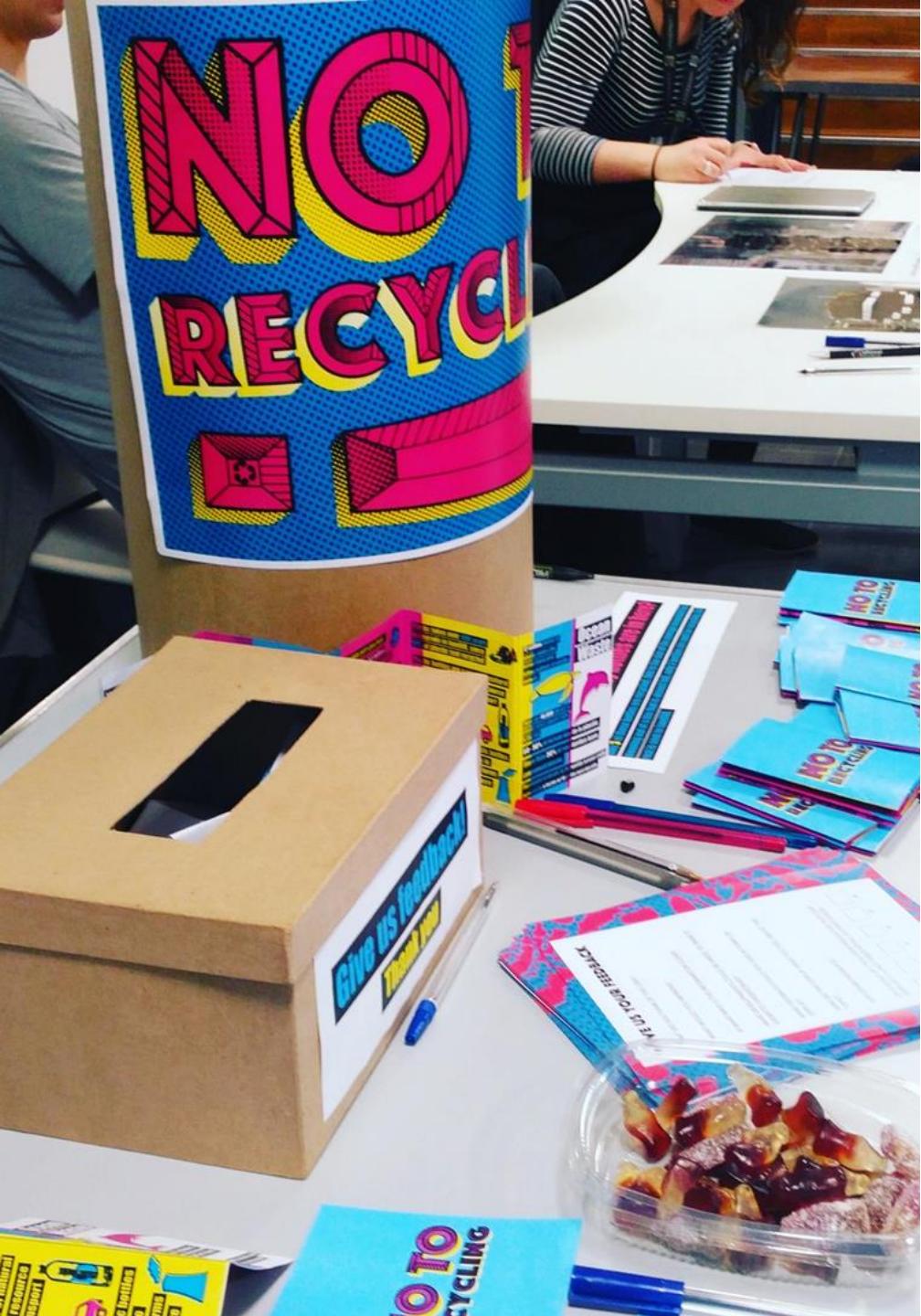




Designing
designers
—
through
Transformative Experience



Research of Sancha de Búrca
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If you have any questions or would like to work on a project that raises levels of social responsibility, please do feel free to contact me:

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Images

- All images are from Design for Good projects
- And are created by students on HND or BA Graphic Design...
- ...or are of them learning about it
- Diagrams Sancha de Búrca and Sean de Búrca

Ethics

- The project has been passed by the ethics committee of the University of Kent and reported to the research committee of the Hadlow Group



Why do we need change?

Our world is full of man-made 'wicked problems' that are hard to solve, such as:

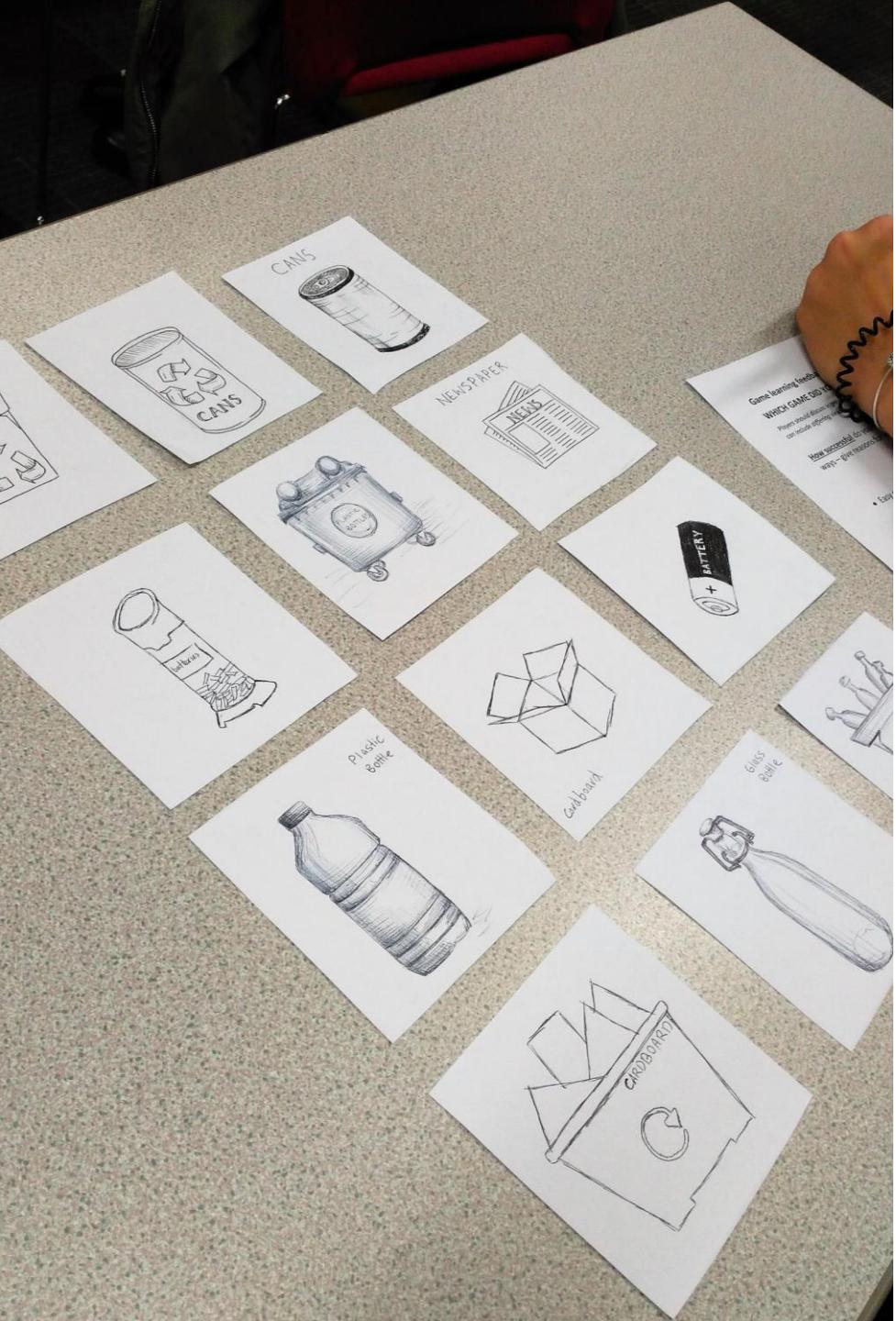
- Climate crisis
- Environmental degradation
- Extinction (1,000,000 species under threat)
- Social injustice, war, inequality and poverty...
- ...seen in instances like homelessness, mass migration of refugees, unhealthy eating or starvation and many more



Why change graphic design?

Graphic Design has been **complicit** in causing and fueling these problems:

- Persuasion to buy the unnecessary
- Upholds normalization of consumerism
- Maintains mainstream norms
- Sells the idea of *infinite* commercial growth...
- ...through the abuse of the world's *finite* resources



Professional responsibility?

- Living in an age of accountability to government agencies and distant corporate parent companies
- Even university is a 'transaction'
- No room for moral voice or discernment
- Where is professional social responsibility?
- Pedagogy for social responsibility needed
- Therefore undertaking research to underpin curriculum design for social responsibility
- Attempting to make graphic design a professional of care



What kind of new education?

A new kind of pedagogy might include:

- Critical pedagogy – drawing attention to oppression which usually involves class, race, ability or gender issues, but now includes the oppression of climate crisis and inequality
- Critical hope – opportunities must be given for students to take action through their learning
- Transformative experiences – setting these up can potentially trigger the above two aspects and more



IS YOUR INJURY LIFE - THREATENING?

Something such as small hand injury could be treated in a minor injuries unit. Call 111 to find out what the best course of action is for you! In 2015-16 10% of 999 and 111 calls were resolved over the phone.

111



Each time a call gets transferred to a clinical advisor it costs £64.59



10% of all 999 and 111 calls are resolved over the phone.



Many young people are not taught what 111 is or how to use it.

MAKE A CHOICE BEFORE YOU VOICE

SPEAK TO ME BEFORE GOING TO A&E

<https://111.nhs.uk>



What is Design for Good?

- An altruistic move away from commerce
- Using ethical and sustainable approaches
- New purposes for design to help people, environments
- Design's positive affordances:
 - Problem finding
 - Collaboration
 - Visualisation
 - Awareness raising
 - Design as speculation and research



Negative affect

Negative emotions arising because of huge scale of problems and disruption of design can:

- Disrupt student expectations
- Cause despair, anxiety, hopelessness – even grief
- Annihilate identity where someone is invested in a worldview
- Can cause reactions like: “We didn’t learn any graphic design skills”

Research questions

Transformative Experiences:

- In what ways are transformative experiences effective as a method to promote agency regarding social responsibility?
- How do participants perceive transformative experiences relating to Design for Good professionalism?





Framework: transformative experience

- Pugh's Transformative Experience framework is based on writings of Dewey
- John Dewey's 'An Experience' is recognisable as distinct from everyday experience, but enriches later experience
- It often involves a felt difficulty, disclosure, fracture
- Paradigms can be ruptured (especially in critical pedagogy) leaving a void
- So there follows reflection and constructivist re-working
- Anticipation to test new ideas results in "free choice" action or agency



Framework: Pugh's transformative experience

Pugh describes three elements to Transformative Experience:

- Expanded perception – cognitive ‘re-seeing’ after paradigm break
- Experiential value – intrinsic value (affect) of how the new knowledge can be used
- Motivated use of content – or putting *free choice* action into practice in voluntary situations

#NOTOBIGBRANDS

MOST OF THE MONEY SPENT AT **BIG BRAND** COFFEE SHOP LOCATIONS WILL **NOT** CIRCULATE IN YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY



Curriculum change aims

The aims of a changed pedagogy are to:

- Inspire agency for social responsibility
- Raise levels of empathy and 'BTS' (beyond the self disposition)
- Develop ethical discernment
- Enable confrontation of risk for an unknown future
- Change-making skills
- Redefine the *purpose* of graphic design in order to help others rather than concentrating on the commercial

Altering the curriculum

For the last four years the research interventions have included:

- *Design Volunteers* (graphics students freelance for local charities across the academic year)
- A range of ethics-based and sustainability projects
- Students complete evaluations on professionalism, ethics and sustainability on all projects to underpin the fundamental nature of Design for Good
- ‘Project X’ – large annual project and the focus of this report, including:
 - *Provoking our Futures* (2018)
 - *Creative Conscience* (2019)





Research methods

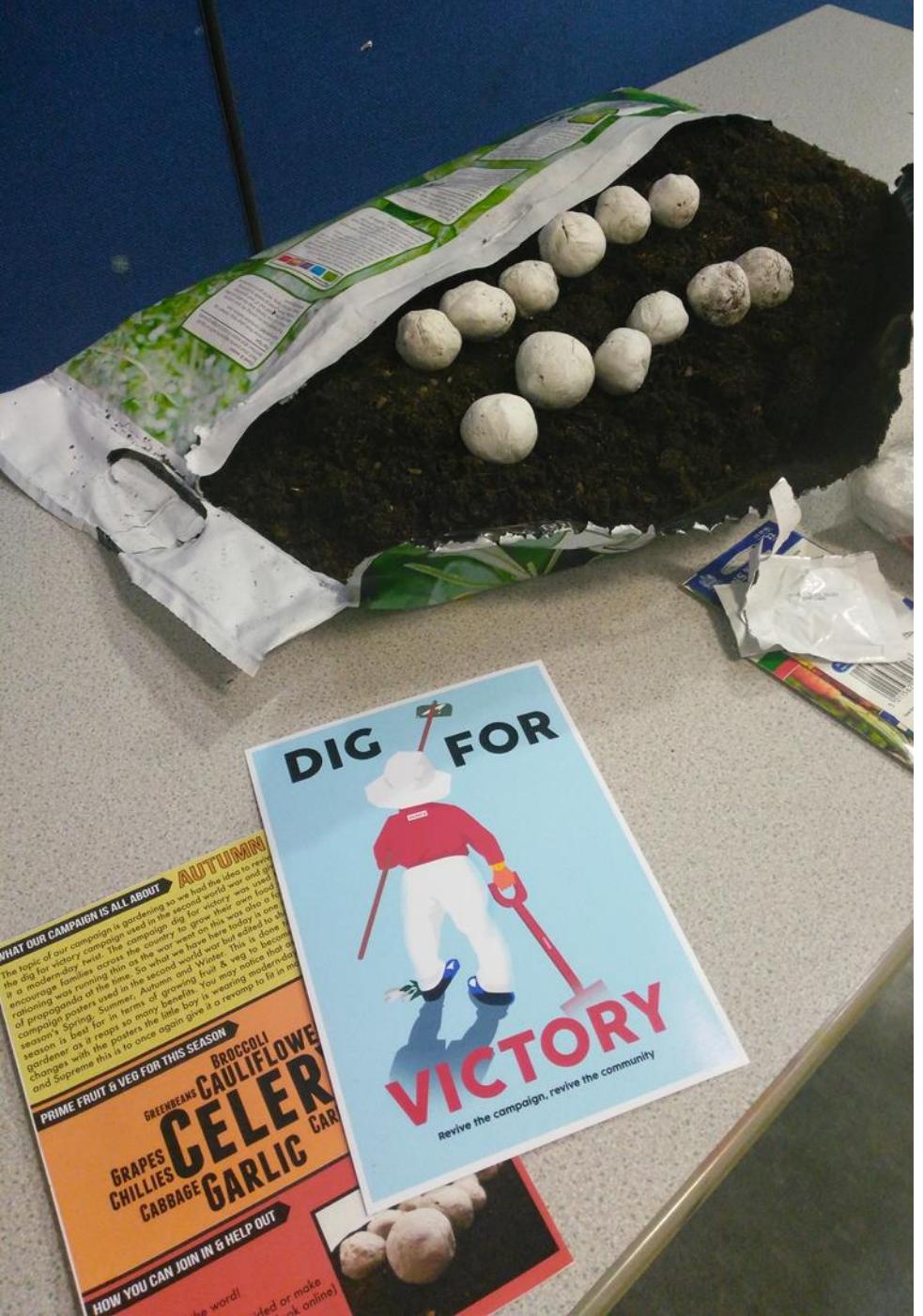
Mixed methods are being used:

- Phenomenography (for Project X interventions):
 - Variations in perceptions across groups, not individuals
 - How these variations relate to each other and to Design for Good
 - Finding a base-line or rubric for the design of new pedagogy
- Narrative:
 - Exploring longitudinal journeys of individuals' transformative experiences across the programme



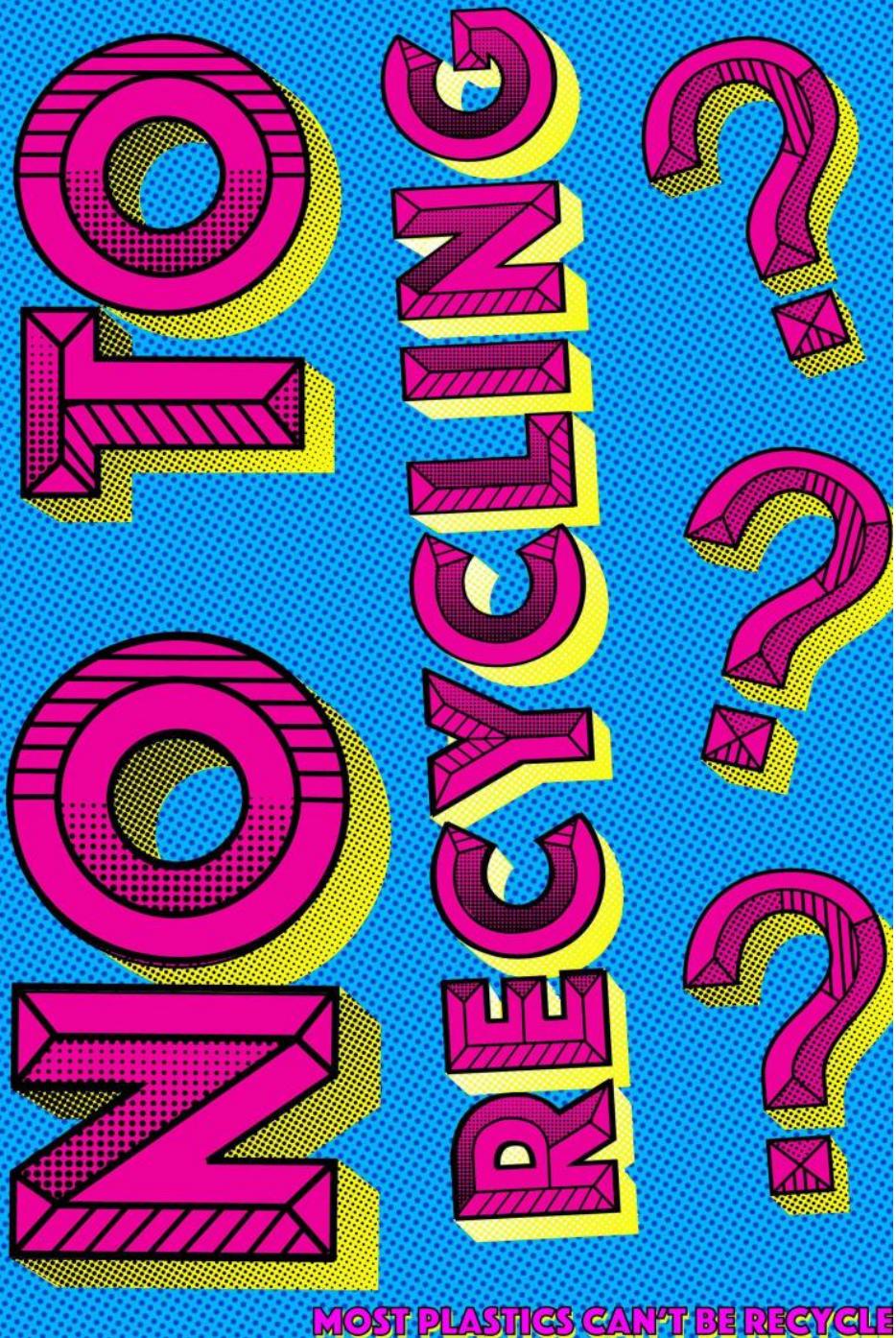
Method: Project X 2018 Sample

- University of Kent Graphic Design students
- 3 year-groups together
- 37 participants
- 9 Teams
- December 2017 – February 2018
- Individual research over Christmas and team work on practical design in Spring term
- Sharing of research in sprint exhibitions



Project X 2018: Provoking our Futures format

- Making conversation starters (prototypes)
- Design experiments with new forms
- Central focus was a one-day display of conversation-starting designs in canteen
- Focus on local, sustainability projects (meaningful to students)
- Involving community feedback and perspective
- Producing Design for Good outcomes from that feedback



What are 'Provotypes'?

- 'Provotype' means provocative prototype
- They are conversation starters
- Design as a form of speculative research
- Engage community in dialogue
- Act as change-making catalyst
- Co-design with communities
- Always in beta format for feedback
- Further iterations produce more dialogue



Data: Project X 2018

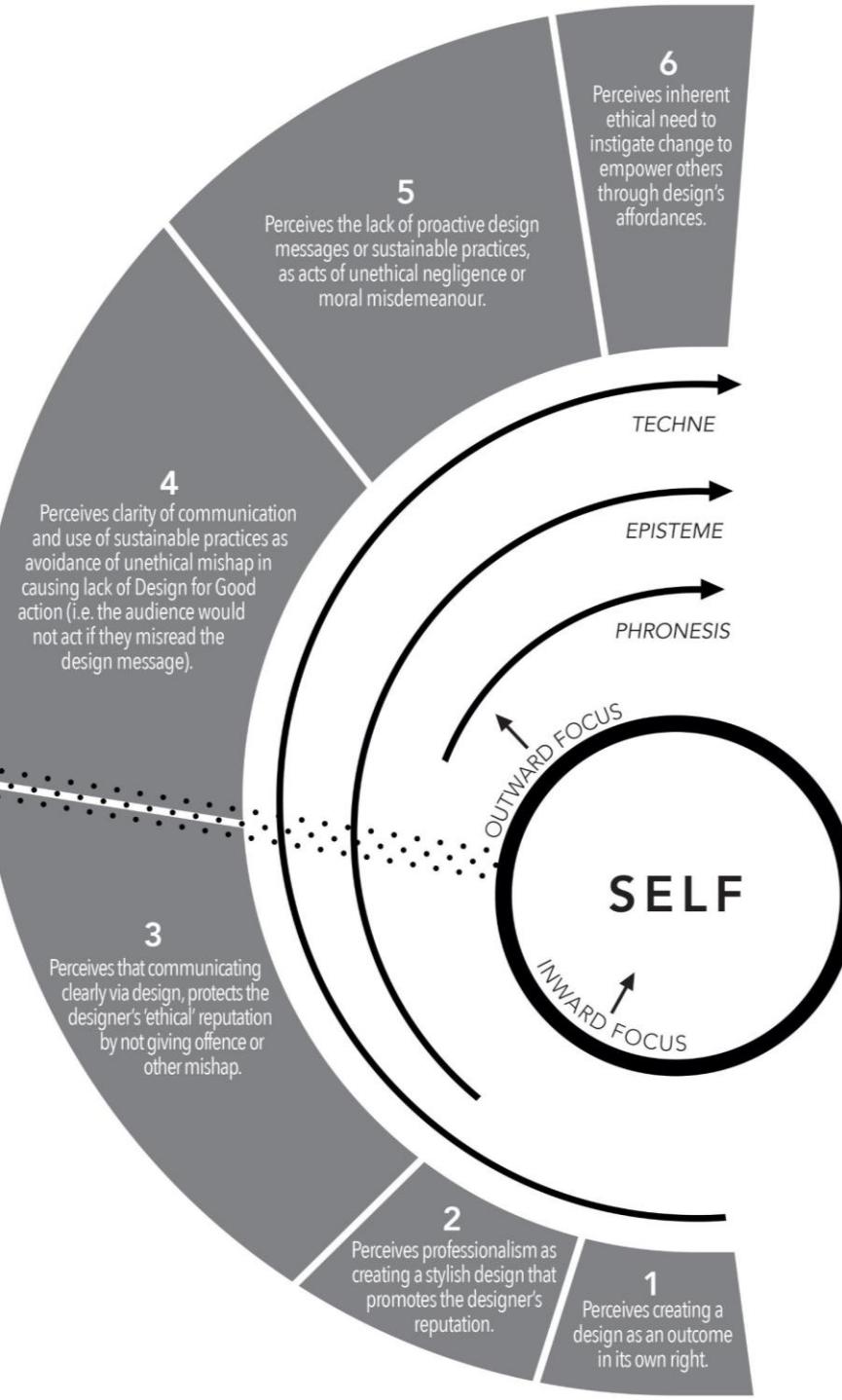
Phenomenographic coding of:

- Blog 'journals' (design process, evaluation and reflection)
- End of day reflection sheets
- Practical work
- Pre- and post-intervention surveys – perceptions of Design for Good Professionalism



Survey questions (overview)

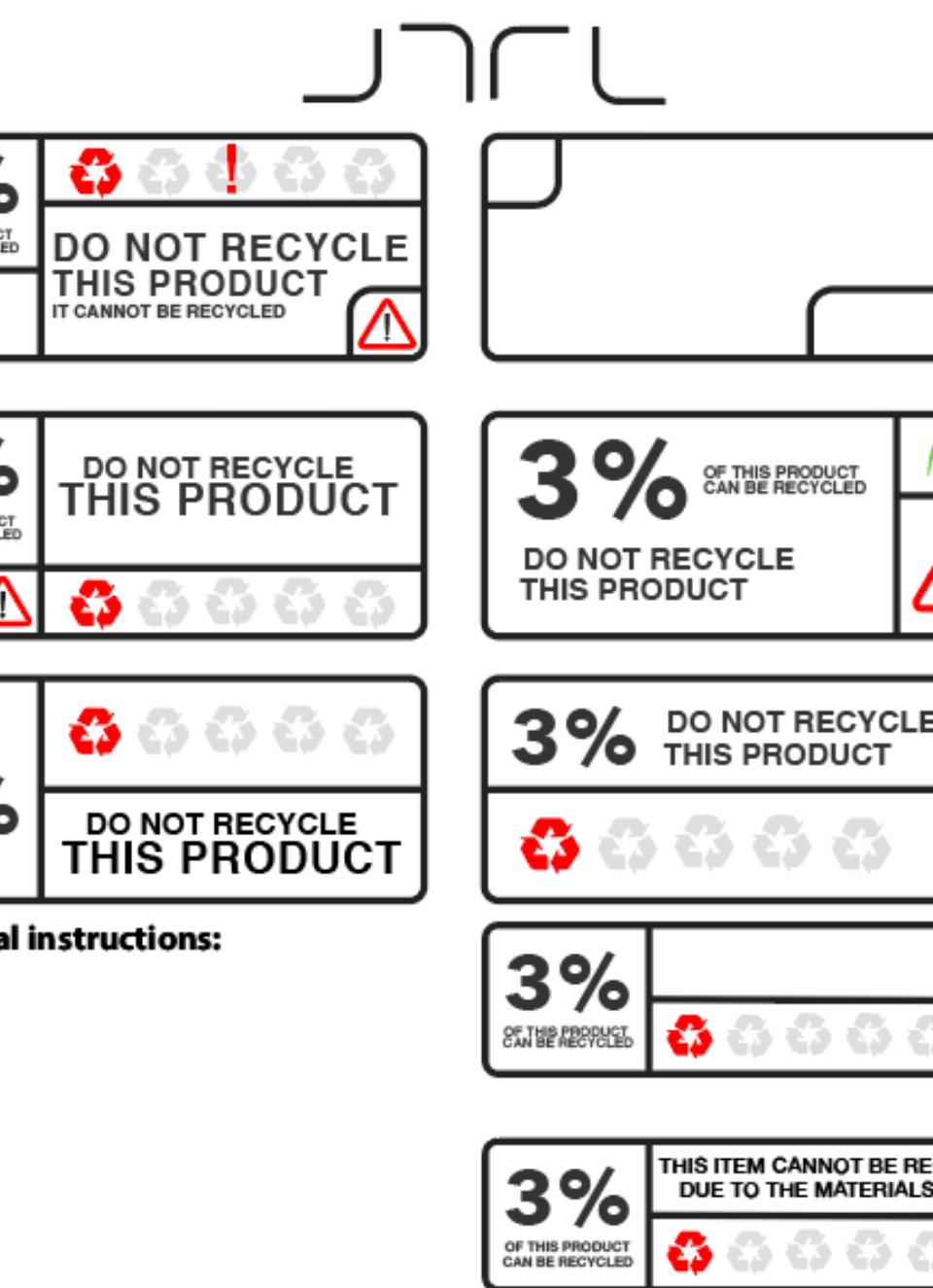
- In what ways were you a Design for Good professional?
- How do you know?
- What were the trigger scenarios (to gain concrete, contextualized answers, not abstract ones)
- Consequences of not being?
- Changes or transformations occurred?
- Respondents did not like this last question. Why? Wording? Implications of change?



Model of Variations in Perception in Project X 2018

Perceptions of Design for Good

- **Variations 4 – 6 = Outward focus: an escalating Beyond The Self awareness, supporting others, moral need for Design for Good**
- **Between variation 3 and 4 there is a shift in perception of purpose of design (as end in itself or as means to act)**
- **Variations 1 – 3 = Inward focus: self as learner, practical skills and saving reputation**



Two findings: Communication and authenticity

These elements were important in all variations but acted as a mirror of the inward and outward focus:

- Communicating clearly to maintain own reputation (variations 1 – 3)...
- ...or to help others (variations 4 – 6)
- Researching purposefully to prevent embarrassment during display (variations 1 – 3)...
- ...or finding genuine facts to design to *help* others (variations 4 – 5)
- ...or to pass on information via design to *empower* others (variation 6)



Redesign for Project X 2019

- More autonomy – students nominated the charrette topic
- Engage expert guests to support staff as well as students
- Keep community voice – design for local people
- Develop scaffolding as a ‘motivational ZPD’
- Follow with independent work with self-initiated topics



Mental Health topic

- Students nominated and voted for the topic of mental health
- Sensitive topic needed careful handling and involved risk for staff as well as students
- Expert support needed - West Kent counselling team and West Kent Mind supported us by provided guest experts to help make the design relevant
- 'No-questions' safety net – students allowed to opt out of triggering situations or topics (few did so)

Project X 2019: Creative Conscience format

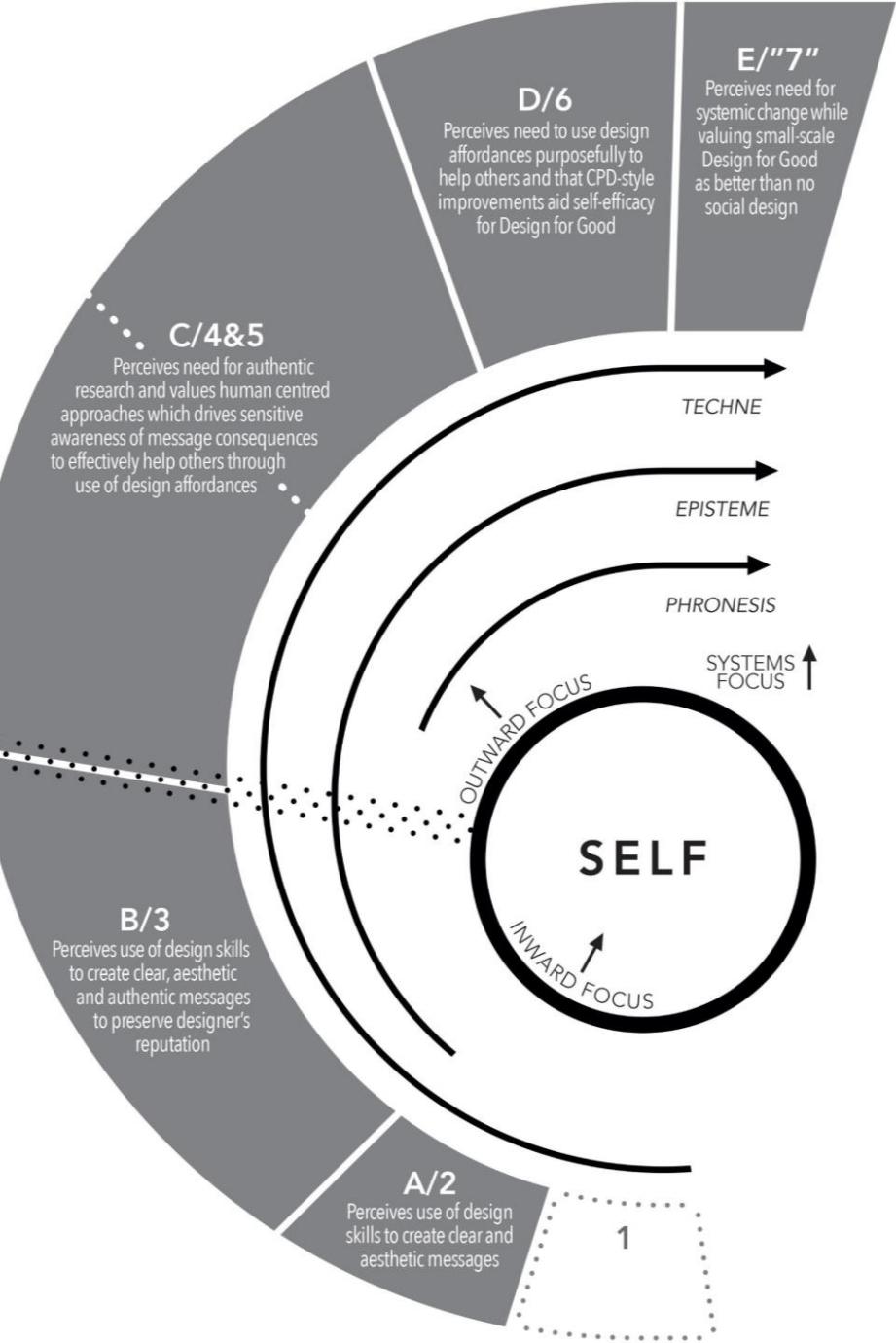


- Flipped learning over Christmas
- Sharing of research (personas – fictional people based on real narratives)
- Initial intensive one-week ideation charrette in mixed year-group teams
- Charrette culminated in design pitch to experts
- Individuals then move on to (national) *Creative Conscience* competition design briefs on a variety of topics, including mental health



Method: Project X 2019 Sample and data

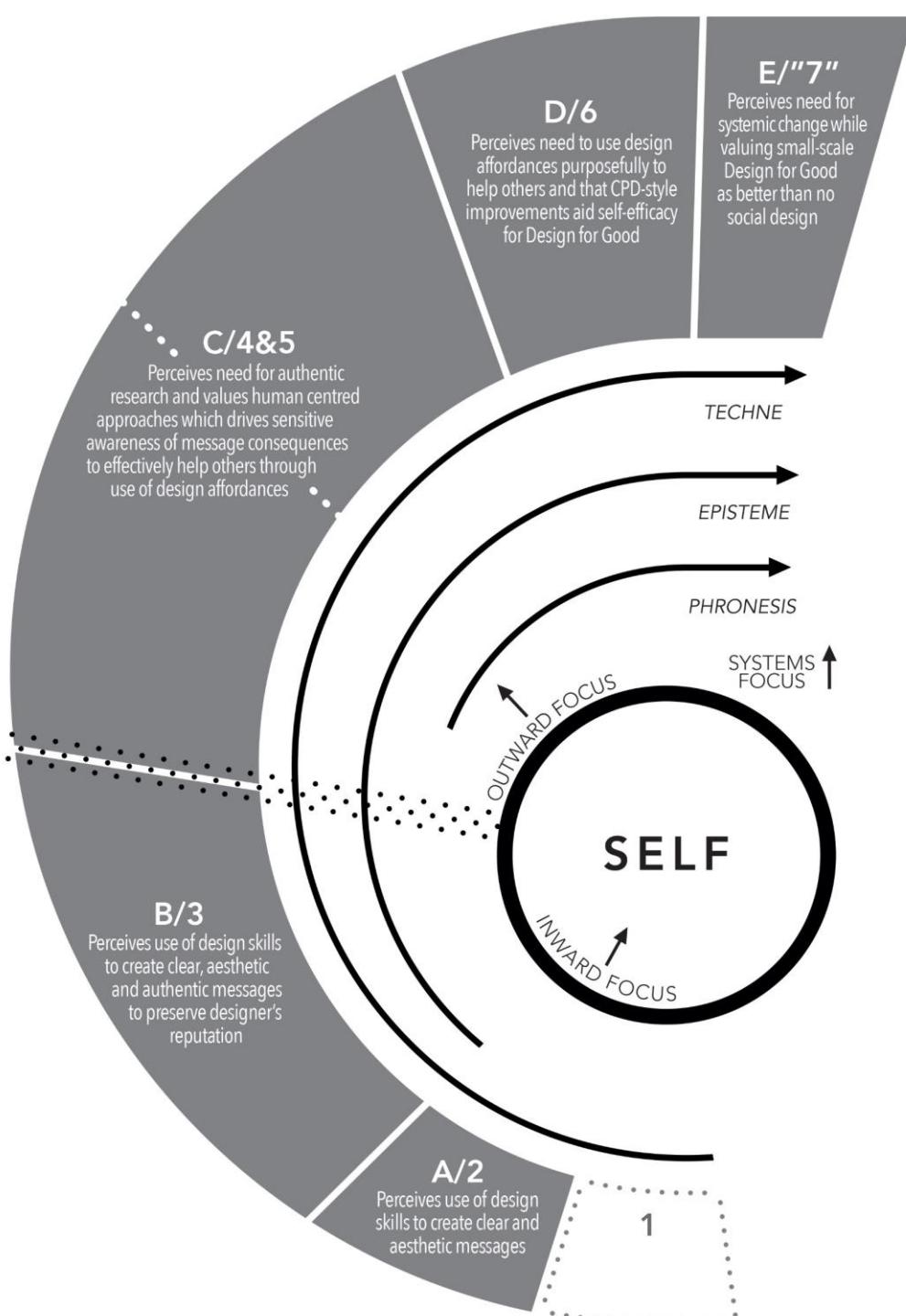
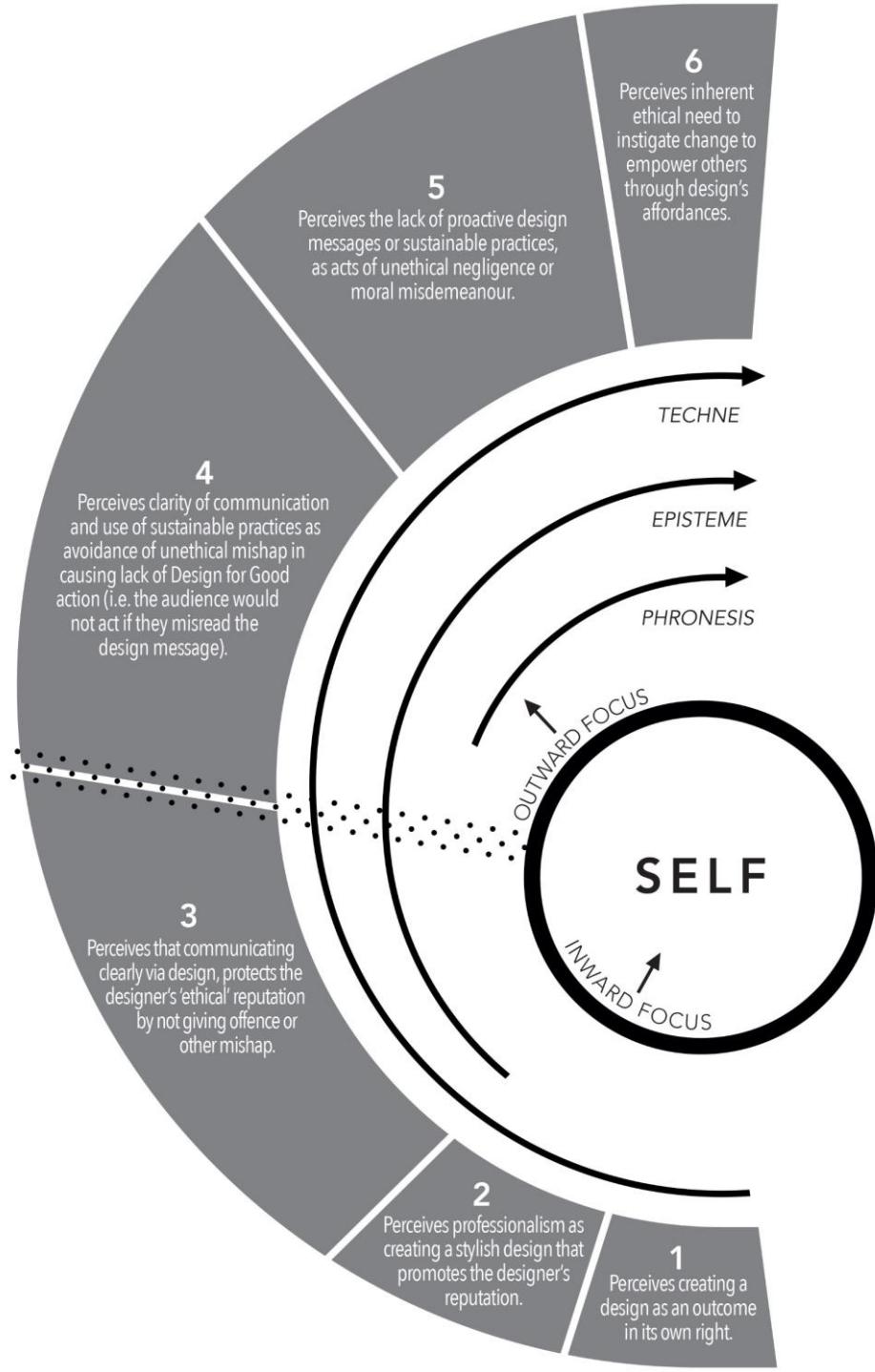
- 26 students
- 7 teams
- 20 had participated in *Project X 2018: Provoking our Futures*
- December 2018 – February 2019
- Same method – compare to previous rubric
- Same data collection
- Change in last survey question to discuss ‘personal and professional growth’

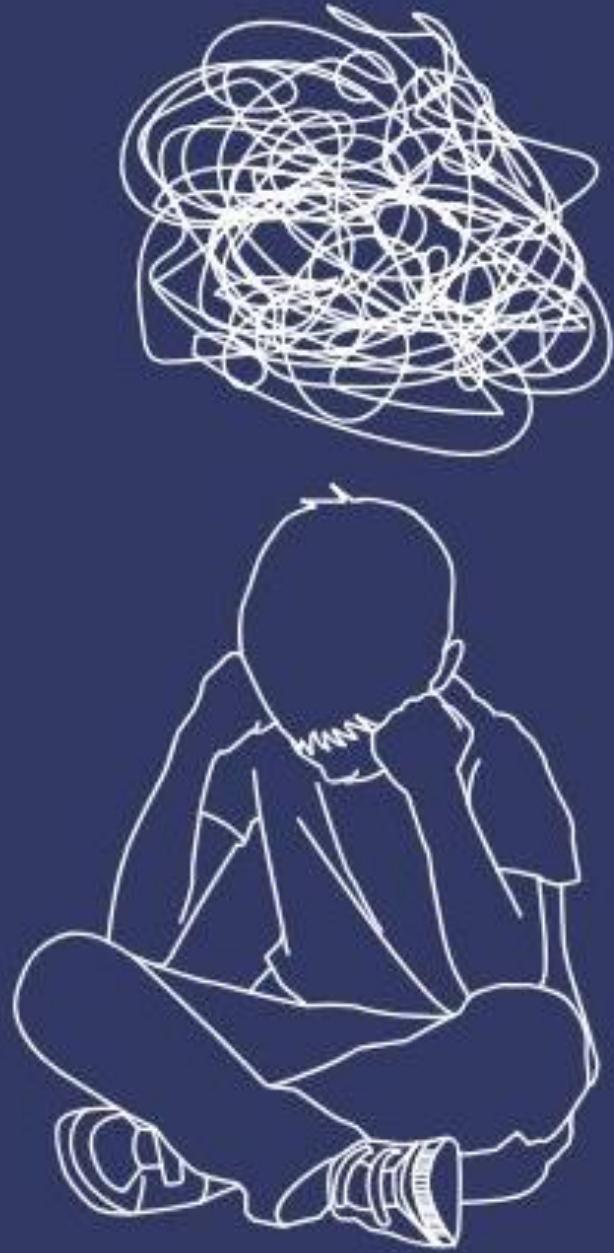


Model of Variations in Perception in Project X 2019

Variations in perception across the group showing different foci

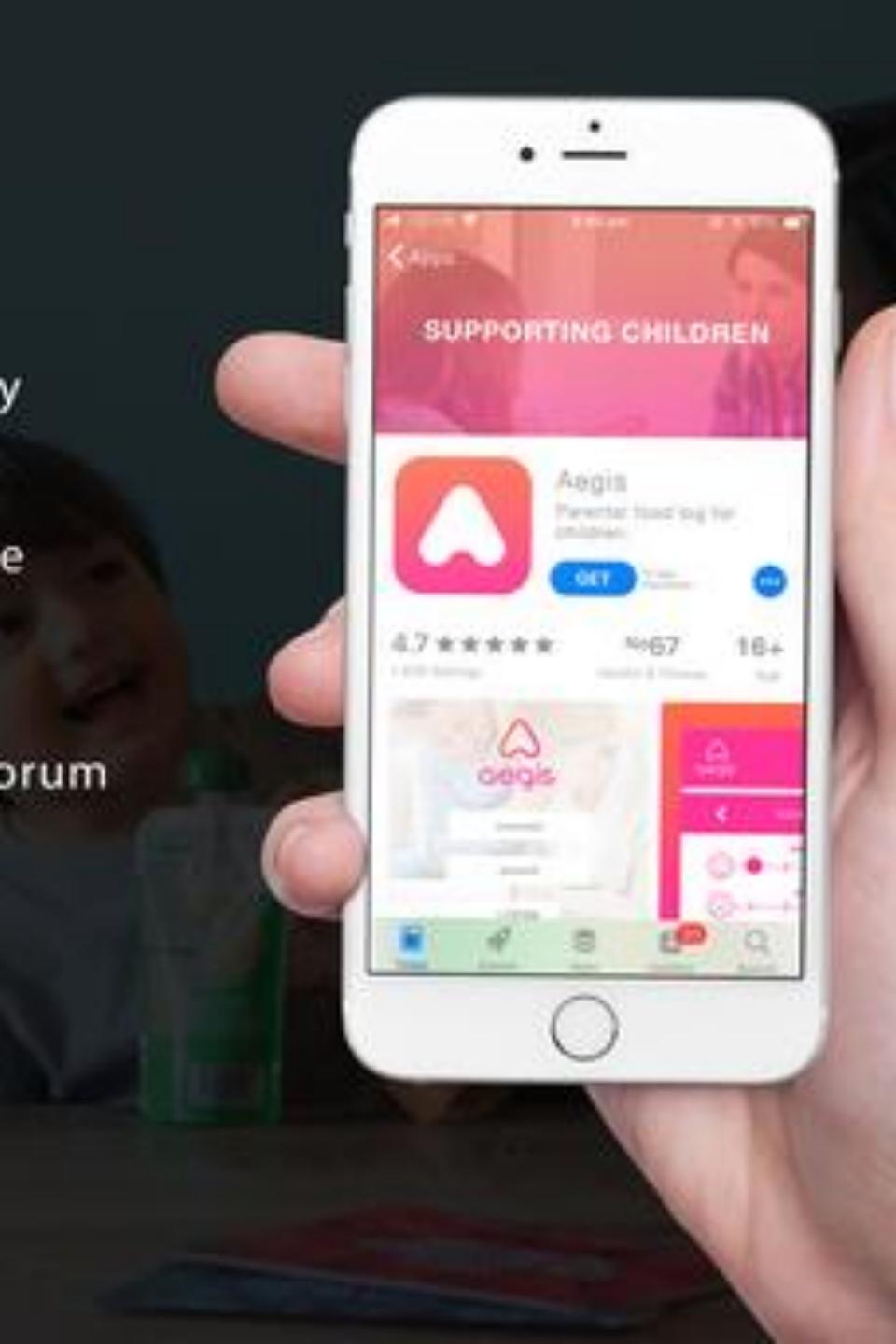
- New perception at variation E - Systems focus; perceives need for systemic change beyond the range of Design for Good
- Variations C and D (maps to 2018 variations 4 – 6) – Outward focus: Beyond the Self disposition, values CPD up-skilling to be ready for Designing for Good
- Perception variations move 'upwards'
- Variations A and B (maps to variations 2 and 3 2018) – inward focus, designer's reputation
- No variation mapping to 2018 variation 1





What made a difference?

- Relatable topic (mental health more ‘here and now’ than sustainability for future change-making)
- Deeper understanding of own mental health or that of friends and family
- More autonomy in overarching topic
- Charrette seen as ‘professional’ scaffold – being and acting professionally
- Experts provide another voice
- Hope in case studies show that Design for Good is exciting and achievable



Transformative Experience? Expanded perception

In both interventions:

- 'Eye-opening' background of design
- Research into topic information
- Design case studies

In the charrette:

- Methods for ideation as CPD
- Working with experts
- Real designers do this!



Transformative Experience? Experiential value

- Risk and consequence enable deep pride in achievements
- Helping others, altruism
- Expert validation
- ‘CPD’ approach to attaining skills helps self-efficacy
- *Purpose* to give design depth, so activity becomes doubly meaningful



Transformative Experience? Agency

- Topic content changes behaviour (sustainability and mental health content used at home, at work)
- Ethical and sustainable content used in outside projects by entrepreneurial students
- Plans to undertake Design for Good in career
- Design for Good topics in self-initiated projects in university course



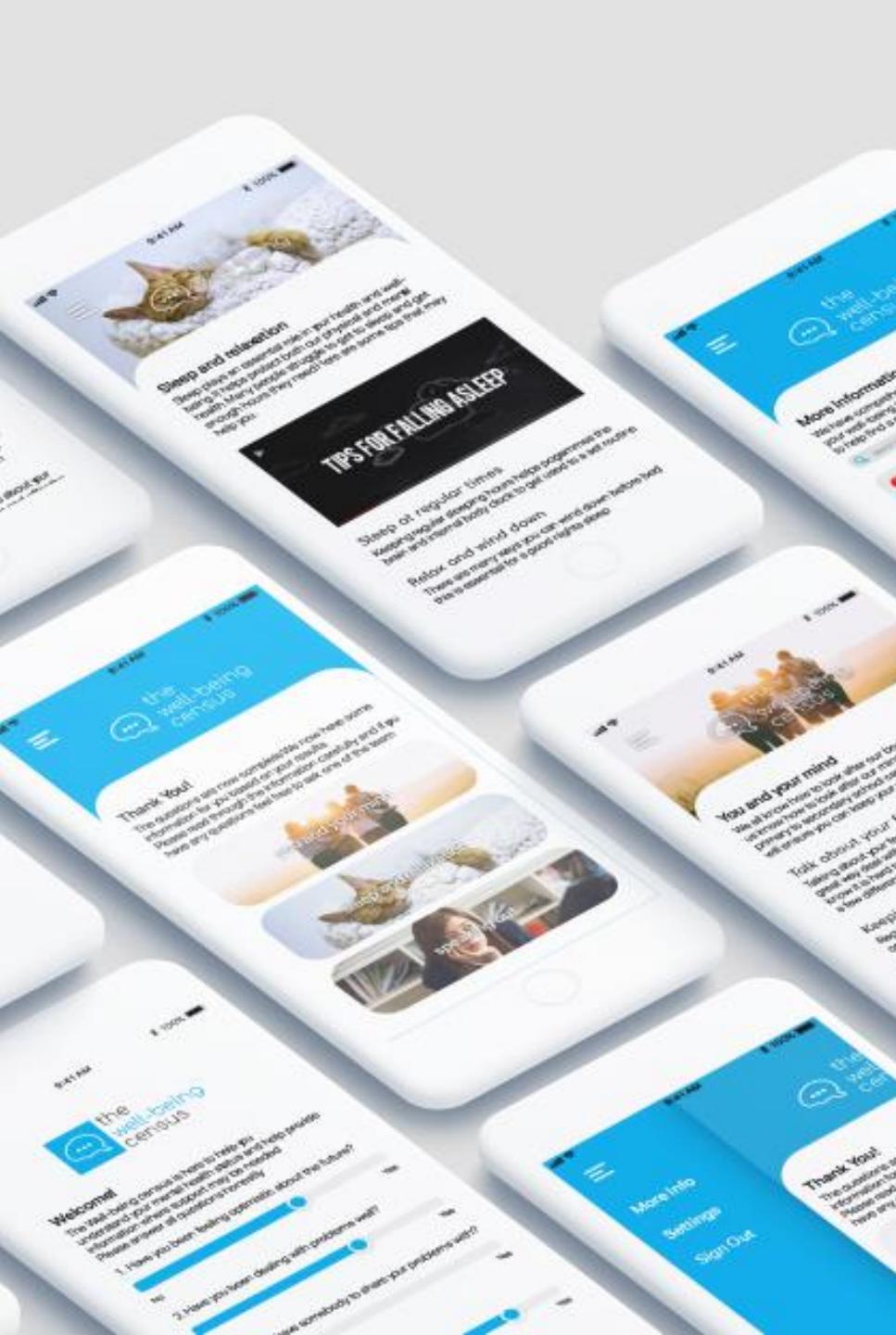
Was it Transformative?

- Students see new future
- Change in career plans
- Include ‘Designer for Good’ on CVs and feel it has “given an edge” that has gained employment
- Conversely, this also makes a regular or ‘greenwashing’ design job uncomfortable for other new graduates
- Graphic design is now seen as purposeful and altruistic
- Growth in Beyond the Self disposition

A photograph showing a classroom or workshop environment. Several students are standing around small white tables, working on projects. One student in the foreground is looking down at a table covered with papers and a laptop. Another student is writing on a piece of paper. The room has white walls, a red door, and a grid-patterned floor. A series of small photographs are mounted on the wall to the right.

Pedagogy for social responsibility: Conclusions

- Take part in real and meaningful scenarios
- Build in consequences – risk – things at stake
- Community involvement and co-design – outward facing
- Scaffold skills for change before independent work
- Give hope – through local focus and attainable actions
- Reward and value in altruism, or work used in public
- Feedback on altruistic ‘work for good’, not just on good work
- Make opportunities for student agency – give choices in future projects to operationalize transfer of content



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