

## Reflection Essay

Digital Design Project Poster Link:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAFveJcgcR4/qb3K5YFEv8FrLJb0eUNP1Q/edit?utm\\_content=DAFveJcgcR4&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAFveJcgcR4/qb3K5YFEv8FrLJb0eUNP1Q/edit?utm_content=DAFveJcgcR4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

I started the project by selecting the Norfolk Animal Care Center as the organization that needed the poster for volunteers. Given that this rhetorical situation's audience was ODU college students, I was drawn to the concept of a journey. College students and care center animals are on a journey, one to get an education and prepared to succeed in the workforce, while the latter to get healthy and find a forever home. The project pre-defined the purpose as advertising to prospective college student volunteers. It also defined the medium as a poster with its physical location inside of a student center on ODU's campus, also part of its contextual characteristics (Arola et al, 2014). My goal was to integrate every college student's goal, graduating, into the poster to capture their attention along with connecting it to the journey concept.

Posters, as a medium, are meant to be read while individuals walk by or glance at during a break, so the time that an individual dedicates to reading the content is limited which minimizes the touchpoint. Due to this, the text was required to be concise yet enticing to the reader. To achieve this, I ensured that the poster spells out that the organization is an animal care center in need of volunteers and help. I also include three short statements that highlight the benefits that the student, as the primary audience, might enjoy from their volunteer experience (Arola et al, 2014). The benefits highlighted were assisting animals, stress relief and companionship, and learning animal care skills. Some college students could be home sick and missing their pets, so they may be receptive to the prospect of companionship with animals. Additionally, college can be a stressful time, so stress relief in the form of animal interaction may

also be welcomed by the students. Finally, they may just be excited to assist animals while learning new skills.

I also included a picture of happy graduates to reflect the motivations of most students that would be viewing the poster. Since the touchpoint of a poster is brief, I used a quick reference (QR) scan code that students can use to get to the animal care centers website where they can find additional information. Using the QR eliminated the need to add all the contact information, which prevented additional clutter. As for the secondary audience of the Norfolk Animal Care Center, I studied their website and incorporated their navy-blue color scheme as the background color of the poster and mirrored their font style of Arial. By incorporating these features into the poster, it would allow students to instantly connect the poster to the website when they scanned the QR code and establish a formal relation between the two different media.

During the design process, Canva provided many great affordances such as numerous pictures, texts, colors, and images to select from their database (Arola et al, 2014). I was able to immediately locate the picture with a pathway leading up to the house that was aligned with my “journey” theme. It also had the images of happy graduates, cute animals, and paw prints. It did have the constraints of a pay wall to prevented access to better images and shapes in their database that could have enhanced the design. For any pictures that were native to Canva’s database, I was able import my own custom pictures. This feature permitted the import of the QR code, which allowed me to save space.

Furthermore, while creating the poster, I used contrast, organization, alignment, and proximity techniques to shape the overall design. For contrast, the lettering at the top and bottom of the poster have high contrast between the text and background color, which allows for the text to stand out and makes it easy to read. Also, the cartoon characters, animals, and paw prints

contrast against the real background that also catches the reader's eye. Next, I organized the information statements about the potential benefits of volunteering as steps moving towards their graduation goal. The proximity of each step moving closer to the goal of graduation reflects relationship of the journey and progression that the student will experience during college (Arola et al, 2014). Finally, I choose to align the paw prints in the same orientation of an animal walking, offset and interchanging between side to side. People are used to seeing paw prints in the previously stated pattern, so they are familiar with the concept, and it adds visual flare to statements that would otherwise be bullet pointed. While the pattern of an animal walking was emulated, I did still choose to align the paw prints evenly horizontally and vertically to maintain a neat and orderly organization so the reader wouldn't become disoriented by any perceived messiness (Arola et al, 2014). Additionally, I aligned the text at the bottom and top of the poster with the left and right edges of the photo to further enhance the neat and orderly feel of the design.

Overall, I believe the poster represents the animal care center as a fun and happy place to assist animals while getting some added benefits as a college student. It presents the information in an easily digestible package that doesn't require a lot of time to read or process. Utilizing the QR code encourages people to pull up the care center's website, which then allows for quick access to the phone number or email address to inquire about volunteering. Lastly, displaying graduates at the end of the journey shows the students that volunteering can be accomplished on their path to graduating while being active in the community.

## References

Ball, C. E., Sheppard, J., & Arola, K. L. (2022). *Writer/designer: A guide to making Multimodal Projects*. Bedford/St. Martins.