HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST ONLINE DESIGN COLLEGE FOR YOU

10 REASONS ONLINE CAN WORK FOR YOU

ENGINEERING A CAREER CHANGE

WHAT TO LOOK FOR... ...AND HOW TO PAY

PUTTING EDUCATION TO WORK

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Content

There's a lot of buzz about online education these days.

According to the latest Babson Survey, more than 5 million students in the U.S. took at least one online course in the last year. In fact, online enrollment continues to grow faster than any other sector in higher education.

Simply put, more and more people are beginning to understand the tremendous potential of online education. Flexible enough to accommodate my busy schedule? Check. More affordable? Check. Just as effective as a traditional class, or moreso? Check.

Whether you're a college age student or an adult learner, committing to any school or program is an important life decision. So I asked the Sessions team to put together this online education guide to help you identify whether online is right for you.

I hope you enjoy it and wish you success in your creative arts education.

Best,

Gordon Drummond
President
Sessions College

* Babson Survey Research Group: Going the Distance, 2014

10 REASONS
WHY ONLINE EDUCATION CAN WORK FOR YOU

Thinking about studying online? At Sessions College, we've been delivering online programs for nearly 20 years. We know that online education can work for our students. Here are ten reasons why online education can work for you:

1 QUALITY AND CHOICE.

Since the birth of the web browser two decades ago, online education continues to develop and mature. Today, online programs exist for a vast range of academic interests and professions. With so many excellent options, there's never been a better time to enroll online.

2 FLEXIBILITY.

Online education offers students the freedom to study at their own pace, on their own time. With 24/7 access to courses, you can plan out a schedule that works for you. The flexibility of online learning allows you to maintain work or family commitments while studying full or part-time.

3 FACULTY.

What if world-class faculty came to you, rather than you coming to them? Online education connects you with experts in your field, regardless of where you live. Instructors from across the country and around the world bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the online classroom.

4 FEEDBACK.

It's a myth that online learning is impersonal. In a quality online program, you get more personal attention, plus ample opportunities to ask questions and receive feedback. Online classes give everyone a voice, allowing for more time and space to share ideas.

5 COMMUNICATION.

In an online classroom, you participate in lively discussions with students and instructors from around the world. Online education gives students the opportunity to reflect critically on their contributions to the class. This helps students develop the skills to communicate effectively through technology.

6 WORK ON YOUR COMPUTER.

If you'll be working professionally from your own computer - if you're a graphic or Web designer, for example - it can be a great benefit to learn from your own Mac or PC. You can start taking classes immediately, from the comfort of your own workstation.

7 ...AND OFF YOUR COMPUTER.

If spending a year glued to your computer seems like a chore, remember that online classes can be a springboard for offline learning. In our classes, students draw, paint, conduct photoshoots, mockup 3D artwork, and more, all without having to be online 24/7.

8 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION.

At an online school, you practice professional skills in a safe, supportive environment. Sessions College students, for example, work from design briefs that set the pace for a professional job. Students submit work for review and revision, much the way a professional designer does every day.

9 BUILD A BODY OF WORK.

Your online program can yield more than a qualification. As you study, you'll be developing skills and building a portfolio of professional work. Assembling a body of high-quality work can be your foot in the door to a more creative job.

10 LIFELONG LEARNING.

Lastly, online education inspires lifelong learning. Whether you're a young person facing a challenging job market, a parent returning to school, or a retiree looking to bridge the digital divide, online education is an accessible alternative to the traditional classroom. Online education connects students with the tools and resources that will help them better succeed in the future.

ENGINEERING A CAREER CHANGE

Nuclear industry engineer Kyle Gilbreath turned to online education to help him pursue his passion for design. Now wrapping up his final semester at Sessions College, Kyle credits the personal attention of instructors and other students for his tremendous progress as a designer. Our GD USA magazine student to watch for 2013, Kyle explains how he engineered his career change.
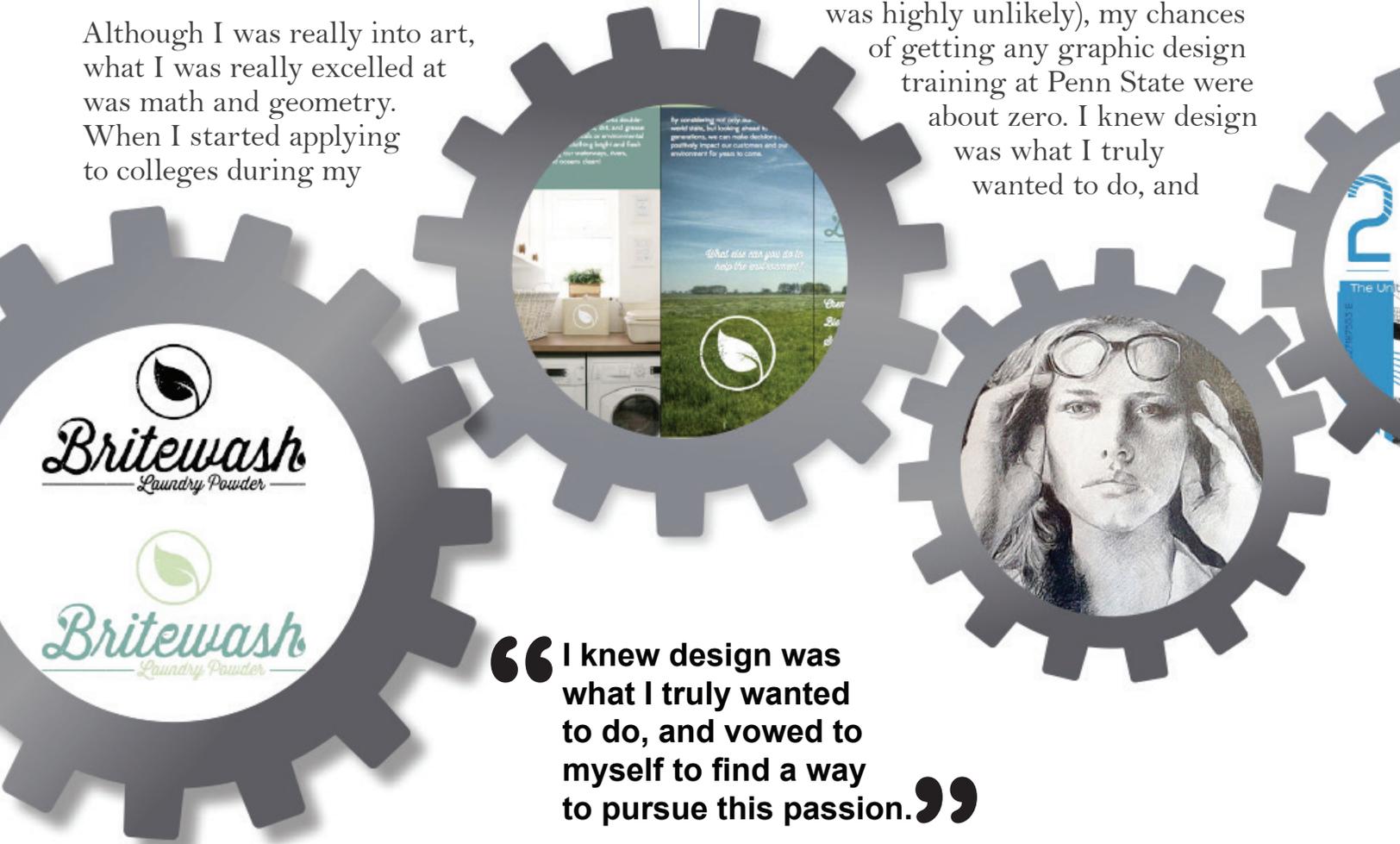
Like many online students, you're not a "traditional student." Can you tell us about your background?

I definitely didn't take a traditional path. In high school, I was really into art. I was mildly talented, but didn't have a focus that I excelled at. I took all types of art classes; 2D, 3D, clay, drawing...but once I left the classroom it was hard for me to stay motivated. It almost felt like a really cool hobby, but never something I could see myself getting a career in.

Although I was really into art, what I was really excelled at was math and geometry. When I started applying to colleges during my senior year, my parents pushed me toward getting an engineering or architectural degree, so that's what I decided to do. I chose to go to Penn State University, and pursue a Mechanical Engineering degree, graduating in December 2009 with a BS in Mechanical Engineering.

I think the turning point in college happened for me during my final semester of classes at Penn. In one of our class projects we were introduced to Photoshop, and my love for design began. During the week I would stay late in the computer labs messing around with the different Adobe CS programs and taught myself the basics for each tool.

Unfortunately, I found this hidden love I had a little too late, and unless I rescinded my job offer and someone convinced my parents that I needed to stay an extra semester to take some graphic design classes (which was highly unlikely), my chances of getting any graphic design training at Penn State were about zero. I knew design was what I truly wanted to do, and vowed to myself to find a way to pursue this passion.

After receiving my engineering degree, I started work with Westinghouse as a Seismic Test/Analysis Engineer. After spending about a year in this role, the challenge of the job left and I began to miss being creative.

> **I knew design was what I truly wanted to do, and vowed to myself to find a way to pursue this passion.**

What led you to an online degree?

I started looking around for schools in my area that offered Graphic Design degrees, but couldn't find anything that would allow me to maintain my full time job and still pursue a degree in design. By this time, I had bills and student loans to pay, so it was not realistic for me to quit my job and become a broke college student again. As I continued to look, I came across some schools that offered online degrees.

Some of these schools were very expensive, and because it was online, getting a BS in graphic design would have taken much longer than a 4-year duration. I was tempted to

"If you can maintain that drive and constantly push yourself, you will be surprised at how you can develop as a designer."

do something like this, but couldn't pull the trigger on again signing away my life for 4+ yrs and tack on some more student loan debt, so I kept searching around for other alternatives.

My Mom found Sessions College online and brought it up to me. I initially was skeptical because it was specifically focused on art and design, and wasn't a big school with a well-known name. I spent some time further researching Sessions and found that it was a fairly new school and actually offered a 2-year Associates Degree.

I decided to sign up for an Open House Tour that Sessions offered, and was completely blown away. When I signed on the chat room I found that there were actual people talking about the school, and not just some cookie cutter Power Point slideshow that I was seeing from other online schools I
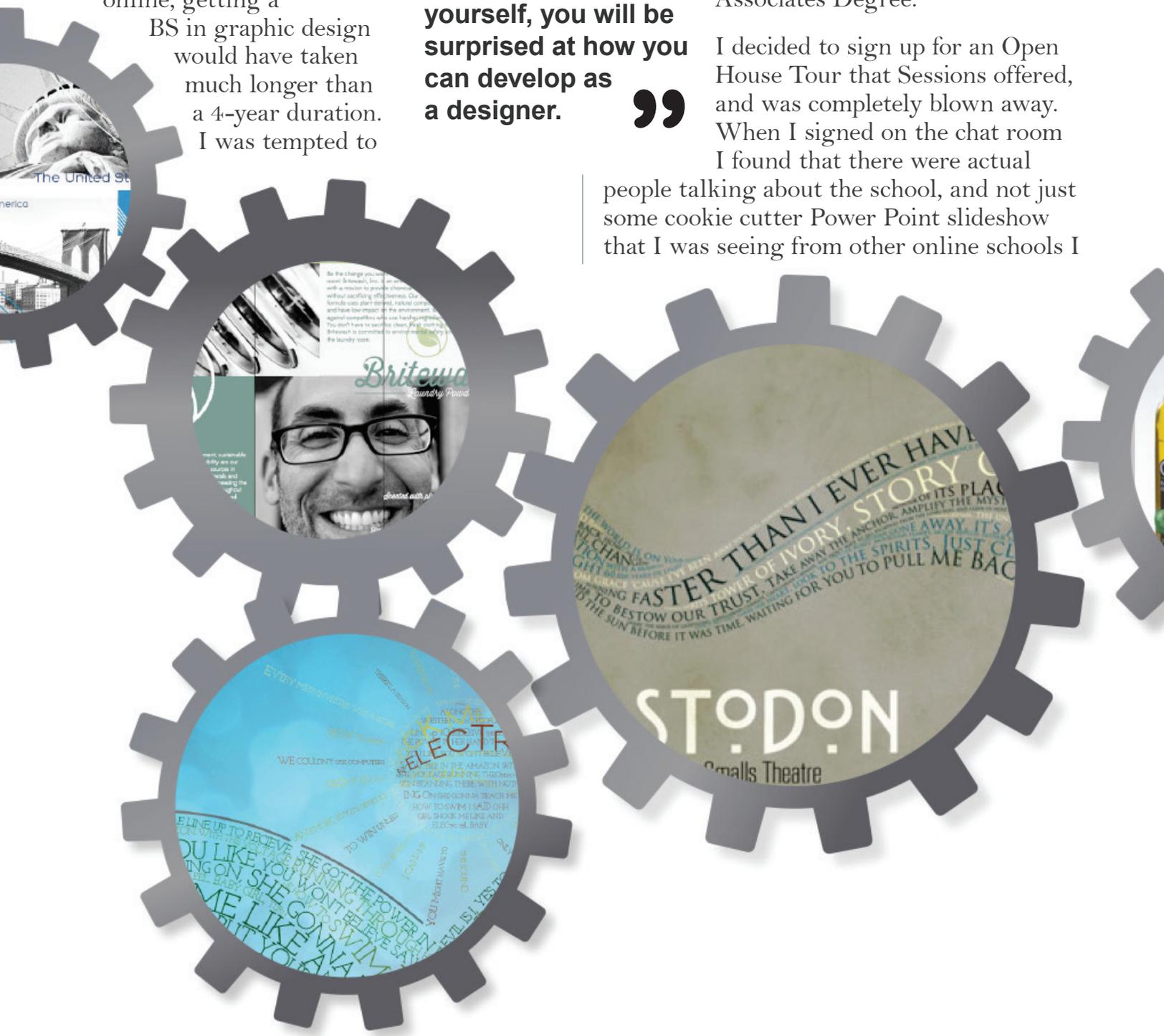
pursued. After leaving that chat room, I knew Sessions would be a good fit for me. I started taking classes in Fall of 2011 in pursuit of an Associates of Occupational Studies in Graphic Design, and have never looked back.

What surprised you about your online school experience?

The small class sizes and the valuable feedback I received from both students and professors. Having spent time in a traditional college classroom, I can say that getting specific feedback from the professor was very rare unless you really pushed to meet with them after class hours. Having an almost one-on-one feel was definitely something I wasn't expecting.

I was also surprised by how easy it became to put your work out there for critique from the professors and students. In a traditional class setting, I was always worried about sounding dumb when asking a question during class or nervous about asking a fellow classmate for feedback on a homework assignment. During the class discussions, everyone seemed to be in the same boat, so the comfort level allowed me to push myself

to experiment with designs as well as provide my own suggestions on other students' work.

Every class I took during my time here has been a collaborative effort for everyone to learn the techniques and get better. Classes felt more like teams, and because they were so small, I felt a tighter bond with my online classmates than I ever felt with my traditional college classmates.

What's your advice for someone interested in studying design or considering a career change?

Anyone looking at Sessions already has the drive to learn design. If you can maintain that drive and constantly push yourself, you will be surprised at how you can develop as a designer. Even now, I feel like there is so much more to learn. I think maintaining that constant drive to learn more, get more feedback, revise old designs is the more useful advice I can give anyone. Also, learning to receive negative feedback as a chance to improve your design is important.

Keep as many options open as you can. I was extremely nervous about changing careers paths, especially one with such a dramatic shift. I knew it wasn't going to be easy, but I couldn't imagine thinking "what if..." for the rest of my life. A quote attributed to author Karen Lamb inspired me to take the next step and start pursuing my graphic design degree. "A year from now you may wish you had started today." I couldn't have asked for a better experience than the one Sessions College provided. ☢

Kyle Gilbreath is an aspiring graphic designer living in Pittsburgh, PA. Kyle earned his first degree in Mechanical Engineering and currently works as a nuclear design and analysis engineer. Kyle came to Sessions after deciding to pursue his lifelong passion for creative expression and design. In his free time, Kyle keeps busy snowboarding, running, taking digital photos, and working to prepare his portfolio for the world of design.

Check out more examples of Kyle's work on his website, kylegilbreath.com.

What to Look For...

Choosing a school can be confusing if you're new to online education. We humbly present this checklist for evaluating that shiny new institution in your browser window.

WHAT TO

SCROLL DOWN

WHAT TO LOOK FOR
CHECKLIST

☐ **ACCREDITATION**
Does the school meet established business and educational standards?
What government or education agencies affirm the quality of the school?

☐ **AFFORDABILITY**
What are the total costs of the program? Are different options available for financing my education - such as payment plans, tuition assistance, or financial aid?

☐ **FACULTY**
Are classes taught by experts who have credentials and professional experience?
Would I be excited to work with them?

☐ **MISSION**
What is the stated purpose of the school?
Does the school specialize in the areas I want to learn?

☐ **PROGRAMS**
Do the program objectives meet my learning or career goals?
Is the curriculum up to date and developed with industry best practices in mind?

☐ **OUTCOMES**
What quality of work do students produce? Are students generally satisfied with programs? Are graduates employed in the field?

☐ **REPUTATION**
How long has the school been in existence?
What do current students and graduates say about the school?

☐ **STUDENT SERVICES**
Will I have a qualified student advisor I can turn to?
Are staff friendly, professional, and responsive to my inquiries?

☐ **TECHNOLOGY**
What computer and/or software will I need to get started?

☐ **TIME COMMITMENT**
Are programs self-paced or structured?
Are there any set login times?
How much time will I need to allocate per week?

...And How To Pay

Going to college is an important investment. In fact, the cost of getting a degree or certificate typically repays itself many times over in terms of increased income and career opportunity.

So getting a degree is intrinsically good – but that doesn't mean you should mortgage your future to pay for college. As a savvy education consumer, you need to look for affordable programs, get to know your financial aid and payment options, and draw up a budget that's realistic for you.

Here are some tips from our financial aid team on graduating debt-free:

1. EDUCATION YOU CAN AFFORD. Affordability is a new buzz word in education. Simply put, consumers are looking for programs whose total costs make sense with their expected income after college, and which enable them to minimize loan debt and pay as they go as far as possible.

2. UNDERSTAND THE TRUE COSTS. If you don't know what to ask, the true costs of a degree program can be hard to figure out. So, here are some questions to make sure you get answers to.

- How much is the tuition: per credit, per year, and for the entire program?
- Are additional costs not included in tuition, such as textbooks or program fees?
- Will you need any supplies/software to participate in the program?

3. CREDIT TRANSFER. If you've taken some college classes before, ask about credit transfer. Many adult students can offset degree tuition costs by transferring in previously earned credits.

The Student Debt Crisis.

According to FinAid.org, the cost of college tuition has risen at rates higher than the rate of inflation every year for the last 17 years. As a result, the average student in the United States graduated in 2011 with more than $26,000 of loan debt.

4. FINANCIAL AID. Eligible students may be able to access Federal Pell grants and low-interest Stafford loans. Grant money does not need to be repaid, but loans do. You can determine your eligibility for free by filling out the FAFSA online.

5. OTHER SOURCES OF AID. Don't forget to ask about other sources of aid - institutional scholarships, employer tuition assistance, federal or state workforce programs, military service member programs.

6. YOUR BUDGET. Now look at your budget. How much can you realistically pay as you go? Can you maintain a full- or part-time job that will help pay for the program? How much can you or your family pay out of pocket per month or per semester?

7. ASK ABOUT PAYMENT PLANS. One key to affording college is that there are different ways to break down the cost. Many schools offer no-interest payment plans that can split out-of-pocket costs into an easily digested monthly amount.

8. TALK TO AN ADVISOR. Before you do anything, talk to an Admissions or Financial Aid advisor at the school. Check your assumptions about program costs with a live person. And bear in mind that when you register, all your program costs will be summarized one more time in your Enrollment Agreement.

How Sessions College Compares

- Ranked by the U.S. Department of Education as among the most affordable colleges in its category
- More than 50% more affordable than other online art schools*
- Digital materials included in tuition, no textbook costs
- Up to 36 transfer credits accepted
- Financial Aid for eligible students
- Merit scholarships
- GI Bill and Military TA approved
- No-interest payment plans available

Based on comparison of Sessions College Associate program to three leading competitors.

Why I ♥ Teaching Online
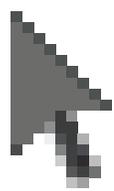
Long before anyone had heard of MOOCs, Sessions College faculty member Piper Nilsson had graduated thousands of students from her online classes. As a department head and instructor for more than ten years, Piper has influenced design students from all over the world, earning a USDLA Platinum Award in 2012 for teaching excellence. Recently, Piper has seen Web design itself undergo dramatic technological transformation, and her classes and teaching methods evolving to meet the pace of change. Here she discusses the joys of teaching online.

You won a USDLA Platinum award for your online teaching. How did it feel to be recognized for your work?

It was a huge surprise. I see students improve everyday, but it's great to know that the classes are effective. I'm happy to be part of Sessions College, it is a terrific program.

What are some exciting changes you've seen in Web design over the last ten years?

When I started out in Web design, designers were trying to make print layouts work in a browser, or designing complicated interfaces with beveled buttons like a jukebox. Today, the Web has developed its own design sensibility and strategy. Layouts are responsive so they adapt to different screen sizes, and the interfaces are minimal, keeping the focus on content.

How are you addressing these changes your classes?

The most important shift now is towards responsive design. This year, we are restructuring the Web design projects to get students thinking "mobile first." I'm also excited to see students experimenting with Web fonts, which opens up a lot of design possibilities. Through teaching, I'm constantly learning new design tools. I've been exploring ways to use HTML5 Canvas and CSS transitions and transforms to format visual data like bar charts, pie charts, and Venn diagrams.

How is online teaching different than teaching in a classroom?

Teaching online, I work with students individually rather than as a group. Each project receives a personalized critique. I look for the best aspects of the student's work, and

encourage him/her to simplify and focus. A common beginner mistake is to try to fit too much on the page. You have one message to communicate, but you say it in five different ways, unsure if your audience understood you the first time. It takes confidence to just say something once and know you've got the point across.

What are some of the benefits of studying online?

For most students, the biggest benefit is probably the flexible schedule. You can work full-time or part-time while going to school, from anywhere in the world. I had a student from Malta who worked on a cruise ship while getting a degree in Web design.

What do you find most rewarding about teaching online?

It is fun seeing what each student does with an assignment. Everyone has a different way of seeing things. I have students from Japan, Brazil, Italy, South Africa.. I never know whom I'm going to meet when I login to work.

Piper Nilsson is an award-winning instructor and graphic designer with over 10 years' experience teaching and developing courses at Sessions. Some of Piper's accomplishments include work for global clients MetLife, Pepsi, and Citibank. A freelancer based in Buenos Aires, her recent projects include a Spanish language podcast and travel app. In 2011, Piper received a Sessions College award for excellence in online teaching and won a USDLA Platinum Award for distance learning in 2012. Piper's dedication to students shows in her work, and she is consistently ranked as a top instructor in student evaluations.

In April 2012, Sessions College instructor Piper Nilsson won a **USDLA Platinum award for teaching excellence**. The Platinum award is the highest honor USDLA can bestow for teaching.

WHY ONLINE ROCKS

Yeah, yeah, we know; it's more convenient. But what's it really like to study online? There are many other benefits to taking an online program than 24/7 access--some of which might surprise you. Here, our degree and certificate students discuss some of the unexpected benefits of pursuing a virtual education.

ACCESSIBILITY
PRACTICAL SKILLS
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
INSPIRATION

The online discussions and critiques are very lively and sometimes even intense, with everyone participating and giving their feedback.

Hiba Abugosh
ASSOCIATE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

It's satisfying seeing the final result of your hard work and creative problem solving.

Cherese Schoombee Uys
GAME ART CERTIFICATE

Course deadlines helped me to produce quality work in a short time frame - a great asset when dealing with clients outside of college.

Julia Grant
WEB DESIGN CERTIFICATE

My technical and computer skills, especially with Photoshop, have grown by leaps and bounds.

Megan Skipworth
ASSOCIATE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

The biggest differences seem to be an improved 'eye for the design elements' and my workflow seems to be more efficient and productive.

Joe Urso
DIGITAL ARTS CERTIFICATE

I wanted a program that was flexible, affordable – at a school that would let me work full-time and do my studies at night.

Justin Ashley
ASSOCIATE IN WEB DESIGN

Now I can look at my own work with a critical eye and find areas of improvement.

Erin Ramsdale
ASSOCIATE IN WEB DESIGN

My work has matured greatly. I'm creating work that exceeds my dreams and expectations.

Michael Lawson
GRAPHIC DESIGN CERTIFICATE

There has been a big change in my confidence in my design work since the beginning of this program.

Jason Maclean
ASSOCIATE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

Taking the program has allowed me to show my thoughtful, creative, and artistic sides.

Anita Reidner
WEB DESIGN CERTIFICATE

I've seen my ability to go from concepts to results just blossom as I get conversant with the tools, especially Adobe Creative Suite.

Mat Brink
MULTIMEDIA ARTS CERTIFICATE

There's something about that eureka moment you get when you discover a design principle that you know is going to improve your work!

Kurt Cummings
MARKETING DESIGN CERTIFICATE

BUILDING A PORTFOLIO

Employers need to know you can transition from the classroom to the industry. Capstone projects help to bridge that gap by showcasing everything you've learned in one last real-world style project.

For aspiring designers, a good portfolio of work is key. Whether you're working with Photoshop, Dreamweaver, or painting on canvas, your portfolio will give potential employers a sense of what you can offer in the field of design.

So, how is it assembled? Our Portfolio Review panel presents their tips for making your portfolio stand out from the crowd.

Andrew Shalat
Degree Department Head, Graphic Design

A GRADUATE'S PORTFOLIO SHOULD CONTAIN:

Traditionally, a design portfolio would have ad work, layout, book cover design, packaging, restaurant menus, etc. Now you need to show a good sense of interactive design, as well as branding and logo work. Sometimes an array of logos will work, if you have enough to show. Just one or two isn't enough.

ADVICE TO FIRST-TIMERS:

Choice is everything. Don't let your emotions get in the way of good portfolio selection. Think like a Vulcan: logically, and strategically. Do you have all the parts that show your talent and intentionality? Do you show a good range of pieces? Do you show their real world context? Always think of the viewer, not so much yourself.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PORTFOLIO STAND OUT:

Originality and confidence. Does the student's work show a clear intentionality, with a point of view. Is it evident or is it emerging?

Presentation. Does the presentation of the work show the context for each piece? Too many times a design student will show production work, without giving its real world context. If the piece is a label for olive oil, then showing the labels on the bottles in real life is essential.

Rhythm. A portfolio has to have a flow. People viewing a portfolio linger at the first two pieces, then speed up, then slow toward the middle, speed up, and then pause exhausted on the last piece, which doesn't really get the time it deserves. Make choices that account for rhythm.

Piper Nilsson
Department Head, Web Design

A GRADUATE'S PORTFOLIO SHOULD CONTAIN:

A few conceptual pieces, like a logo design; a few bold, graphic examples, like a poster; and a few longer, more complex projects, like a magazine. Something clever, something witty, something beautiful.

ADVICE TO FIRST-TIMERS:

Revise and rework each piece in your portfolio until it is perfect. Add more content to give weight to lighter pieces. Show how a logo looks on a package, a business card and signage. Only show your best work, eliminate any weak links. Quality over quantity is essential.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PORTFOLIO STAND OUT:

A consistent level of quality. Leave out your weaker pieces. When you consider adding a new project to your portfolio, compare it to your best work. Is it as good?

Good typography. Most importantly, your content should be legible. Choose a font that projects the right tone for each project and consider font-size, leading, and line-length and other typographic details.

A sense of your individual style. Your portfolio should show your personal approach to design. Your client wants to know what to expect after hiring you.

Jordon Schranz
Department chair of Illustration

A GRADUATE'S PORTFOLIO SHOULD CONTAIN:

Your best work in the area you choose to focus on. Pay close attention to layout and typography as these two elements play key roles in any design role (print, web, or screen).

ADVICE TO FIRST-TIMERS:

Always show your process along with the finished design. Showing a client/potential employer how you arrived at the final design is just as important as the design itself. It shows the effort that you put into the design. Research, sketches, and initial concepts should be presented in some fashion. When presenting a portfolio, have a consistent medium/look rather than loose pieces.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PORTFOLIO STAND OUT:

Concept development and execution. Does the concept fit the goal of the design and is the goal clear via the execution of that concept? To put it plainly, I look to see if a design is just pretty or if it clearly communicates something.

Attention to the fine details. Is the text greek (lorem ipsum) or is it real? If it's real then I take the time to read it to see how the design connects with the context of the text. I also look for little things like page numbers, widows, and orphans.

Completeness. Is the work an exercise that shows competency in a specific software OR is it also logical and serves a purpose? Did the student put extra thought into how to apply a real world scenario to the exercise?

Bridging the Gap

At the end of their degree or certificate programs, many Sessions students complete a Portfolio Review class. In it, they collect their best work and present it for faculty feedback. The burning question: which work should they use in presenting their portfolio to future clients and employers, and which should they set aside?

To get a student perspective on this experience, we talked to Myriam Keaton, a Spring 2013 Associate Degree program graduate who has just completed Portfolio Review.

Biggest Surprise or Challenge

The first challenge was coming up with an attractive design and layout that would represent me as a brand and that would allow each selected pieces to shine. The second challenge was the organization of my portfolio. Readers focus most of their attention at the beginning and at the ending of any document while quickly browsing through the middle section. So the beginning and the ending is where your best pieces should go.

Deciding which pieces were the best was a bit of a chore as I felt my judgment was getting a bit blurry after seeing my work over and over again. A set of fresh eyes from a friend proved very helpful in accomplishing this task.

Advice to Future Students

Your portfolio promotes you as a brand and as a designer. Spend some time on the concept and design of an attractive cover page and template that will represent you as a designer and highlight your work.

Include compositions which show your style, your skills, your ability and your creativity. Choose the majority of your pieces reflecting the field of design in which you are most interested in but not exclusively. For example, you might favor packaging but your portfolio should still include a page with logo design to show that your skills are not limited to

packaging and that you can also excel in other fields of design.

Before you present your work, revise your pieces and go through the creative briefs, the concepts, the approaches and the challenges that you faced. Were the goals and the objectives met? Was the design successful? How and why? This process will help you be more comfortable, fluent and confident in presenting your work. When it's time to present your portfolio; relax, be yourself, and let your work do most of the talking!

Next Steps

My next step is to build a Web site and establish a strong online presence to promote my work. The next two years will consist of acquiring experience and building a strong resume. Continuing to learn and staying current in the field of design will always be part of my agenda. My long term goal is to have my own graphic design studio and offer my services both online and in my community. I also foresee expanding my design knowledge to textile where I envision the creation of bedding products for kids.
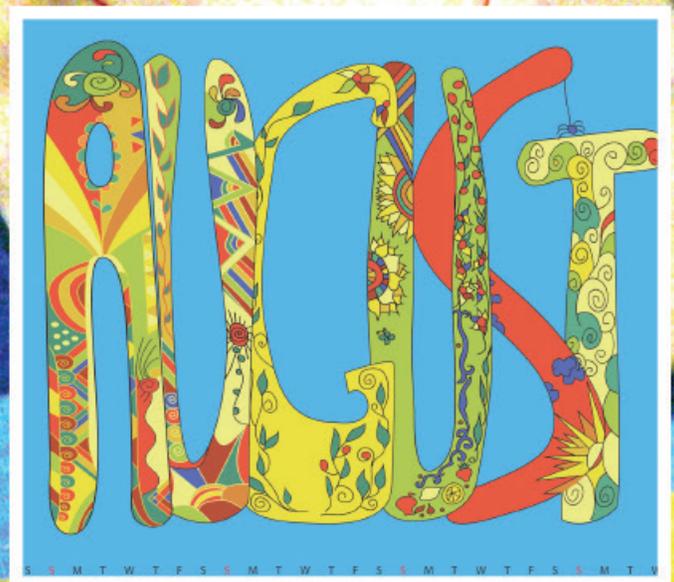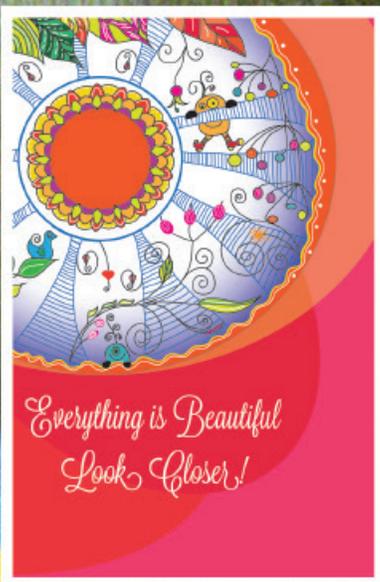
Putting Education to Work

Is there life after school? Exciting careers await online graduates. Next steps for our alumni can range from freelancing and design startups to creative positions at major firms.

We asked four Sessions College alums how they put their education to work.

DESIGN INNOVATOR

Joe Akers
OWNER/DESIGNER,
Brainchild Collective

CO-OWNER/
DESIGNER,
PaperFreckles

At Brainchild Collective I work in a business-to-business capacity with small-to-medium sized companies to help them develop branding and marketing materials such as logos, printed collateral and websites in conjunction with developer partnerships. (I'm not a web developer, and just do the design.)

At PaperFreckles, I work with my wife and business partner Coleen to design high-end custom wedding and special event invitations. We recently debuted seven new lines of greeting cards at the National Stationery Show in New York City. There is always something new to work on, a new challenge to tackle. It

never gets old!
Sessions provided me with a foundation in design that has stayed with me since completing my program. The projects, coursework and feedback from the instructors have been invaluable in my approach to my work. I don't think I could have gotten it elsewhere.

CREATIVE PUBLISHER

Greg Hamerton
DESIGNER,
Eternity Press

My strapline is "Creative publishing, by design" so I offer creative design solutions for my clients' media needs.

It ranges from website design to print design to email marketing newsletters to marketing campaigns, so it's quite broad.

I like being my own boss. The media is always changing, so the work is constantly evolving. For instance, I've recently been producing YouTube videos as part of a marketing strategy, which involves graphic design and filming work.

Sessions taught me how to plan a design. Instead of diving into every design and getting lost in iterations, I have learned to think first about the objectives and style of the design itself. I knew that a professional designer was going to criticize my work, so I was always trying to impress (great practice for having a client!)

I design, code and test email campaigns for Capital One, Capital One 360, and ShareBuilder. I work with an awesome team, and the work is constantly changing and evolving.

I think the research that we do--finding new features and new ways of adapting web standards to our email practices--is the coolest aspect of our work.

The Sessions program gave me a grounding in CSS/HTML and Photoshop/Illustrator/Indesign. I always say that one of the hardest parts of learning graphic design/web design was "learning what things were called," be it the tools of Photoshop or a piece of CSS code. The program offered the building blocks for continued learning.

MULTIMEDIA WEBMASTER

Candice Dunlap Miller
WEB DESIGNER,
Capital One

GAME ENTREPRENEUR

Lauren Ellis
ART DIRECTOR, INTERFACE DESIGNER, AND LEAD MONSTER DESIGNER

I run an independent game company called Ignis Studios where I am the Art Director, Interface Designer, and lead Monster Designer. We are developing our first game, Deozoa, which is a monster catching game.
I manage three artists right now, as well as help develop the game's UX and UI. I also help create our characters, plot, and attacks. I love being creative. Designing an entire world from nothing really stretches me to my limits. When drawing new monsters, I love to Google real animals and base them off of that. It is so much fun to learn more about the world around me and put that into a fun product.

Everyday I'm thankful for my education from Sessions. Sessions really helped develop my skills as an artist and train me to use programs like Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator.
I also learned how to work independently and to manage my time efficiently, something vital to a small start up business.