



INSPIRING OPEN DESIGNERS OF THE FUTURE

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ABSTRACT

Designers are increasingly involved in tackling complex, wicked problems that arise from complex societal challenges. Such involvement results in rapid change in design practice as it enters and expands into new territories, highlighting the importance of rethinking design education to better prepare future designers.

This workshop aims to consider ways in which we can equip designers with the necessary skills to engage members of the public in co-creation and participatory design, drawing upon the international and multidisciplinary perspectives afforded through the conference.

Using the approach of Experience Labs, this session aims to engage delegates to share their practice, experiences and insights from their respective disciplines, towards preparing future designers. Experience Labs employ a design-led participatory approach to innovation within the health and care context. To date, the Labs have developed and evolved as a way to provide a space for creative collaboration. However, the Lab approach has been recently applied within the context of design education to foster interdisciplinary collaboration within Art and Design disciplines.

Delegates attending the workshop will be asked to form groups around four design education challenges: (1) Engagement, (2) Sustainability and Impact, (3) Empathy through design, and (4) Ethics by design.

The workshop will produce insights for the themes addressed and will provide the opportunity to gain an international perspective on these challenges within design education. It is anticipated that the workshop could also generate a network/community of interest for design education specifically related to the themes addressed throughout the workshop.

Keywords:

Design education, creative collaboration, participatory design

INTRODUCTION

Project description

The workshop aims to consider ways in which we can equip future designers with the necessary skills to engage members of the public in co-creation and participatory design, drawing upon international and multidisciplinary perspectives afforded through the conference. It aims to engage delegates through a designed workshop session to share their practice, experiences and insights from their respective disciplines, towards preparing future designers. The workshop session will begin with the authors sharing an example of the way in which they are prototyping their participatory design approach with students in order to develop research and teaching linkages within the Institute of Design Innovation, Glasgow School of Art. The Lab team will share the findings from the first iteration of this event, including findings from pre- and post interviews with student participants from a range of Design and Art disciplines in order to define and contextualise the approach.

Delegates attending the workshop will be asked to form groups around four design education challenges: (1) Engagement, (2) Sustainability and Impact, (3) Empathy through design, and (4) Ethics by design.

1. Engagement: this challenge focuses on how we educate and prepare designers to engage with a range of stakeholders in co-creation and participatory design.
2. Sustainability and impact: this challenge relates to how we educate and prepare designers to consider and design for sustainability and impact.
3. Empathy through design: this challenge relates to how we educate and prepare designers so that they can design both 'with' empathy and 'for' empathy when engaging participants in co-creation and participatory design.
4. Ethics by design: this challenge relates to how we educate and prepare designers to consider the ethical dimensions of their work in increasingly complex research landscapes, particularly when ethics is often viewed as a barrier or alien concept rather than a valuable part of the design process.

Employing design practices from the Experience Labs, each group will then be guided through an exercise using a designed tool to consider ways in which to educate and prepare designers to tackle the complex societal challenges of the future. Design researchers will facilitate each group's work, and delegates will be encouraged to share experiences and insights from their own practices and disciplines in relation to the four challenges.

As an output of this activity each group will be asked to identify key learning outcomes and develop a design brief for students that would support experiential learning activities relevant to this theme. Groups will then summarise and share key insights in response to the theme with the wider group.

The workshop will produce insights for each of the themes addressed and will provide the opportunity to gain an international perspective on these challenges within design education. The outcomes of the workshop and insights captured will be analysed and used to develop a paper to share the findings of the workshop with the design community. In addition, the workshop aims to generate a network/community of interest for design education specifically related to the themes addressed or identified in the workshop.

Abstract and rationale

Designers are increasingly involved in tackling complex, wicked problems that arise from complex societal challenges. Such involvement results in rapid change in design practice as it

enters and expands into new territories, highlighting the importance of rethinking design education to better prepare future designers. Design has been described as an 'integrative discipline', capturing this multi-layered expansion, and suggesting that design is entering an all-inclusive paradigm to tackle complex challenges (Moreira, Murphy and McAra-McWilliam, 2016). In addition, design is referred to as a 'transformative discipline', encompassing a (social) strategic focus through a socially-engaged practice increasingly concerned with shaping futures (ibid, 2016).

The rapid growth and expansion of design practice highlights the importance of rethinking design education in preparing future designers. The role of the designer is also changing from the 'top down' creative to the 'humble' designer (Slavin, 2016) and there is an increasing need not only to be able to creatively engage a range of stakeholders in co-creation and participatory design practice, but to be able to engage empathically and develop interpersonal skills required for creative collaboration and engagement.

Experience Labs employ a design-led participatory approach to innovation within the health and care context. To date, the Labs have developed and evolved as a way to provide a space for creative collaboration, however, the Lab approach has been recently applied within the context of design education as a way to foster interdisciplinary collaboration within Art and Design disciplines. The Labs can offer ways in which to cultivate the future designer through both providing ways in which to prepare designers to engage a range of stakeholders in co-creation and participatory design, and equipping designers with the interpersonal skills required for creative collaboration. In the context of design education, they can offer students a rich experience and the opportunity to consider different ways of engaging stakeholders throughout the design process.

This workshop aims to consider ways in which we can equip designers with the necessary skills to engage members of the public in co-creation and participatory design and to consider the ethical dimension of their work, drawing upon the international and multidisciplinary perspectives afforded through the conference. Using the approach of Experience Labs, this session aims to engage delegates to share their practice, experiences and insights from their respective disciplines, towards preparing future designers.

Expected number of participants and target audience

The workshop is intended to be relevant to all conference attendees, and would benefit from a mix of attendees representing: academics and educators; professional design practitioners and collaborators; and design students. The workshop could accommodate up to 40 participants.

Short biography of organisers

Tara French is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Design Innovation, Glasgow School of Art with expertise in designing creative research approaches for experiential learning and embodiment of new interventions for person-centred care. She has a wealth of experience and knowledge in creative collaborations within the health and wellbeing sector. Her research interests lie within the theme of eudaimonic wellbeing towards engaging people to recognise assets that contribute to positive human flourishing.

Gemma Teal is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Design Innovation, Glasgow School of Art specialising in participatory design approaches to innovate in health and wellbeing contexts. Her work focuses on opening up the design process to include academics from other disciplines, industry partners, health professionals or members of the public. She designs for meaningful engagement and participation through innovative community engagement, insight gathering tools, workshops, and digital and service prototyping.

Jeroen Blom is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Design Innovation, Glasgow School of Art interested in interaction prototyping and making complex technological solutions tangible to explore in participatory design sessions. He has a background in industrial design and designing for various disabilities in an empathetic and empowering way.

Angela Tulloch is a Research Associate at the Institute of Design Innovation, Glasgow School of Art with a background in Interior Architecture and Service Design. She has versatile experience in working with multiple stakeholders across health, wellbeing and the creative industries with a focus on meaningful storytelling and engaging people in the design process. Her current research interests include the role of ethics in design practice and education.

Mafalda Moreira is a design educator and a PhD researcher at the Institute of Design Innovation, Glasgow School of Art looking at emerging design practices and design education approaches for new forms of designing. With an MSc in Innovation and Technological Entrepreneurship, and a Design Degree, she has international experience in the Creative Industries and Higher Education, having worked in management, operational and academic roles.

References

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