panel which folds in and I struggled quite a bit with them. I realized that reading about design principles and critiquing media design is very different from putting the principles to use. I faced design conflicts between what I thought ‘looked good’ and what abides by the design principles, logical connectivity of presented material and audience need. It is an art which can be developed with experience only and since one is always maturing I wonder if it can ever be perfect in one’s own perception.

A description of the principles I followed for the choice and arrangement of images on the different panels is as follows:



Front left-fold panel – This is the cover page of the brochure. The purpose of the brochure is to give students some basic information about the student-teaching program in Puerto Rico. The cover page is thus a key factor in drawing attention to the brochure and has to be attractive enough for the student to pick up and browse through. With this in mind, the elements of color, text and image had to be arranged to appeal. At this stage, I debated with two background color schemes and image insets, which would set the tone for the information which was to follow. The first scheme was of high intensity cool colors grading from a purple to a deep blue which followed the colors of a late sunset picture of a barge seen through a window. I personally liked this scheme as the colors and images conveyed richness, quality – as well as mystery – like an unknown awaiting discovery. The second color scheme, employed a back ground of rich warm sunset colors grading from an orange to deep red-brown with an inset of a sunset image silhouetting the island and reflecting the same colors off the waters. The use of adjoining colors on the color-wheel adds depth to the layout. The image was set within a white frame to create emphasis and draw the eye. I finally chose this scheme because of its overall warm inviting effect, which is what one wants to convey to the students. Considering that the internship takes place during the Spring semester, when it is very cold in Iowa, highlighting the beach and calm warmth would add additional appeal.

The text on the front page is short and kept a little cryptic to generate curiosity. The words ‘Teach, Experience, Learn’ are set above the image and hints at what the brochure is about – but not completely. The name ‘Puerto Rico’ is set below the photograph and creates a context for the image, brochure and the text above. The font used is a graceful monotype cursive which is clear to read and the colors of the font contrast with the background while following the same color scheme.

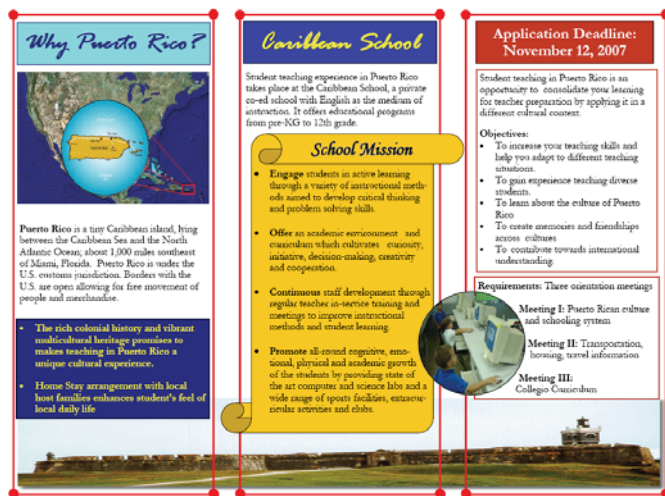


Inside right fold panel and outside back panel: As mentioned before, my greatest struggle was deciding which of these two panels should form the inside fold and which the back of the brochure. Both the arrangements had some merit for ease of accessing information and I switched them back and forth several times. If I put the contact information on back panel,

then even without opening the brochure, people could tell what it was about, what the projected expenses would be and who to contact for it. This was useful particularly when the brochure was lying face down or in somebody's hand. With the welcoming image and text on it, the back panel would also serve as an invitation to pick up the brochure and browse the information. The Puerto Rican pictures panel would then be a continuation of the front page and inside left panel (Why Puerto Rico), giving more reasons for choosing Puerto Rico. However, I wondered if this arrangement made the emphasis too touristy. Since the front page did not specify anything about the student-teach program except for the words 'Teach Experience Learn' all these beautiful images would make it a tourist brochure. The audience would not know what it was about until they got to the inside middle panel and all these references to the school and teaching might prove confusing. Also, there would be too many colors in the field of view making the brochure look busy. Moreover, lately I have seen some brochures stuck on the wall in Lagomarcino, in which case the contact information would get totally hidden. So I decided to put the contact information on the inside fold. In this way, when somebody picked up the brochure and opened it, the context of the information would be clear and be just as welcoming.

Inside panels: The three inside panels contain basic information about the Puerto Rico student internship program. It starts with geographical information as students may first want to know where Puerto Rico is, and also reasons why choosing Puerto Rico will be an enriching experience. A map was created for this by doing a print screen of a Google satellite image of North America and the Caribbean and modifying it in paint, adding the magnification lines. Another map of Puerto Rico is superimposed on it. This map was

originally square and to give it the magnifying lens effect, an autoshape was drawn in word then picture inserted as a fill-effect. This not only shows the location of Puerto Rico in relation to the US, but also supports the text below it showing its tiny size. Attractive points of the program are again set off by a blue text box and yellow text which follows the overall theme of the panel.



The headings on each of the inside panels summarize the information

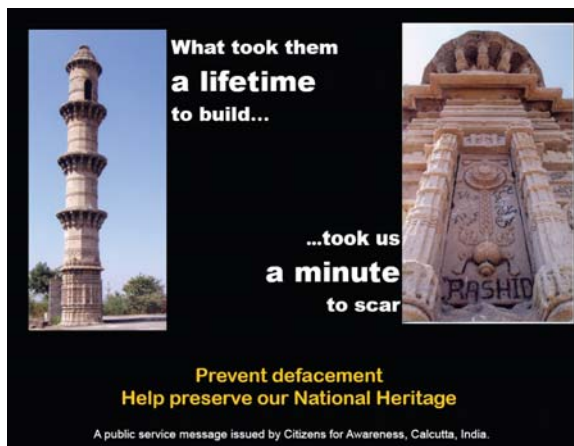
to follow. They serve as content organizers and have been set off by a text box. The page color has been kept white to make the body text easy to read and also to make the images stand out. A 12 point Garamond font was used for the body text and a 30 point rage italica has been used for the headings. Text box and font colors follow a consistent theme (principle of repetition) and information is differentiated by background color of text box and color of the heading fonts (principle of contrast). In all the panels, the color scheme repeats that of the images. A long image of a fortress was placed at the bottom of the page spanning the three panels and creates the lower boundary for the page. Each panel is

also bounded by a red border with rounded edges. They serve as page organizers and help to differentiate information on the panels and create an element of repetition and consistency.

The middle panel contains information about the school and the school mission was placed in a scroll with a yellow-gold background and the heading in a different font than panel heading to give it an official feel. This graphic element was a way to separate the nature of the information and attract attention to it as the most important element on this page. The main points are bulleted and first letters made bold, so even if someone were to just skim through it, the words 'Engage – Offer – Continuous – Promote' would give a kind of overview of the school's philosophy. An image of young students of the school working on computers is set into a circular form and placed partially over the scroll, to appear as a stamp or seal. This serves two purposes. Firstly, it corroborates the text and gives it an authentic context which helps to form a mental image of the school. Secondly, by repeating the circular element in the map, it serves to impart visual consistency to the page, creating an invisible diagonal line from top left corner to bottom right together with the rounded edges of the bounding panel borders. The text adjoining the image also curves around it. As far as possible, orphan lines have been avoided. Text follows the left oriented jagged right format and hyphenated text is kept to a minimum, only where unavoidable. This adds a real sense of unity to the inside panels.

The inside right panel gives the objectives of the student internship program and the program requirements. This panel is headed by the application deadline, which has been set in a red background to convey urgency and importance. A cursive font was avoided for this as it is information that needs to stand out and be clearly legible.

2. Public service Poster/Billboard for mass viewing



The artifact I designed for group viewing is for a poster or billboard. It carries a public service message urging citizens of India to desist from defacing ancient monuments with graffiti. The message is meant to be stark, serious and shocking to draw attention to this menace and arouse public consciousness against it. So the elements of severe contrast have been followed for the entire design, from the choice of colors of background and typeface, the images as well as the copy.

The background is black, to convey the seriousness and enormity of the problem. The two images (like a before and after) are set on the two sides. The text captioning each image is set flush against them on the top and bottom respectively, to create strong lines of relation and a sense of consequence over time. To generate this effect, the sentence is

split into two and separated by black space but connected by the continuity dots. The wordings used 'them and us' in the context of the images also contextualize the images as the past and the present.

At one point, I debated setting the images to the center of the poster/billboard to create the center of attention and the text next to it on the outside following the Z pattern. But I realized that the black space between the images and text made the contrast much more effective.

The copy is short and to the point as demanded by the message as well as the medium of the poster/billboard. A bold typeface (Arial black 26 points) in white has been used to contrast with the background and stand out. I wanted to convey a sense of urgency and the impression of 'shouting to get attention' over the (black) chaos without actually using capital letters. The bold typeface and color contrast served well for this purpose. Emphasis within the text has been created by using a larger font size (38 point) of the same typeface. I had also wanted to make the text catchy by playing on word-sounds with some alliteration. For instance, instead of 'a minute to scar' I had originally preferred the phrase 'a minute to mar'. However, two out of three people I asked were of the opinion that scar was a stronger term to use in this context. So I gave in to audience need and changed it.

The central message of the poster/billboard 'Prevent defacement; Help preserve our National Heritage' is centered between the two images. A less severe typeface of the same Arial family has been used (26 point Arial rounded MT bold) to separate the messages yet maintain the tone. This was also achieved by using a different color for it. The last bit of text specifies the sponsors of this ad (a fictional agency created by me for this purpose) to give it credibility and purposefulness. This is in normal Arial typeface.

The main design principles this billboard/poster incorporates are:

1. Creation of focus and drawing the viewer's attention to important elements by contrasting size, color and position of elements.
2. Grabbing the viewers attention by use of large display type and images with visual weight and intensity of color.
3. Using typeface of same family but different weight to create message hierarchy and separation, yet maintain continuity.
4. Using black space to break up the layout so that viewer has time to absorb the information.
5. Using images to good effect to convey the message – but also having copy that supports the images.
6. Arrangement of images and text and use of continuity dots are graphic devices that guide the viewer through the message.