

# **Design Critiques**

What they are, why we do them, and how we do them

# **The Message**

“Critiques are a way to gain constructive feedback on strengths and weaknesses of a design within a group”

# **Critique** */krĭ-tēk'/*

A critical evaluation or analysis, especially one dealing with works of art or literature.

“Critique has been used as a verb meaning “to review or discuss critically” since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but lately this usage has gained much wider currency, in part because the verb criticize, once neutral between praise and censure, is now mainly used in a negative sense... There is no exact synonym, but in most contexts one can usually substitute go over, review or analyze...”

# **What is a Design Critique?**

A structured conversation between a group or team that provides insight to strengths and shortcomings of a particular design

# **Features of a Critique**



# Collaboration, not Competition



2

**Search to discover  
what has happened  
in the work**

**3**

**Realize the value of  
unintended  
outcomes**

# **Why Critique**

Focus + Scope

Allow others to help, teach, guide

Learn that it's okay to show  
unfinished work

Eliminate destructive ego

Build team trust

# **What Critique is Not**

A chance to show off and get a golden star for perfection (i.e. don't sell a product)

A time to tell others to tell others that their design is bad without justification

# **How do Design Critiques Work?**



[http://www.hs-design.com/images/feature\\_portfolio2.jpg](http://www.hs-design.com/images/feature_portfolio2.jpg)



# Our Critique Process

1. Designs are laid out in the room
2. Everyone gets a chance to walk around and see the designs
3. Each takes turns to show their design, ask questions and get constructive feedback

# Receiving Critique

Some content taken from: Cassie McDaniel, Steve Fisher

# Receiving Critique

1. Remember the purpose of your design – tell your peers what your design is about
2. Prepare questions to channel the discussion
3. Listen before you talk back
4. Refer to the goals, is the feedback relevant to that?
5. Participate, analyze your solution with everyone
6. Don't be defensive
7. Take notes

# **Giving Critique**

# Giving Critique

1. “I like, I wish, what if”
2. Don’t assume. Find out the reason behind thinking, the process, etc.
3. Discuss positive and negative items
4. Refer to the goals, is the feedback relevant to that?
5. Lead into alternatives
6. Be constructive

# **Things to Avoid**

# **LACK OF CLARITY**

*“I love it!”*

*“This sucks!”*

# **TAKING IT PERSONALLY**

*“Well... I don't like purple!”*



# **DESIGN APATHY**

*“Meh, it’s fine as it is, just go with it”*

# CONTRADICTION

*“This should appeal to baby boomers, but it’ll be used by people in their 20’s”*

# **INDECISIVENESS**

*“I don't know what to think... what do you think?”*

# **RESISTANCE**

*“That’s a great idea, but not right now”*

# TOO MUCH NEGATIVITY

*“I don’t like the type or that picture. The colors are way off. I think you missed the point of the exercise entirely.”*

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