

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN



PUTTING THE “VOCATION” IN VOCATIONAL DESIGN EDUCATION.

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DOI: 10.63442/RQBS5026

KEYWORDS | INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS, DIGITAL DESIGN, DESIGN EDUCATION, ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS

ABSTRACT | In this era of important and monumental societal challenges, the role of designers is evolving, necessitating a profound reimagining of design education. Our (inter)active session aims to ignite a collaborative exploration into what design education should do differently to cultivate the “ideal” designer—one equipped to address global challenges and one that is intrinsically motivated. The primary objective of the workshop is to collectively and creatively construct a tangible “image” or model of the ideal design education that empowers designers for transformative global impact and instills in them a sense of calling to take meaningful action.



1. Introduction

Communication and Multimedia Design (CMD) is a bachelor-level design education programme at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS). At CMD, we aim to address urgent, complex societal challenges such as the climate crisis, growing inequality, and accessibility issues in healthcare by educating changemakers. We believe that our students could be changemakers and skilled and engaged digital designers capable of making meaningful contributions to these complex societal challenges.

To effectively address these complex issues, alongside creative, systemic approaches and knowledge, "changemaker" skills are required. Design education is particularly suited to educate changemakers because some of the necessary affective inner skills, as defined by the Inner Development Goals¹, such as empathy and creativity, are already embedded in the curricula. However, other crucial skills such as self-awareness, a sense of connection to a larger whole, and global, environmental, and cultural awareness are not yet addressed at CMD. The first version of this workshop was conducted with colleagues from similar digital design education programmes in the Netherlands (see image 1 for an impression) and proved that these skills were lacking in their curricula as well.

In this workshop, we aim to further explore, in collaboration with participants, which inner skills are essential for contributing to complex societal challenges and are currently lacking or insufficiently addressed in (design) education.

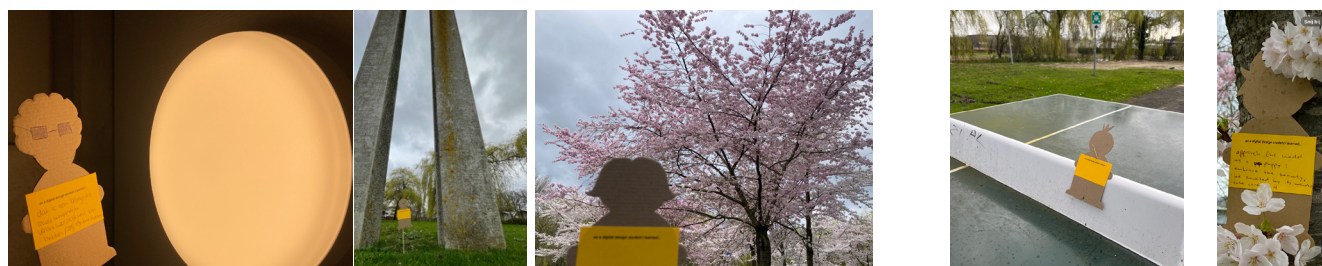


Figure 1. Impression of the outcomes from a previously conducted workshop.

2. Objective and Schedule

We believe this workshop is interesting for (digital) design educators and professionals who wish to contribute to imagining the future (digital) designer. The primary objective of the workshop is to construct, collectively and creatively, a tangible "image" or model of the future designer. Furthermore, we hope to outline its implications for the ideal design education that empowers designers for transformative global impact and instills a sense of calling to take meaningful action.

In this workshop, walking is a key component of our activities. We believe that the value of movement is in enhancing creativity, fostering open dialogue, and deepening connections among individuals. By incorporating walking into our workshop, we aim to create a dynamic and engaging environment that stimulates both the body and the mind. However, we will only proceed with walking activities when every participant can take part.

We have compiled the following schedule:

- Introduction [10 min]
- “Wandertalk” (walk guided with questions and provoking statements to discuss while walking) [45 min.]
- Collecting insights from walk [30 min.]
- Final summary [5 min.]

In the event of bad weather or participants being unable to partake in the walk, we created the following alternative programme:

- Introduction [10 min]
- Collective imagining [10 min.]
- Discussing in small groups the new role of designers and how design education should change – prepare the presentation. [30 min.]
- Break [5 min.]
- Presentation to group [30 min.]
- Final summary [5 min.]

References

Inner Development Goals. (n.d.). IDG framework. Retrieved March 27, 2024, from <https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/framework>

About the Authors:

Astrid Lubsen worked 15+ years as a design researcher with organizations such as Waag and STBY, both pioneering in critically examining technology, ensuring sustainability and public values in the design process. Since 2019, she has been an educator at the CMD programme.

Irene Kamp completed her PhD on comfort, happiness, and design at the Delft University of Technology. She has been working in higher education and applied research since 2012, focusing on futuring sustainable behaviour interventions and speculative design.

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This contribution was presented at Cumulus Budapest 2024: P/References of Design conference, hosted by the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, Hungary between May 15-17, 2024.

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ISBN Volume 1: 978-952-7549-02-5 (PDF)

ISBN Volume 2: 978-952-7549-03-2 (PDF)

DOI Volume 1: <https://doi.org/10.63442/IZUP8898>

DOI Volume 2: <https://doi.org/10.63442/TADX4016>

Conference Organisers

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME)

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