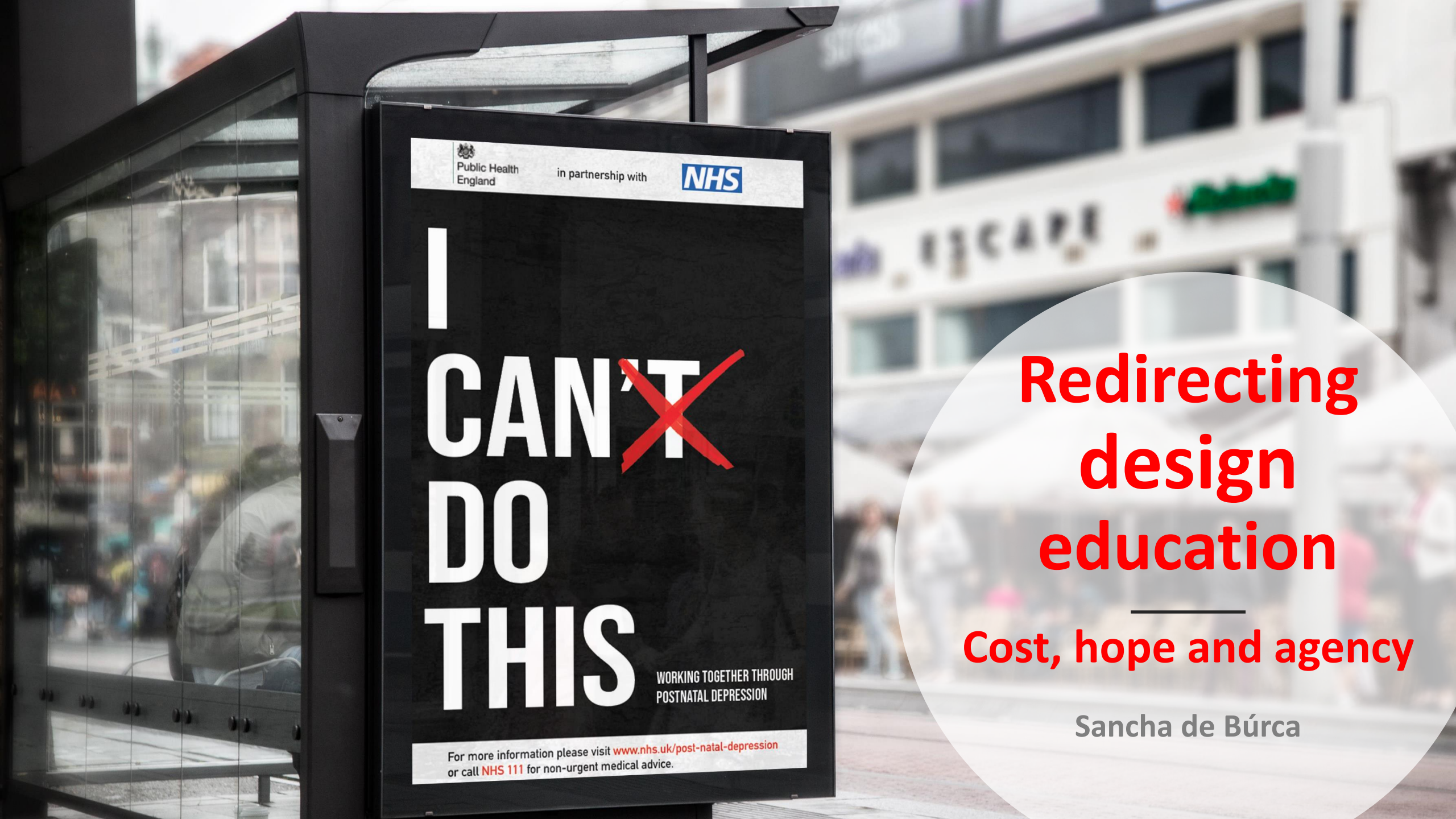


Redirecting design education

Cost, hope and agency

Sancha de Búrca

Images

- All images are from Design for Good projects
- Are created by students on HND or BA Graphic Design…
- …or are of them learning

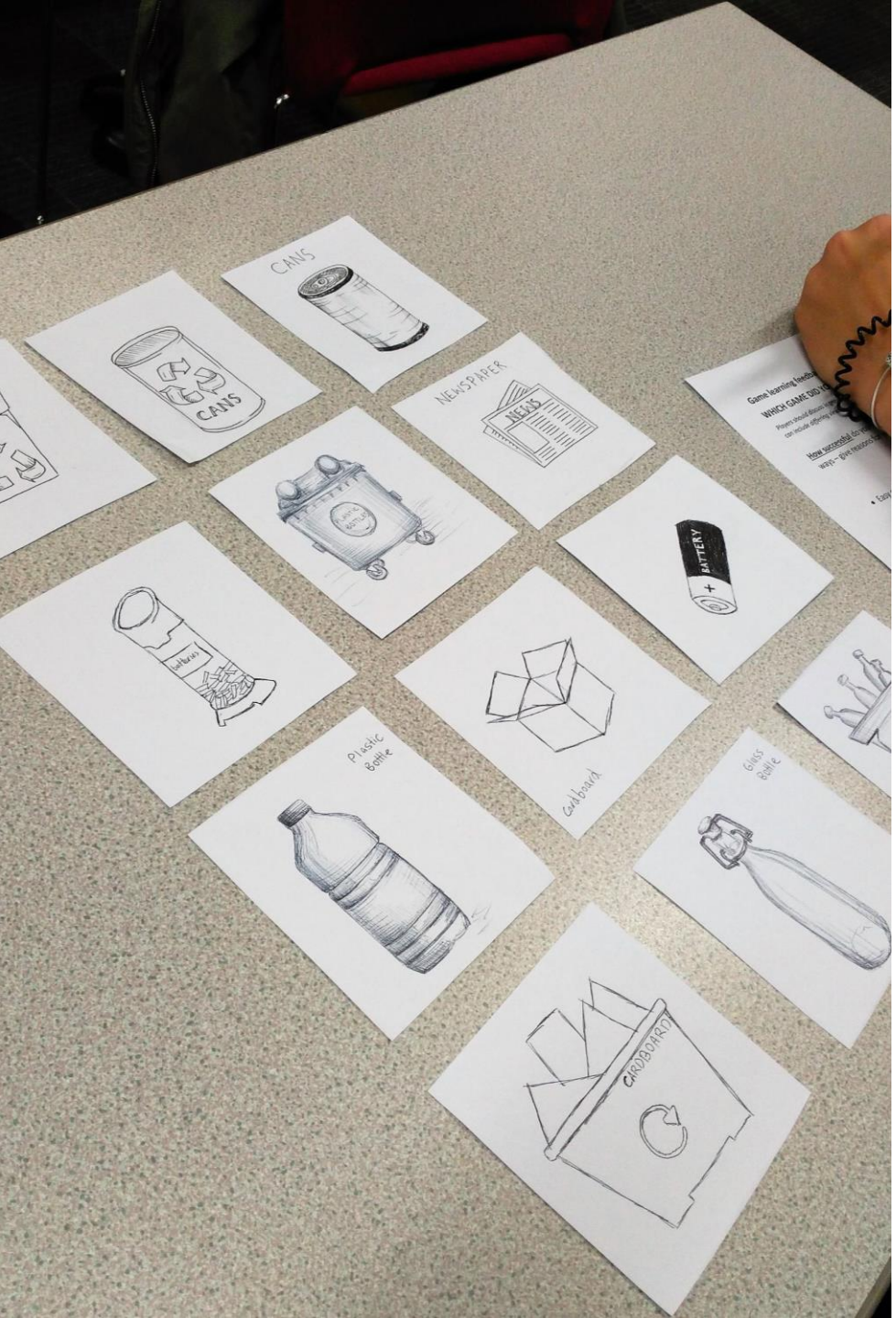
Why change?

Wicked problems:

- Climate crisis
- Environmental degradation
- Extinction
- Social injustice, inequality and poverty
- Homelessness and Refugees

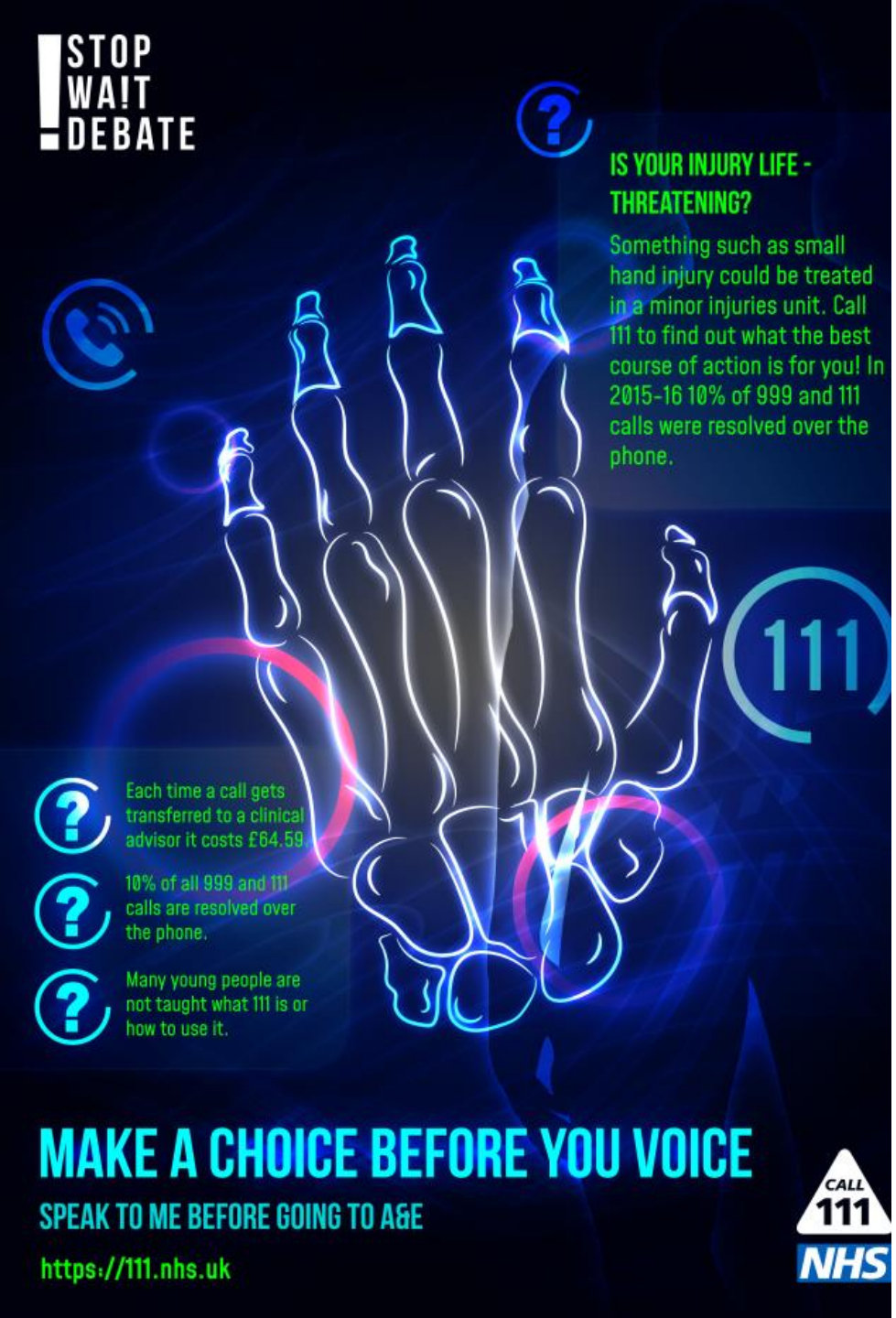
Why change design?

- Complicity
- Birth in 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



Becoming professional?

- Age of accountability
- University as transaction
- No room for moral voice or discernment
- Where is professional social responsibility?
- Pedagogy for social responsibility needed
- Research to underpin curriculum design



Design for Good

- Altruistic move away from commerce
- Ethical and sustainable approach
- New purposes for design to help people, environments
- Design affordances:
  - Problem finding
  - Collaboration
  - Visualisation
  - Awareness raising
  - Design as speculation and research

Negative affect

Negative affect:

- Disrupts student expectations
- Causes despair, anxiety, hopelessness – even grief
- Annihilates identity
- Guilt as designer and consumer

New education?

- Critical pedagogy
- Critical hope
- Transformative experiences

Framework: transformative experience

- John Dewey's An Experience
- Pugh's Transformative Experience
- Felt difficulty, disclosure, fracture
- Paradigm rupture
- Reflection and constructivist re-working
- Anticipation to test ideas – "free choice" action

Framework: Pugh's transformative experience

- Expanded perception
- Experiential value
- Motivated use of content - free choice action

Curriculum change aims

- Inspire agency for social responsibility
- Raise levels of empathy and ‘BTS’
- Work with real people
- Enable confrontation of risk
- Change-making skills
- Redefine purpose of graphic design

Altering the curriculum

- Design volunteers
- Ethics and sustainability projects
- Evaluations on professionalism, ethics and sustainability
- ‘Project X’
  - Provoking our Futures
  - Creative Conscience

Research questions

Transformative Experiences:

- How do participants perceive transformative experiences relating to Design for Good professionalism?
- How and in what ways do students expand their perceptions of design for good?

Beyond-the-self outlook

- ‘BTS’ – outward focus towards others
- Growth in prosocial behavior
- Motivator of good deeds
- Moral commitment
- Can change civic society
- Goal setting in systems

Inward and outward focus

Wilson et al (2103)

- Inward focus : self, design skills, rule book and reputation saving
- Outward focus: protecting others (BTS), contextual discernment, professionals develop the rules

Technique vs discernment

Aristotle's three elements of knowledge

- *Techne* – practical skills
- *Episteme* – theoretical understanding
- *Phronesis* – contextualized discernment: agency

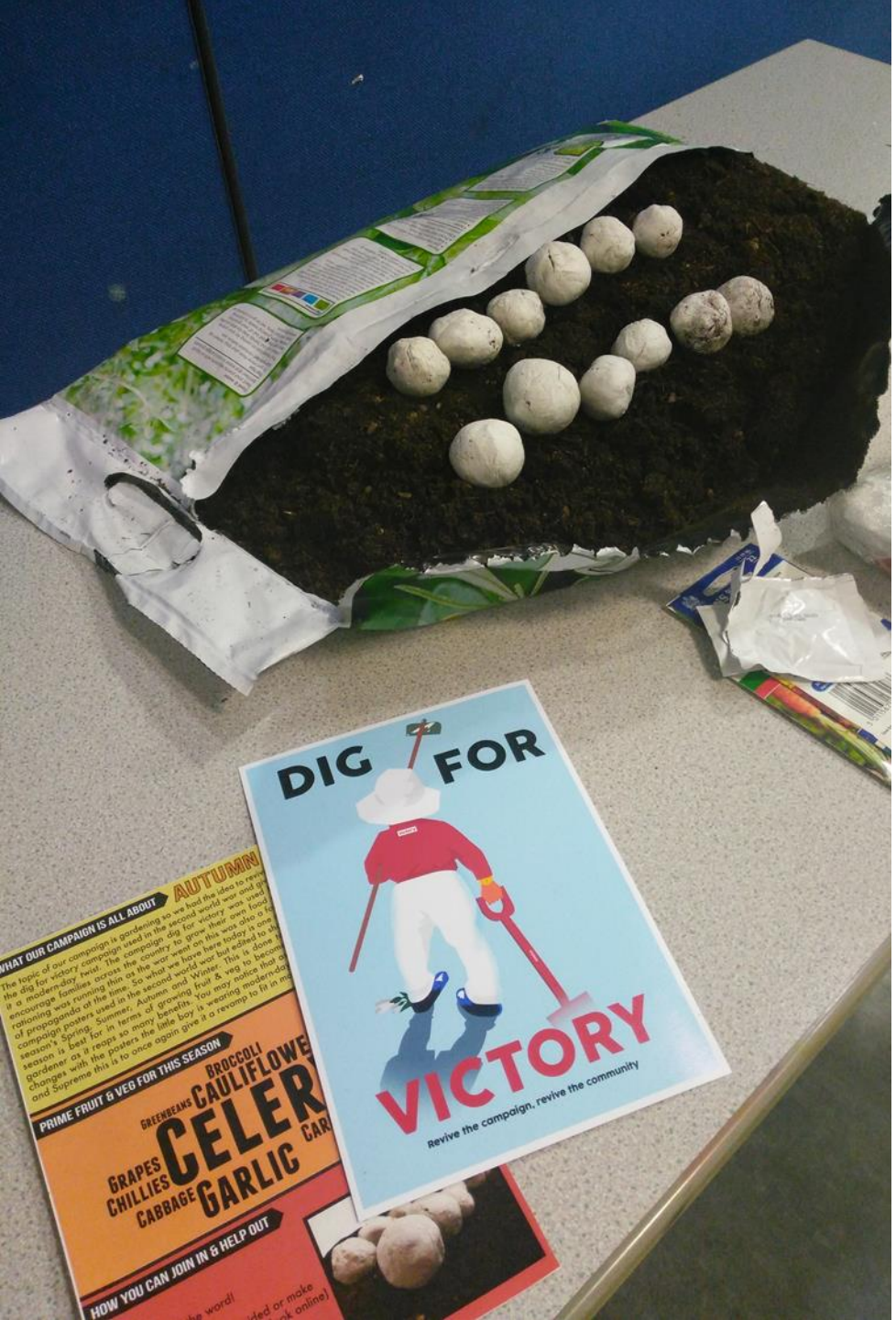
Research methods

Mixed methods:

- Phenomenography:
  - Variations in perceptions across groups
  - Finding a base-line or rubric for design of new pedagogy
- Narrative

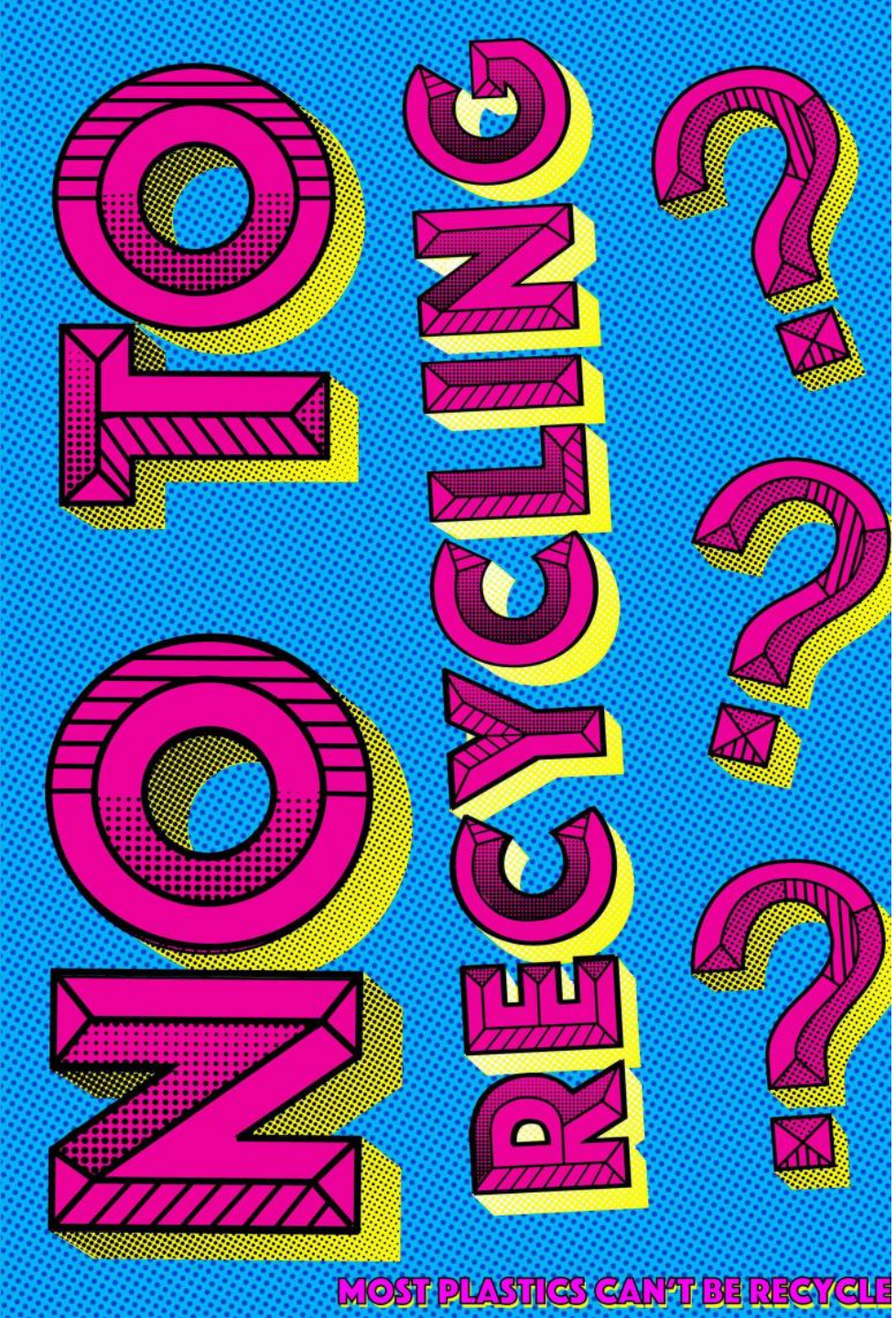
Method: Sample

- University of Kent Graphic Design
- 3 year-groups together
- 37 participants
- 9 Teams
- December 2017 – February 2018



Provoking our Futures – what?

- Making conversation starters (provotypes)
- Design experiments with new forms
- One day display in canteen
- Local, sustainability projects
- Involving community feedback
- Producing Design for Good outcomes



Provotypes

- ‘Provotypes’ (provocative prototypes)
- Conversation starters
- Design as research
- Change-making
- Co-design with communities
- Starting dialogue
- Further iterations – more dialogue

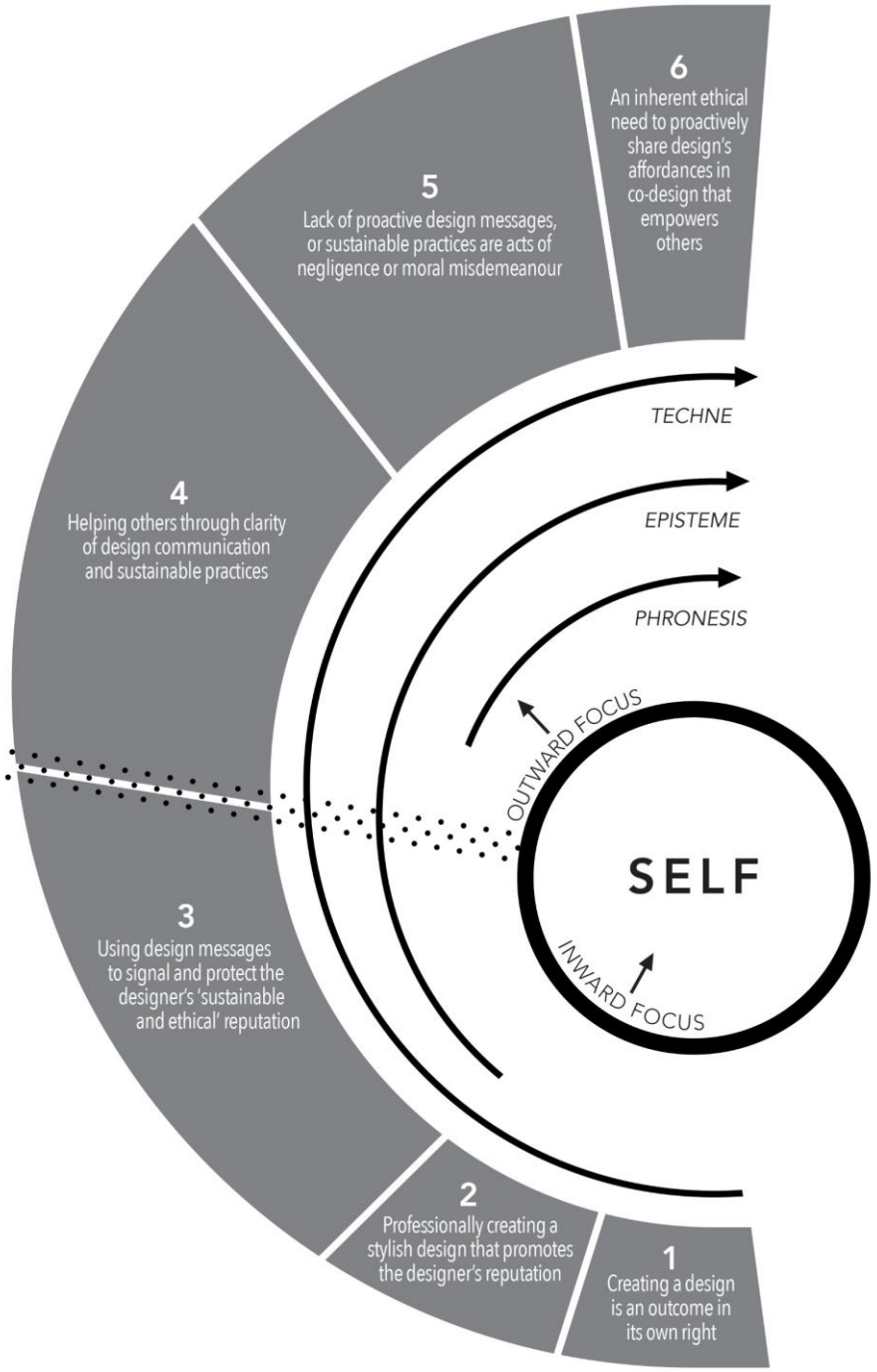
Data

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

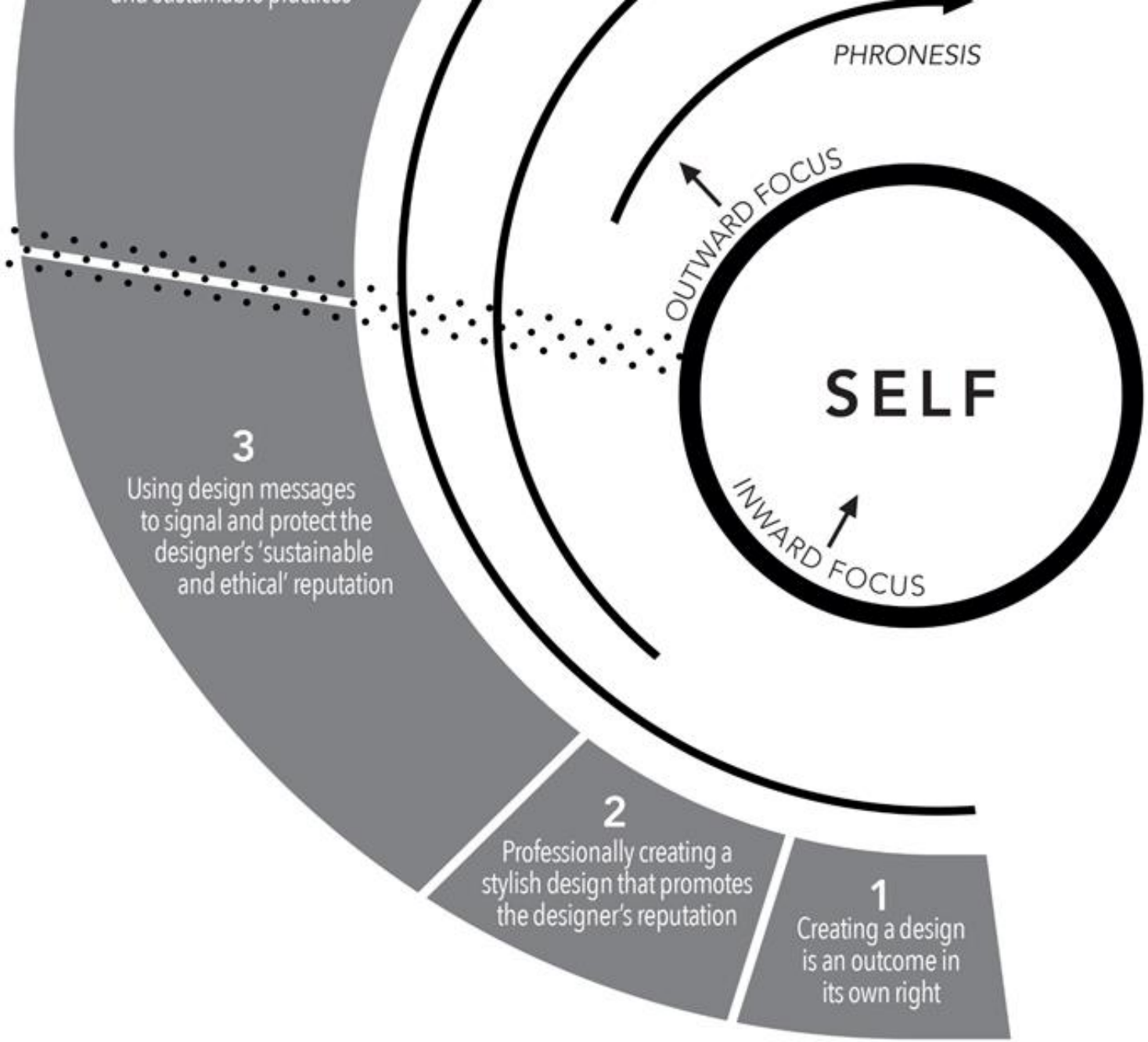
Survey questions

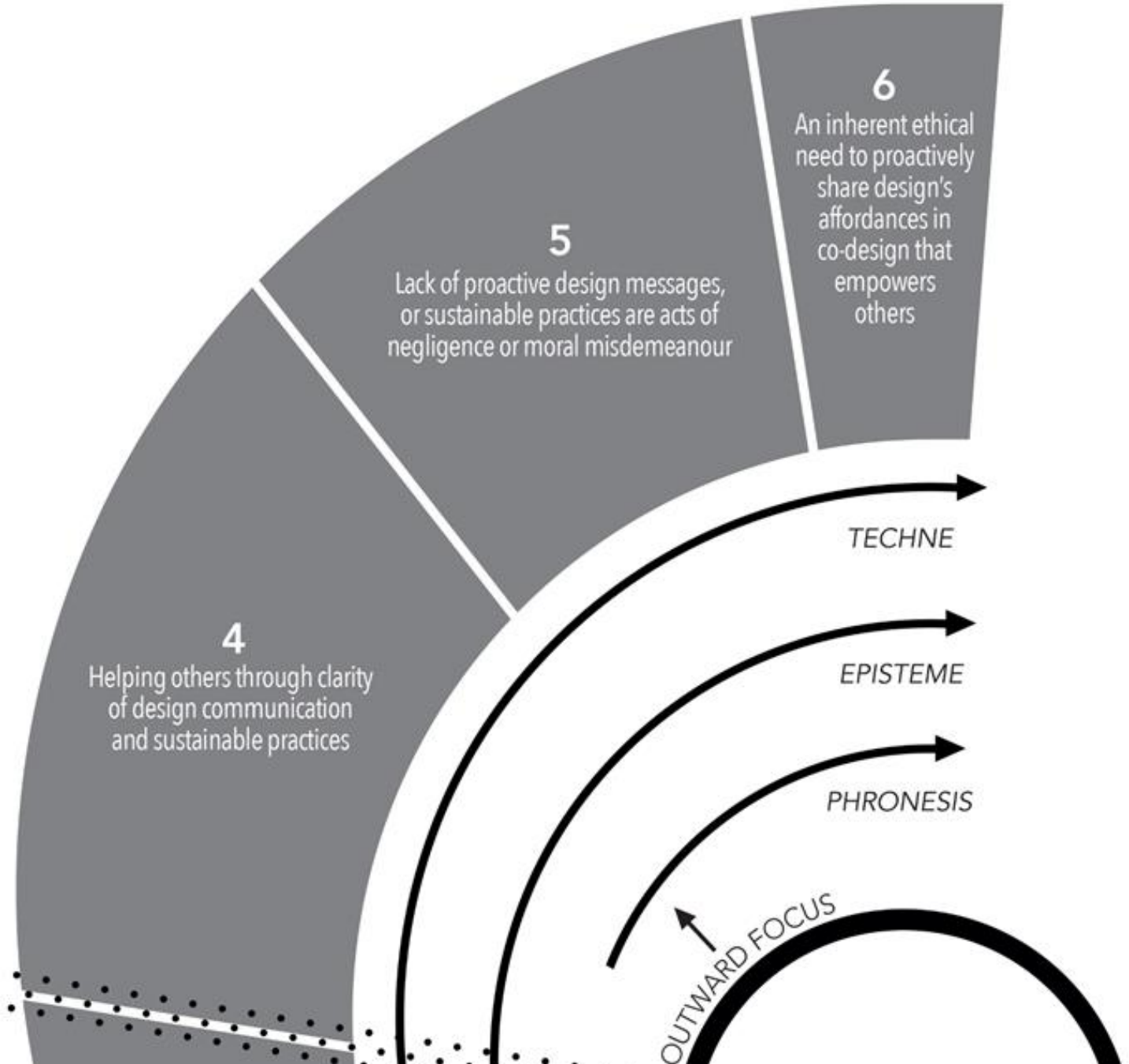
- In what ways were you a Design for Good professional?
- How do you know?
- Trigger scenarios
- Consequences of not being?
- Changes or transformations?

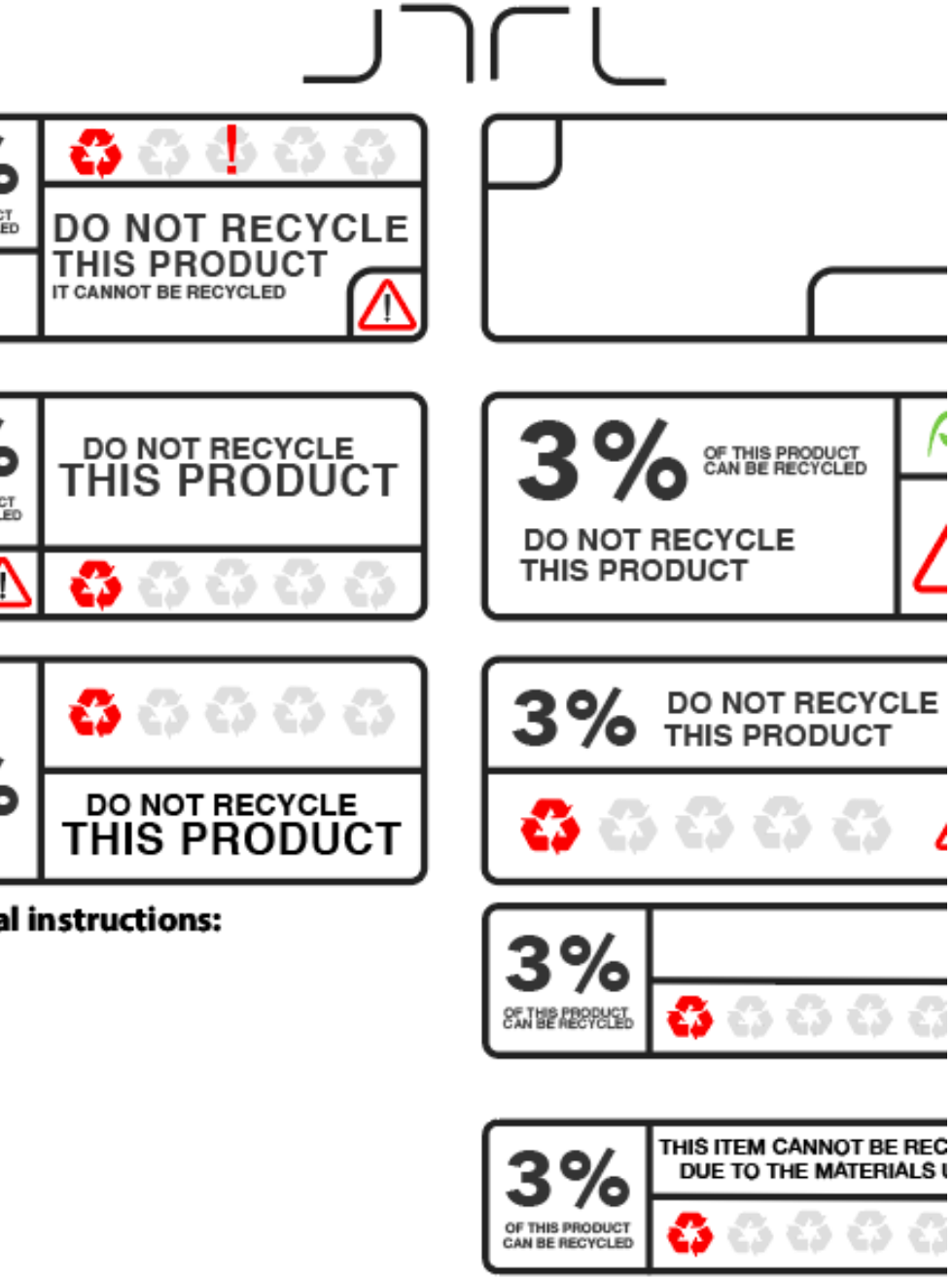


Variations 2018

- Outward focus – Beyond The Self, supporting others
- Shifts in perception of purpose of design
- Inward focus – self, skills and reputation


PHRONESIS
OUTWARD FOCUS
SELF
INWARD FOCUS
3
Using design messages to signal and protect the designer's 'sustainable and ethical' reputation
2
Professionally creating a stylish design that promotes the designer's reputation
1
Creating a design is an outcome in its own right


6
An inherent ethical need to proactively share design's affordances in co-design that empowers others
5
Lack of proactive design messages, or sustainable practices are acts of negligence or moral misdemeanour
4
Helping others through clarity of design communication and sustainable practices
TECHNE
EPISTEME
PHRONESIS
OUTWARD FOCUS



Communication and authenticity

- Communication to maintain own reputation…
- …or to help others
- Researching to prevent embarrassment during display
- ..or genuine facts to empower others

Redesign

- Autonomy – students nominated the charrette topic
- Experts – support for staff as well as students
- Community – design for familiar people
- Scaffolding – *charrette* as fixed format

Mental Health

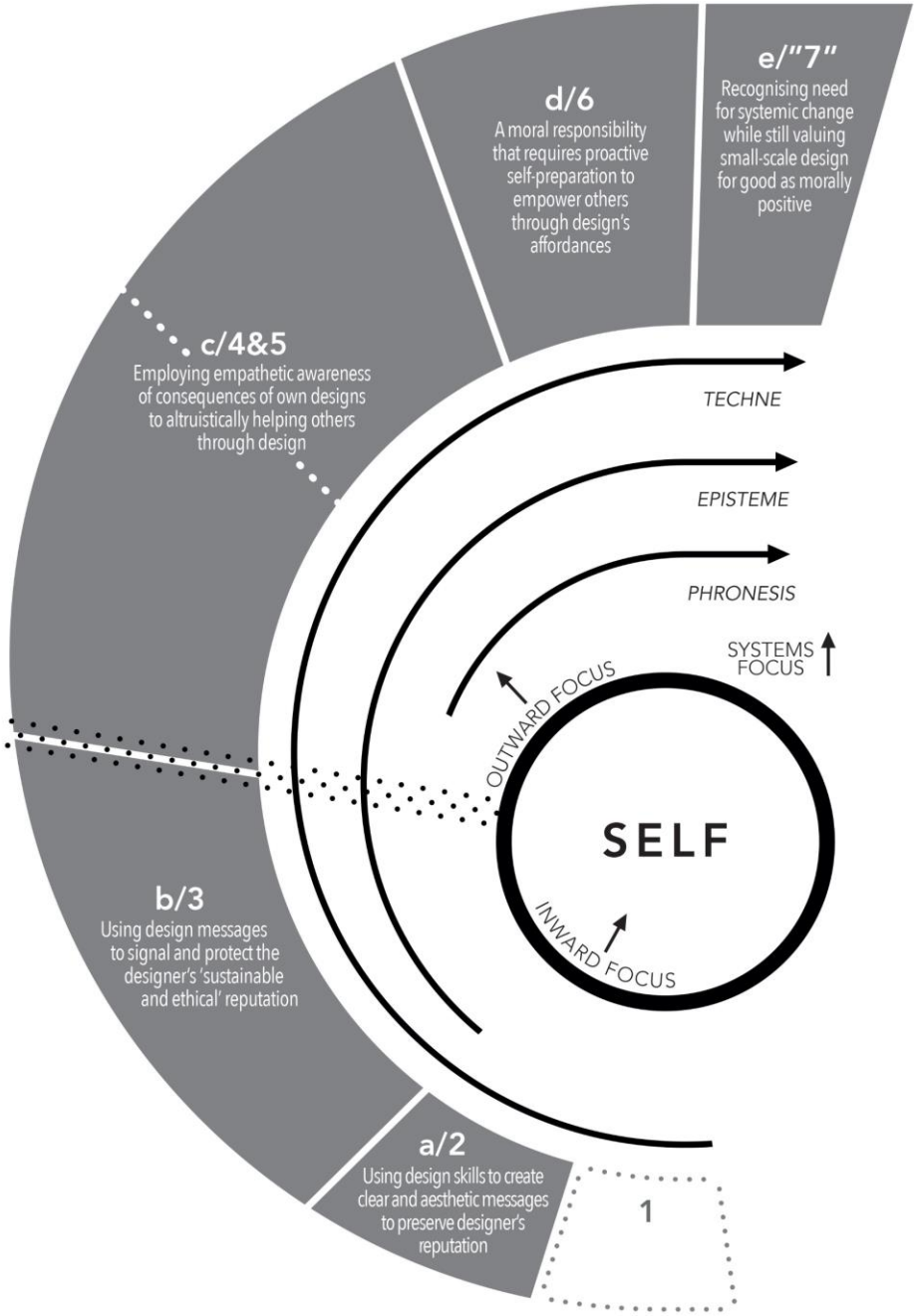
- Students nominated topic
- Sensitive topic
- Expert support needed
- Safety net

Creative Conscience format

- Same format…plus
- One-week ideation charrette (teams)
- Sharing of research (personas)
- Pitch to experts
- Move on to Creative Conscience competition

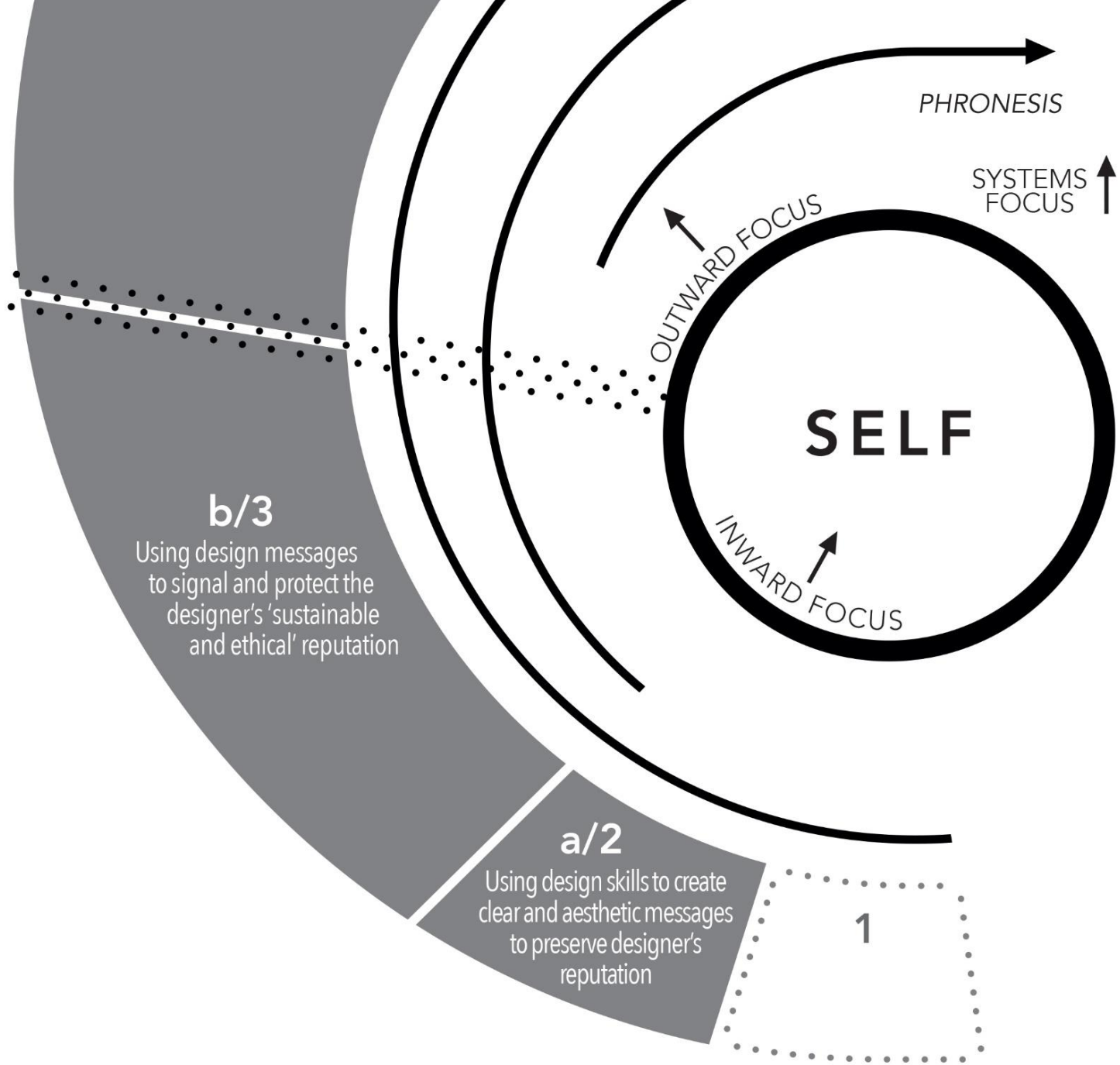
Sample, data and method

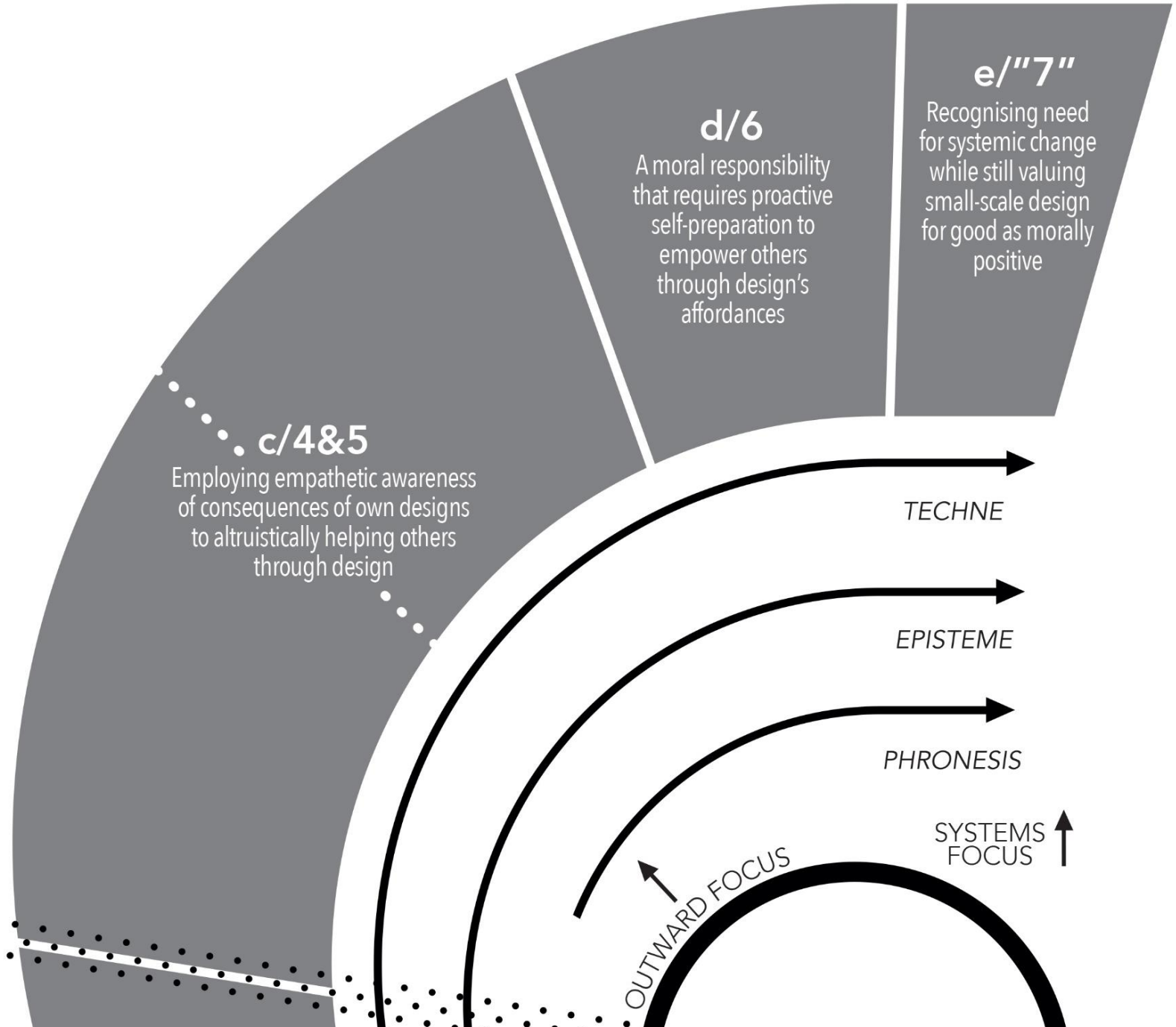
- 26 students
- 7 teams
- 20 had participated in Provoking our Futures
- December 2018 – February 2019
- Same method – compare to previous rubric
- Same data collection
- Change in last survey question

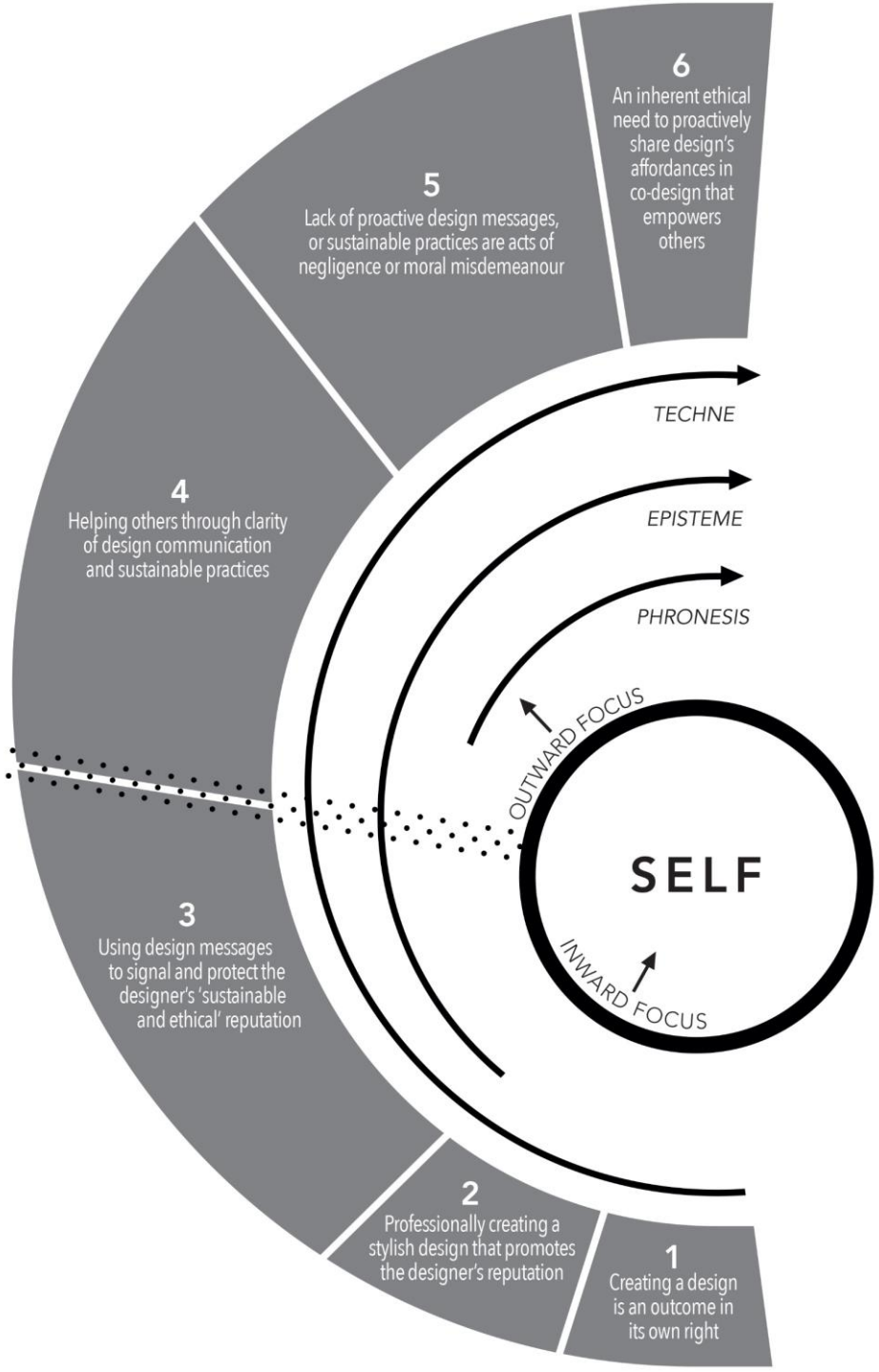


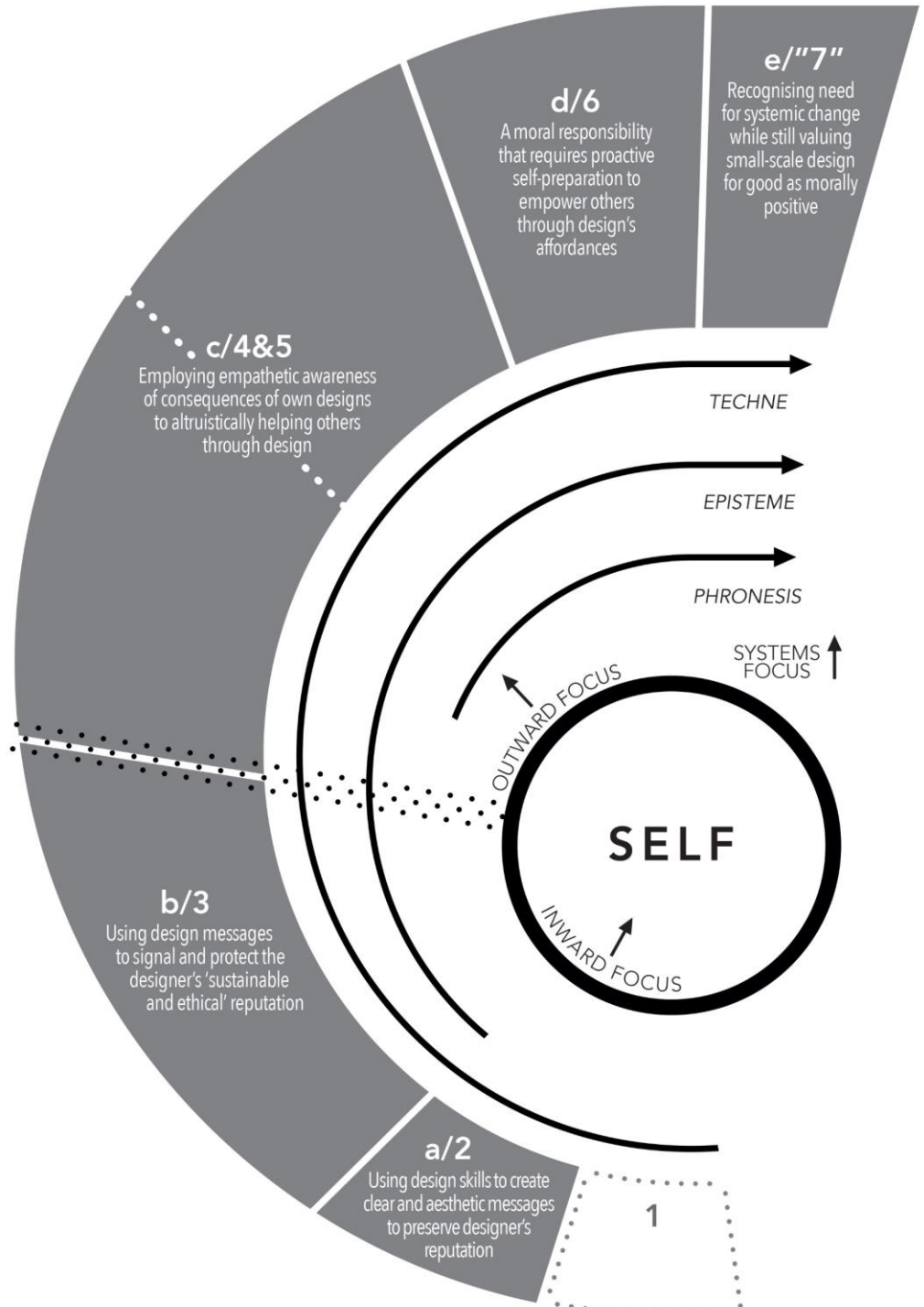
Variations 2019

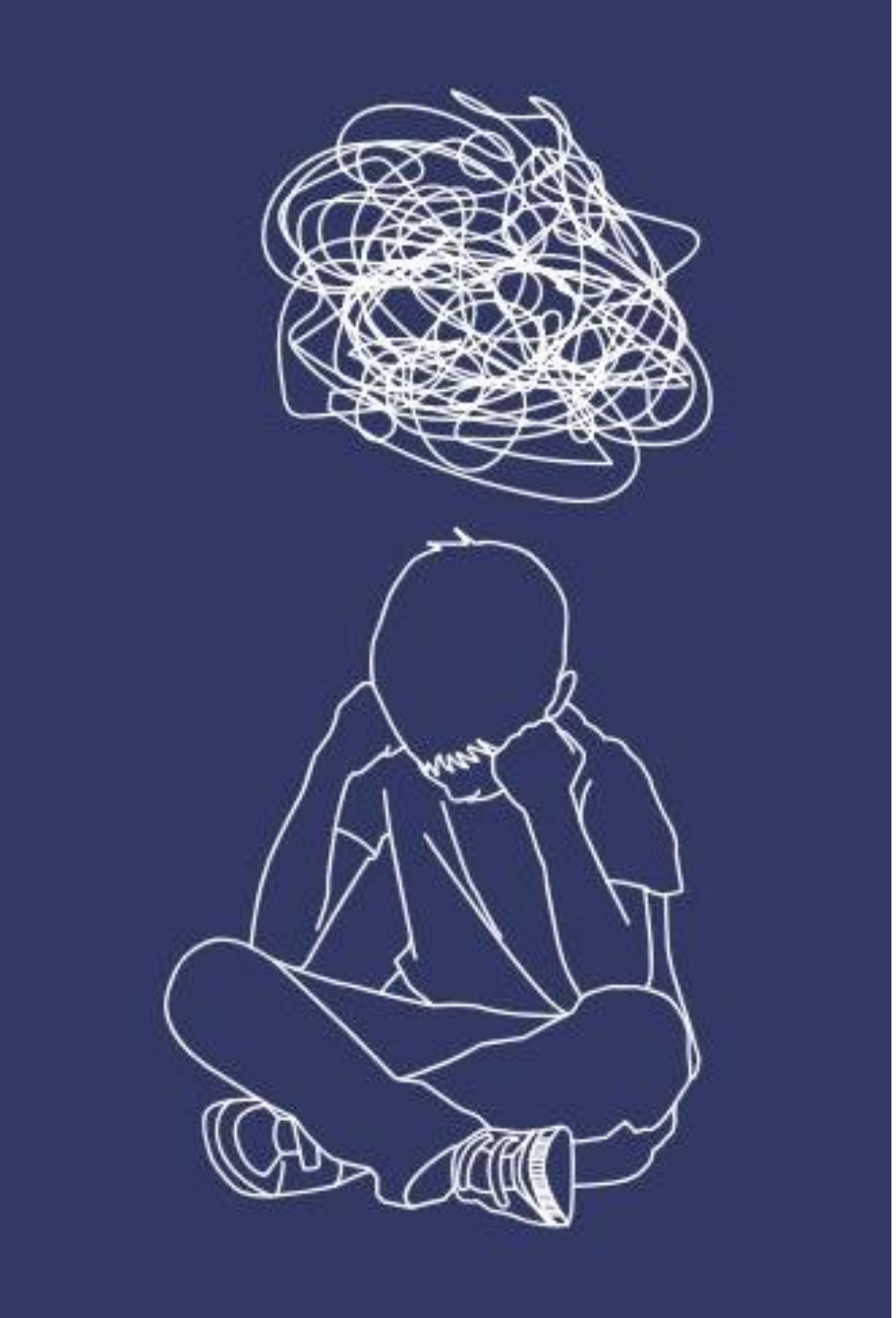
- Systems focus
- Different focus
- Perception variations move


PHRONESIS
SYSTEMS FOCUS
OUTWARD FOCUS
SELF
INWARD FOCUS
b/3
Using design messages to signal and protect the designer's 'sustainable and ethical' reputation
a/2
Using design skills to create clear and aesthetic messages to preserve designer's reputation
1


e/"7"
Recognising need for systemic change while still valuing small-scale design for good as morally positive
d/6
A moral responsibility that requires proactive self-preparation to empower others through design's affordances
c/4&5
Employing empathetic awareness of consequences of own designs to altruistically helping others through design
TECHNE
EPISTEME
PHRONESIS
SYSTEMS FOCUS
OUTWARD FOCUS

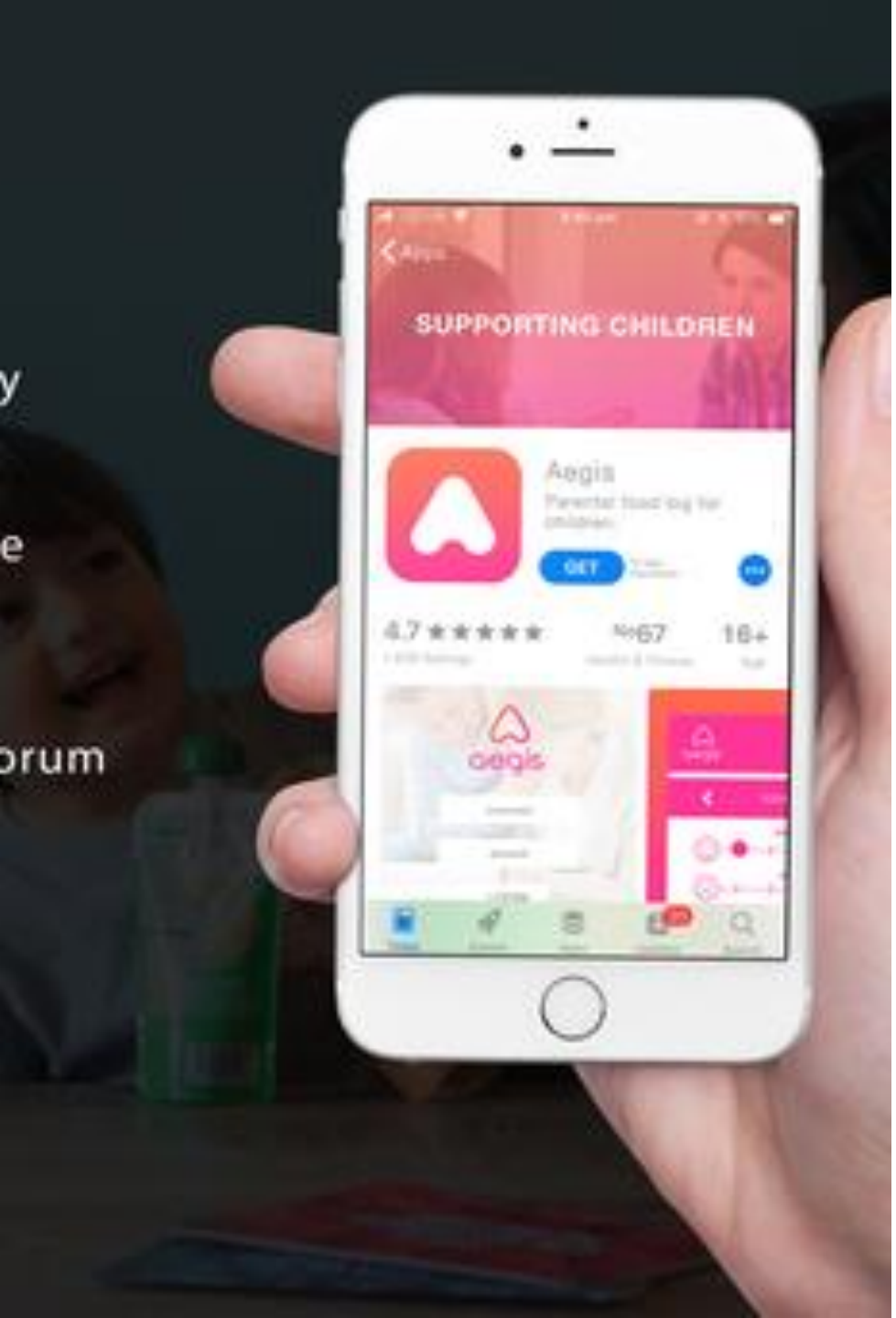

6
An inherent ethical need to proactively share design's affordances in co-design that empowers others
5
Lack of proactive design messages, or sustainable practices are acts of negligence or moral misdemeanour
4
Helping others through clarity of design communication and sustainable practices
3
Using design messages to signal and protect the designer's 'sustainable and ethical' reputation
2
Professionally creating a stylish design that promotes the designer's reputation
1
Creating a design is an outcome in its own right
TECHNE
EPISTEME
PHRONESIS
OUTWARD FOCUS
INWARD FOCUS
SELF


e/"7"
Recognising need for systemic change while still valuing small-scale design for good as morally positive
d/6
A moral responsibility that requires proactive self-preparation to empower others through design's affordances
c/4&5
Employing empathetic awareness of consequences of own designs to altruistically helping others through design
b/3
Using design messages to signal and protect the designer's 'sustainable and ethical' reputation
a/2
Using design skills to create clear and aesthetic messages to preserve designer's reputation
1
TECHNE
EPISTEME
PHRONESIS
SYSTEMS FOCUS
OUTWARD FOCUS
INWARD FOCUS
SELF



What made a difference?

- Duration - familiarity
- Relatable topic – conduit to BTS
- Autonomy
- *Charrette* as ‘professional’ scaffold
- Experts
- Hope



Expanded perception

- ‘Eye-opening’ background
- Research into topics
- Wider scope of design for good
- Design case studies
- Methods for ideation
- Working with experts
- Real designers do this!

Experiential value

- Risk and consequence
- Helping others, altruism
- Expert validation
- ‘CPD’ approach to attaining skills
- Purpose to give design depth

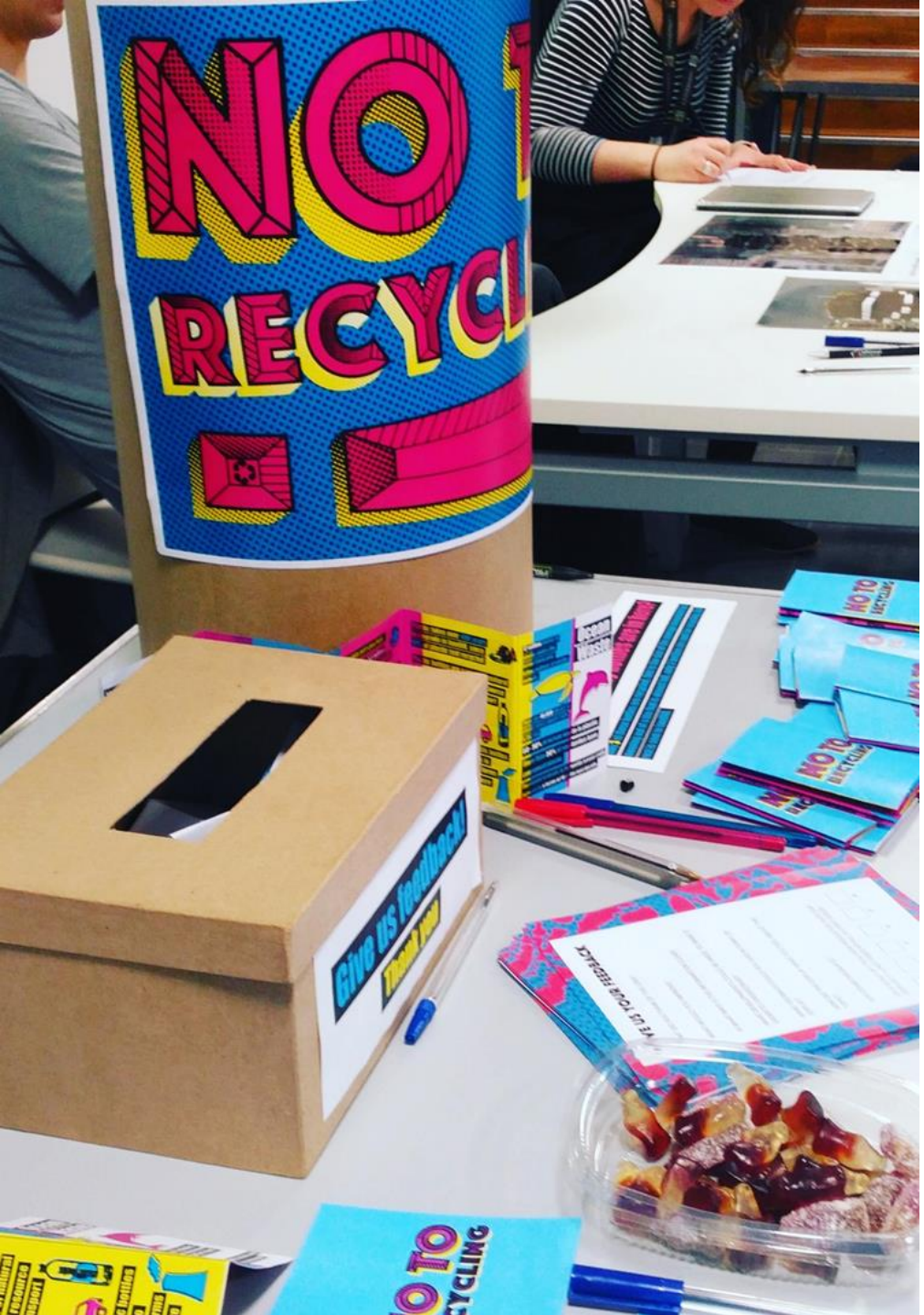
Transformative?

- Look past aesthetics (*techne*) to ethics (*phronesis*)
- Growth in BTS
- Students see new future
- Change in career plans (agency)
- ‘Designer for Good’ on CVs
- Purposeful and altruistic design

Conclusions?

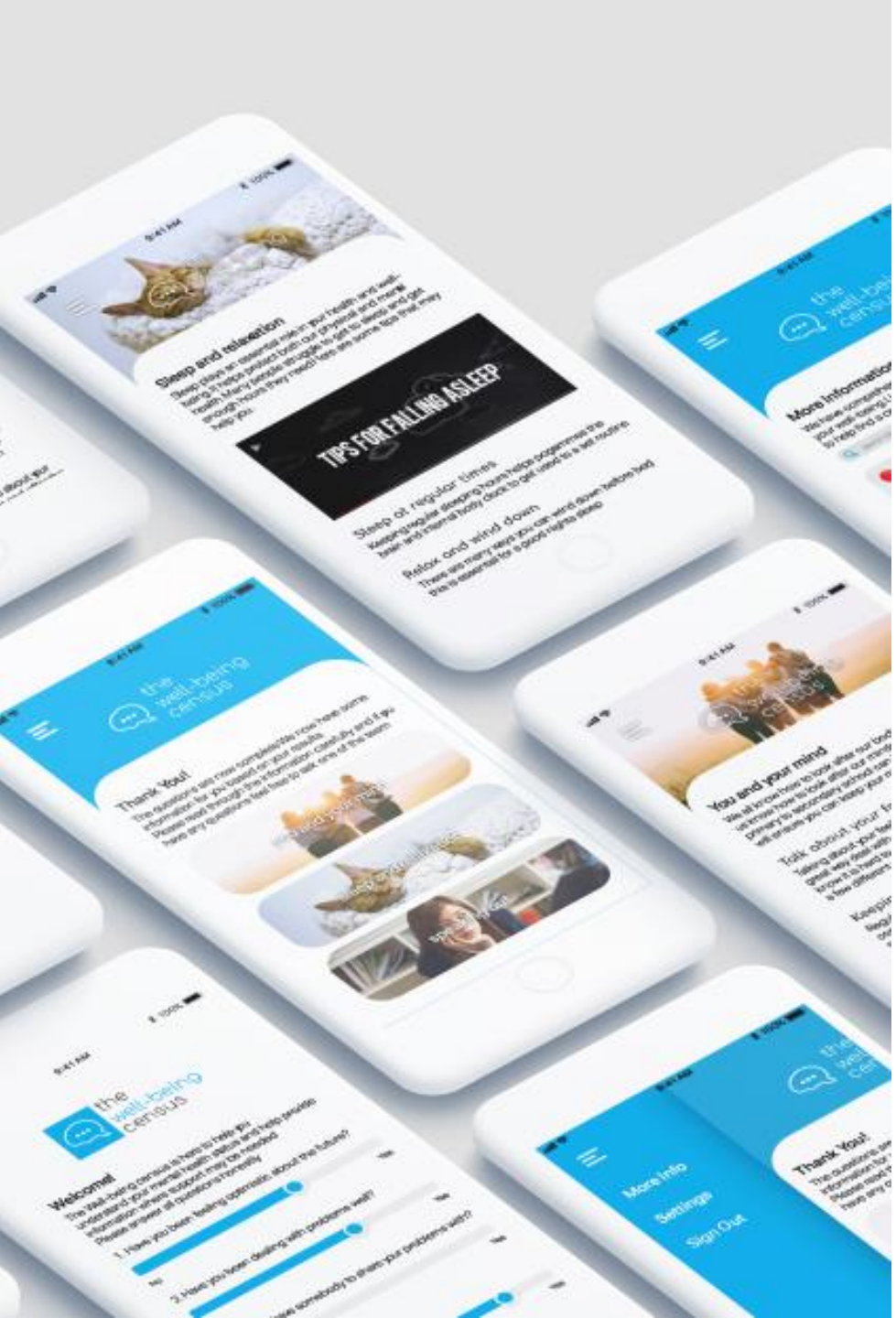
Pedagogy for social responsibility:

- Take part in real and meaningful scenarios
- Consequences – risk – things at stake – rehearse *phronesis*
- Community and co-design – outward facing
- Scaffold skills for change – self-efficacy
- Hope – through local focus and attainable actions
- Reward and value – altruism or work used in public
- Feedback on ‘work for good’ not just on good work!
- Opportunities for student agency (transfer)



Any questions?

sanchadeburca@westkent.ac.uk



References

- Boler, M. (2014) Teaching for hope: the ethics of shattering worldviews. In: Bozalek, V., Leibowitz, B., Carolissen, R., Boler, M. *Discerning critical hope in educational practices*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Manzini, E. (2015). *Design, when everybody designs*. Cambridge (Mass.), The MIT Press.
- Pugh, K. J., Linnenbrink-Garcia, L., Koskey, K. L.K., Stewart, V. C. & Manzey, C. (2010) Teaching for Transformative Experiences and Conceptual Change: A Case Study and Evaluation of a High School Biology Teacher's Experience, *Cognition and Instruction*, 28:3, 273-316.
- Pugh, K. (2011). Transformative experience: An interactive construct in the spirit of Deweyan pragmatism. *Educational Psychologist* 46(2) *107-121*.
- Pugh, K. J., Bergstrom, C. M., Heddy, B. C. & Krob, K. E. (2017) Supporting Deep Engagement: The Teaching for Transformative Experiences in Science (TTES) Model, *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 85:4, 629-657.
- Resnick, E. (2016). *Developing citizen designers*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Wilson, A., Åkerlind, G., Walsh, B., Stevens, B., Turner, B., Shield, A. (2013). Making professionalism meaningful to students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*. 2013. Vol 38, number 8, 1222-1238