



Embedding Responsible Design Practice into GB&I BA (Hons)

GB&I BA (Hons) Course handbook

Unit Code	PU001698
Unit Title	Major Project Studio (Route A&B)
FHEQ Level	Level 6
Effective From	September 1st 2021
Credits	60
Programme	Branding and Design Innovation (L064)
Unit Introduction	This unit is the culmination of the course and provides you with the opportunity to utilise all your practical, critical and analytical skills in the realisation of projects related to the development of your individual portfolio. Building upon previous experiences of the design subjects covered by the course to produce a showcase of work, you will be expected to confidently demonstrate organisational skills in the selection and management of appropriate, considered and resourceful media, techniques and technologies. In answering the briefs you should demonstrate intellectual rigour and conceptual ability and exhibit visual, oral and written skills relevant to the communication of research outcomes.
	You will be given the opportunity to choose from a wide range of projects in order to customise your final degree submission and personal portfolio of work. These may include;

	outlined above.
Learning & Teaching Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent plan of work devised in collaboration with the student • Individual / group critiques and tutorials • Access to technicians and professionals trained in printmaking and letterpress to moving image and digital media

Learning Outcomes	
LO1	Demonstrate expertise in engaging in sustained, in-depth and relevant research from diverse sources that include relevant social, cultural, political and environmental contexts (Enquiry);
LO2	Exhibit expertise in applying critical and analytical skills and synthesis of ideas from research materials in the realisation of project work (Enquiry);
LO3	Demonstrate competence and confidence in applying expert subject knowledge to a final digital portfolio of work (Knowledge);
LO4	Identify, thoroughly explore, develop and process appropriate media and techniques using a resourceful and considered approach (Enquiry; Process);
LO5	Fully showcase substantial technical and craft skills that reflect the principles of responsible design practice (Realisation)
LO6	Demonstrate a high level of expertise in selecting and applying appropriate communication, design and presentation models (Realisation; Communication);
LO7	Confidently select and describe strategies for managing projects, deadlines and consultation with appropriate sources (Process);
LO8	Demonstrate and apply knowledge of the appropriate professional context for the work (Process).

Question;
How do we actually implement responsible design practice into our course?

Existing Ual frameworks



The wellbeing of our planet is of unparalleled importance to humanity's future. And yet it is under threat.

All universities – like all organisations and all individuals – have a duty to respond: to put themselves on the side of solutions instead of continuing harm.

The UAL Climate Action Plan was first published in 2021. It brought together various strands of climate-oriented action at UAL into a plan for systemic change.

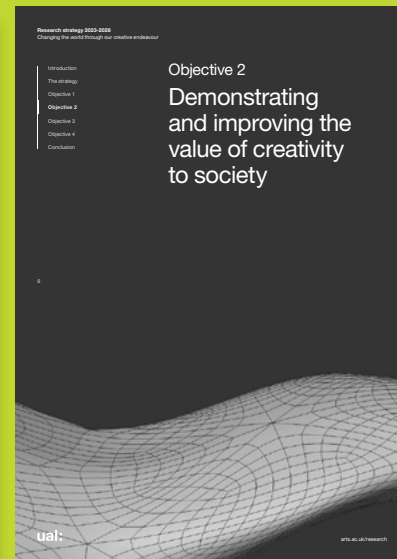


Action 1: Change the way we teach

Our students will engage in discourse relating to climate justice as part of the UAL curriculum. Through teaching, learning and practice, developing work of environmental, cultural, economic and social value. We will equip our students with the education and creative agency to further climate and environmental justice.

Our aims and actions to achieve this are:

- Increase our climate and environmental literacy.
- **Embed climate justice in all our courses.** Acknowledging its intersection with social and racial justice.
- Create the conditions for collaboration at UAL. **Enable our students and staff to make individual changes, take action and advocate for further change in the curriculum.**



This year, the University of the Arts London (UAL) launched its new strategy, ‘The World Needs Creativity’

‘To change the world through our creative endeavour’

The Responsible Design Framework

The Responsible Design Framework (RDF) was developed in 2015 within London College of Communication’s Design School. It is a framework and set of case studies designed to evidence a developing range of practices. It seeks to inspire students to consider a way to practice design that responds to the eco-social challenges of our time with the skills and values of responsible creative citizens. It gives guidance for embedding responsible approaches and principles within the curriculum by identifying both explicit and tacit knowledge.

The Process

Interrogating and improving the way we design via /

- 1 **Resourceful making:** scrutinising medium / material choice and energy use.
- 2 **Systems thinking:** analysing reusability, lifespan and waste impact.
- 3 **Co-design approaches:** being stakeholder-centred and participatory.
- 4 **Responsive reactions:** applying and evaluating approaches in response to need.





Principles
02 to 05
ALL feel relevant
to my project proposal
which I hope will
foster future thinking
and design for human
equity, social justice
and advocacy.

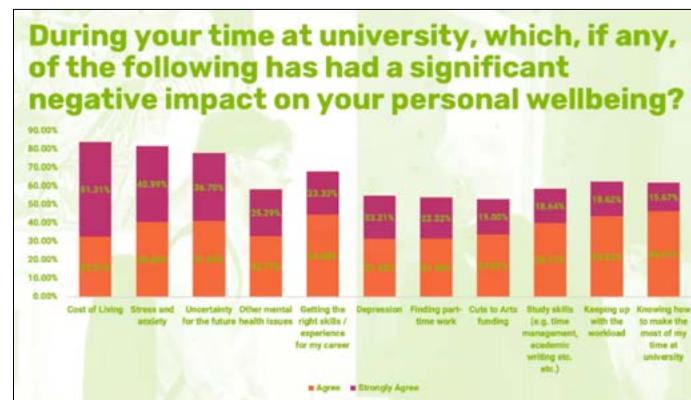
Action Research Project

My proposed question.

How can I embed a sense of social purpose (through making) into the course I teach on - GB&I BA (Hons)?

Courses attended;

- Carbon Literacy training
- What is climate justice?
- Facing climate fears



What is Climate Justice?

The climate crisis has global impacts, but it does not affect all people in equal ways. If climate justice is not included when tackling the climate crisis by sustainable transformation or climate policy, social inequality may be widened.

Climate Justice acknowledges the historical responsibility of countries in the global North for the climate emergency. It also advocates for those who have done the least to cause the climate crisis but are the most affected. Building climate justice into solutions aims to create an inclusive, fair, free, equal and sustainable future.

UAL Climate Glossary, 2023

Perspective 1 (MA Student)

I'm neurodivergent and have a weird relationship with time. So when I learnt about the impact of carbon on our planet, everything changed for me. I couldn't let go of it.

I've now spent a long time working in the field. But every time I start to make progress with any work, I am confronted with some form of discrimination or exclusion.

It feels like there is a glass ceiling for climate work, where decision makers repeatedly block any form of progress. Previously the barriers to combat these injustices impacted me to the point where I resigned from my job.

Perspective 2 (BA Student)

When I'm in London I'm a lot more concerned than when I'm back home.

At home, I can go into the field and just appreciate the beauty of the earth. Then I come here, and feel like oh God, what are we doing to it? It makes me feel a lot of sadness, and frustration. I do feel quite hopeless from it.

Perspective 3 (BA Student)

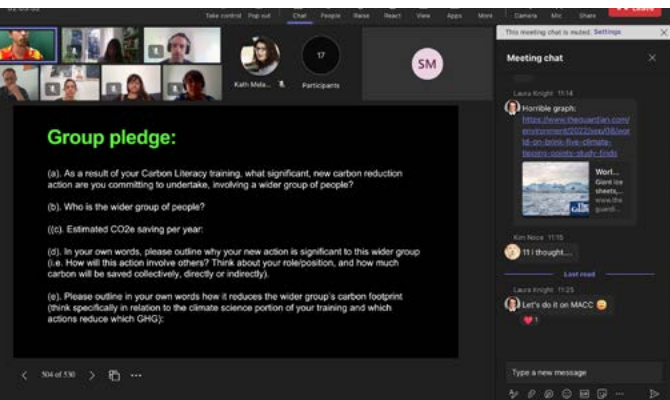
I have the climate emergency in my mind a lot. It's really hard to ignore in my country, where we've been having massive problems because of landfills established in vulnerable areas.

People who live next to the landfills are already vulnerable, and now they're experiencing problems with intoxication. It's really shocking.

Perspective 4 (MA Student)

At the University, I see a disconnect between the statements that are being made, and the opportunities available for us to actually get involved and engaged.

So, I oscillate between being optimistic and hopeful, and then just feeling completely overwhelmed. I'm tired of using my voice, because it feels like every time I raise an opinion that someone shuts me down.



Perspective 5 (UAL Staff)

I'd like to introduce climate more into my class, but it's so delicate. You don't want to look as if you're trying to brainwash students, or ask them to be activists.

We're also in an international cohort; we don't know the full background of our students or how they could be affected differently by this topic.

Perspective 6 (UAL Staff)

One of the things I've learned along the way is that as a species, we would rather doom than doubt. Or, another way of putting it is that we tend to go towards doom rather than bear uncertainty.

And on the other hand, as artists and designers, if we're not uncertain, then we're not alive. That's why I think that within the way that creative people work there is an answer, at least to adaptation, if nothing else.

If we can find ways to help young people deal with the emotions that uncertainty provokes, it may mean that we don't all need to bear this sense of collective doom.

Perspective 7 (UAL Staff)

I teach a unit where we look at a lot of theoretical ideas around power and politics. At first, it can be difficult for students to grapple.

But when they do, they start to understand that we're in a system that looks very bleak. When they really grasp the scale of the issue, they're devastated. But what can I do? We don't have the answer. I would love to offer further support to them, but I'm only paid to offer a 12 week unit.

Perspective 8 (UAL Staff)

I've become very conscious of the gap between how serious the problem is, and how many people are either looking the other way, or focusing on something small because it makes them feel comforted. My anxiety is as big as that gap.

It's hard to devote so much time to something, but see that we're losing ground on so many fronts. At the same time, there's an enormous social pressure to think positively.

Climate justice

The climate crisis is a **social and political problem**, as well as an **environmental one**.

Different communities **feel the effects of the climate crisis differently**.

The responsibility for the crisis rests with some countries and companies more than others.

The **lives of those already facing injustice and oppression** – like the LGBTQI+ community in Jamaica, for example – **are made harder by the impacts of the climate crisis**.

Friends of the Earth

<https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/resources/whats-climate-justice>

Design for Climate Justice

Design for activation: developing creative, equitable and collective climate action.

Design for imagination: creating more equitable alternative futures that speak to past and present injustices.

Design for recognition: responding to how the climate emergency impacts people and species differently around the world.

My Action Research Project has become part of my Carbon Literacy Pledge

Carbon Literacy Pledge

I am interested in embedding sustainability & craft into my course - Graphic Branding & Identity BA (Hons). I plan to use this as a basis for my Action Research Project for my PgCert and as part of that process get involved with the new course Design for Climate Justice by engaging with the course leader Rachel Clarke as a starting point.

My students and those involved with the new Design for Climate Justice course at LCC starting in September 2024.

To share my learning with my students and embed climate justice into their ways of working as future participants in the design industry.

By thinking about sustainability in regards to the graphic design industry, my students will have the knowledge and awareness to make changes both in the work they make while at Ual and their future careers as designers, the impact they can have to make changes in society. As a starting point we can consider what they already know and what we can research together to increase our knowledge, such as making a list of the materials we use, identify their impact from a zero waste perspective and how we could replace them with a sustainable perspective. Creating a monthly newsletter highlighting sustainable practice in the design industry and holding a yearly event with an exhibition of work and lecturers by key speakers on the subject.

I will eat vegetarian food when I teach at LCC. I am currently completing my PgCert via Ual and plan to create my Action Research Project on sustainability and craft into my subject area - this will create awareness and discussion points with my students that will help us to create a climate circle and get involved with the Ual policies for Climate Justice.

My personal pledge is to not eat meat which will reduce my CO2 emissions and my larger goal is to embed sustainability into my course which will involve



My starting point
for this project was
to think about **making,**
materials and **human**
interaction...

The workshop 'Analogue Tuesday'



I was reminded
& encouraged to make
this project something
I wanted it to be,
something I would enjoy.

I used **mixed methods for my research**, to test what results I might get and how they could differ.

- Arts based research
- Participatory research
- Questionnaires
- Semi-structured interviews
- A focus group discussion

Sociocultural theory

Lev Vygotsky strongly believed that community plays a central role in the process of making meaning.

Helenkara.com

“I have argued for many years that it is worth knowing about as many methods as you can, because that gives you a better chance of answering your research questions. Methods are tools, and the more tools we have in our toolboxes – within reason – the better equipped we are to do the work we need to do.”

with students from GB&I and staff from other courses.

What didn't work...

Sarah Mansell Pg.Cert Action Research Project
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My proposed question.

How can I embed a sense of social purpose (through making) into the course I teach on -
GB&I BA (Hons)?

The aim of my enquiry is to gain new insight into how I might support and encourage a sense of social purpose and sustainability through making & doing activities, as part of the learning experience for students on GB&I BA (Hons). By posing and collating data via a series of questions to Ual staff and students. My plan is to design and make a series of creative prompt questions distilled from my data that can be used as 'Wild cards' in workshops for students to consider and engage with as part of their creative process.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my project. Please read and answer the series of questions posed, don't feel you need to answer all of them, just those that have a relevance to you in terms of design and sustainability. Please return this document along with your signed consent form by Thursday 16th of November 2023.

Questionnaire

- What do you think are the 3 most important things as arts practitioners, we should know about sustainability?
- How do you think reusing resources can aid creativity?
- Is it important to 'make' away from the digital experience?
- Can you say something about the importance of 'play' as part of the design process?
- How can sustainability affect the design industry positively or vice versa?
- Can graphic design connect humans and particularly future generations to the natural world?

I did collate the following...

2 staff questionnaire responses

2 staff semi-structured interviews

1 student workshop with
8 participants completing
a questionnaire and arts-based
drawing activity

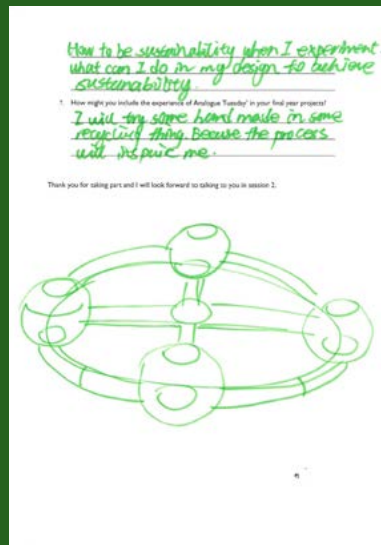
1 student workshop with 6
participants in a focus group
semi structured discussion

1 student questionnaire response

Data collection

I asked questions via questionnaires to both staff and students, some were more successful than others. I realised I needed to take the time to actually speak to people. I conducted interviews with colleagues, held a drawing workshop - asking about memories and feelings associated with the act of creative making. I emailed and asked people (politely) again & again for their input and ran a focus group discussion talking with my final year students about social responsibility and the future of graphic design.

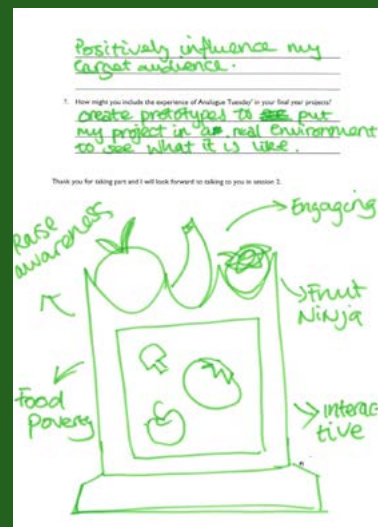
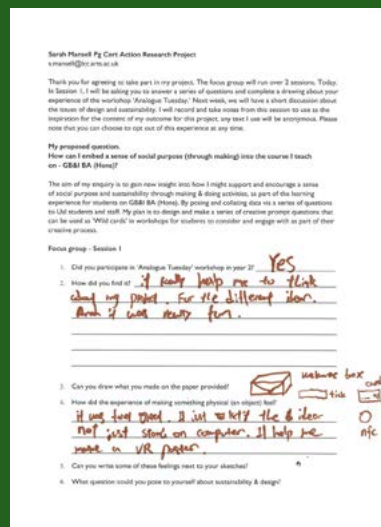
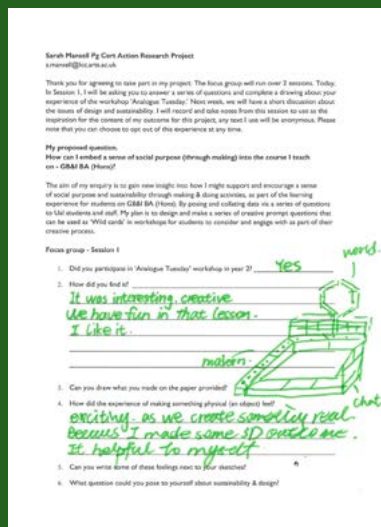
Some of the questions I asked and responses from my students

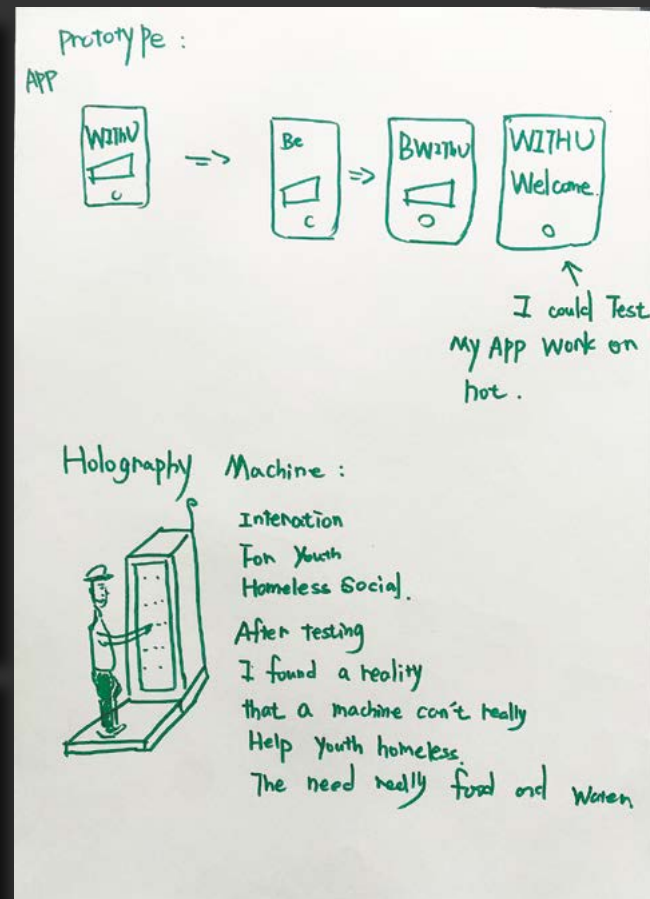
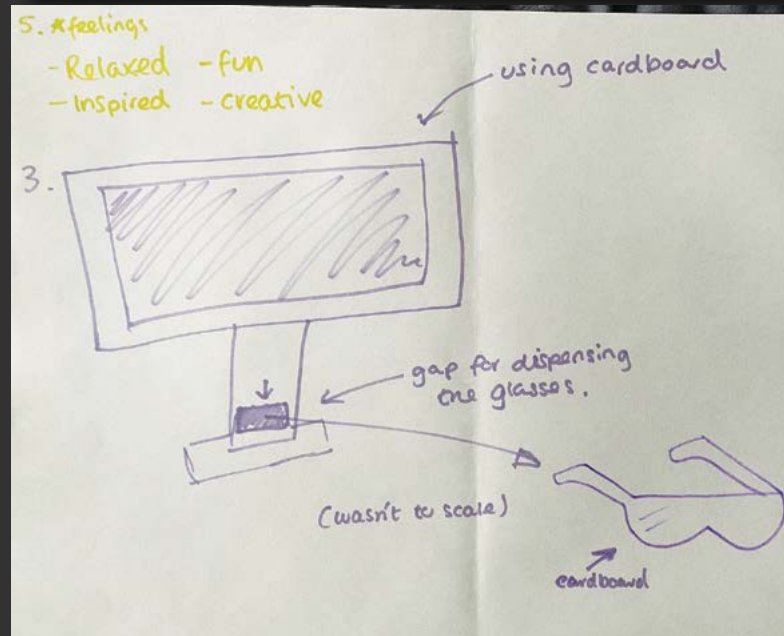
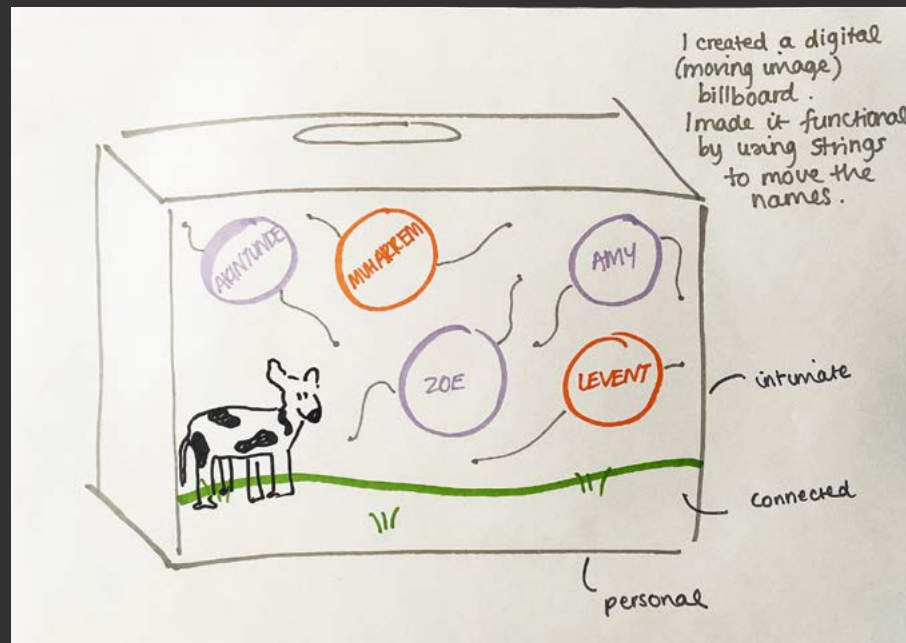


1. How did the experience of making something physical (an object) feel?

2. What question could you pose to yourself about sustainability & design?

3. How might you include the experience of 'Analogue Tuesday' in your final year projects?





I asked students to draw what they had made in the workshop *Analogue Tuesday* and to describe how the experience felt.

Some of the questions I asked and responses from my colleagues

“I think after the climate emergency in 2018-2019 there was a big push for students to see more projects visibly respond within the curriculum, responding to the climate of urgency and also decolonizing the agenda.”

“Responsibilities for designers, you need to think before designing, during designing and after designing, how it can be the whole process.”

“Reusing resources adds to creativity.”

“Being specific about what sustainability means.”

“How you make a small thing so that it feels more real, you have a connection to it.”

“How is somebody gonna interact with your product or service?”

“Graphic design can benefit people & communities by limiting its environmental impact.”

“Do the right thing.”

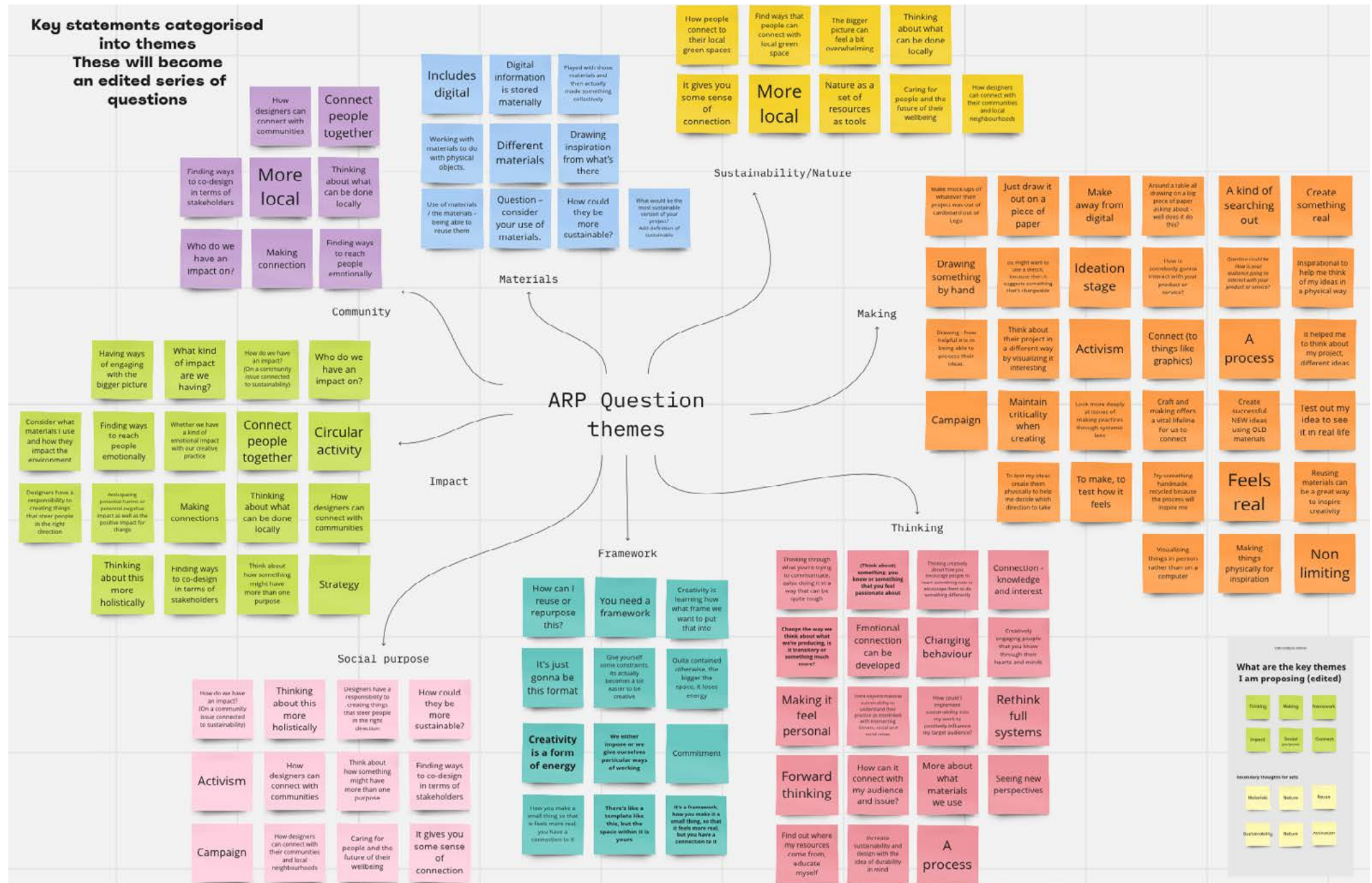
- What do you think are the 3 most important things as arts practitioners, we should know about sustainability?
- Can you say something about the importance of ‘play’ as part of the design process and ‘making’ away from the digital experience?
- Can craft, making & human interaction connect us?
- How can design benefit people and communities by limiting its environmental impact?

I used thematic analysis, to analyse my data.

- I read text after text, editing multiple documents into one
- I began to find repeated themes throughout these texts
- I put all the statements that I had under the themes
- I edited these again and again until I had a final set
- I then took the statements and remade them as questions

I used these questions in the design of my prompt cards.

Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended that researchers work systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data item, and identify interesting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of themes across the data set.



How could your project engage with the bigger issue of climate change?

Recyclable / Repurpose / Reuse at least part of your project

Show your audience how

Think about how your project might have more than one purpose

How could you reuse resources as part of your project?

Consider what materials you have used and how they impact the environment

Look at the project you are working on, what could you reduce? Consider how and why?

Use your agency as a designer to create an outcome that might steer people in the right direction

Can you embed sustainable goals into your project?

Spend the next half an hour playing with the materials available in your studio space.

Draw inspiration from what's there to develop your project in a new way.

Think **Make** Use Connect

Look at the project you are working on, consider what materials you have used. How do they impact the environment? What could you reduce?

Think **Make** Use Connect

Instructions

Choose one card from the pack by random or select from the themes of think, make, use or connect.

Read the instruction and apply the activity to the project you are currently working on.

Share your outcome with your group.

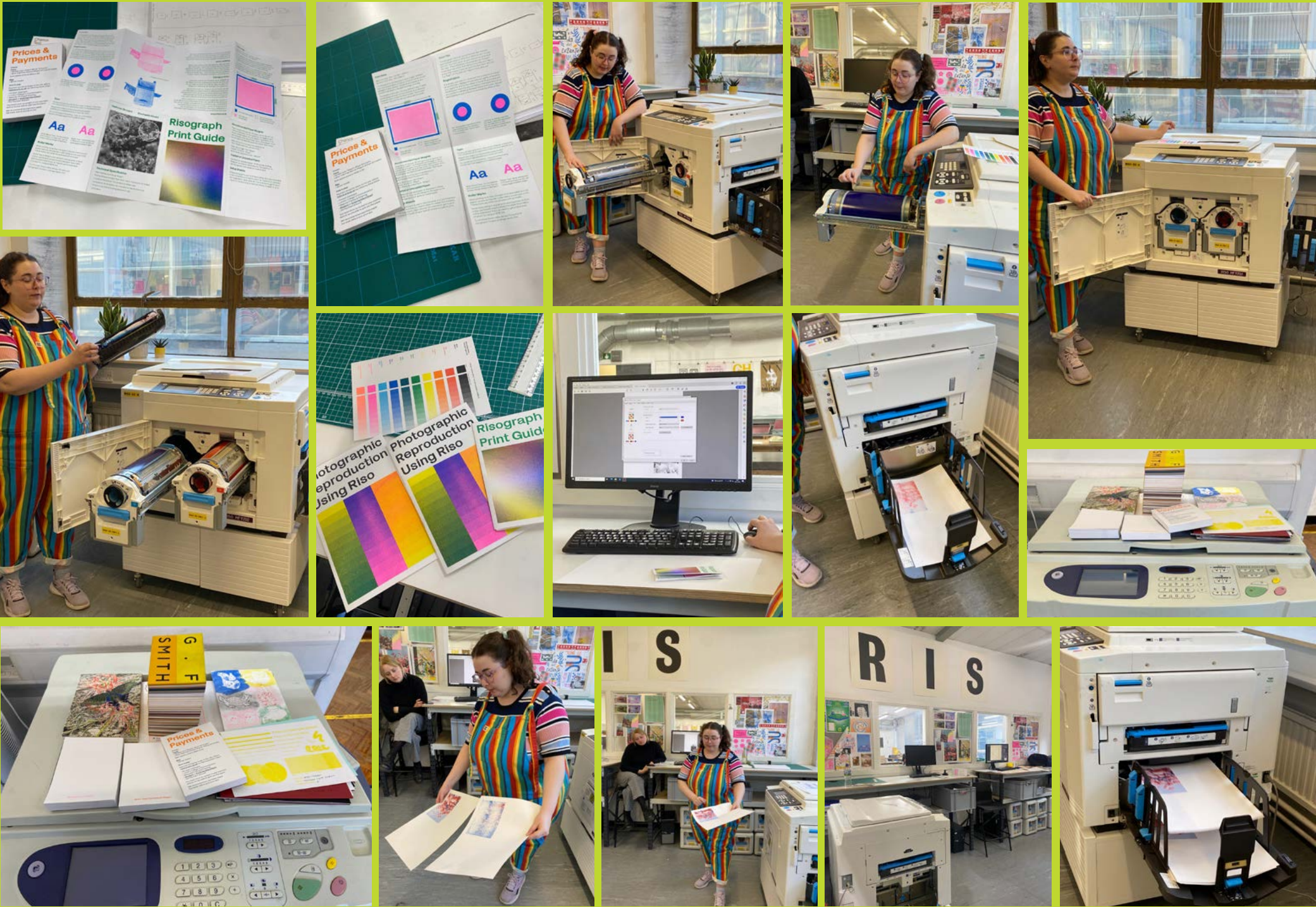
Make a commitment to design or create something that you feel strongly about.

Think **Make** Use Connect

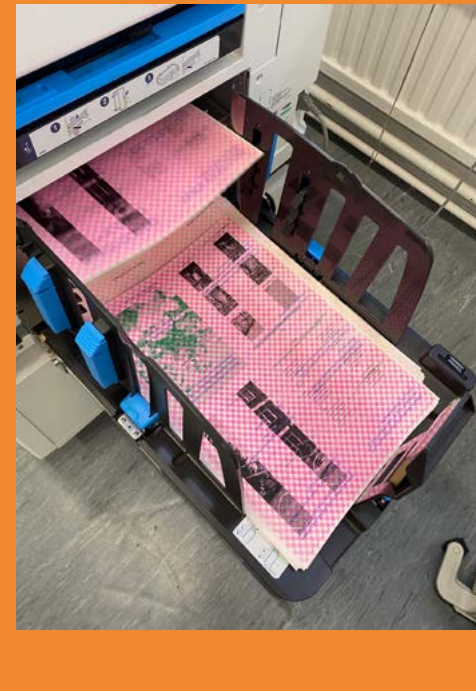
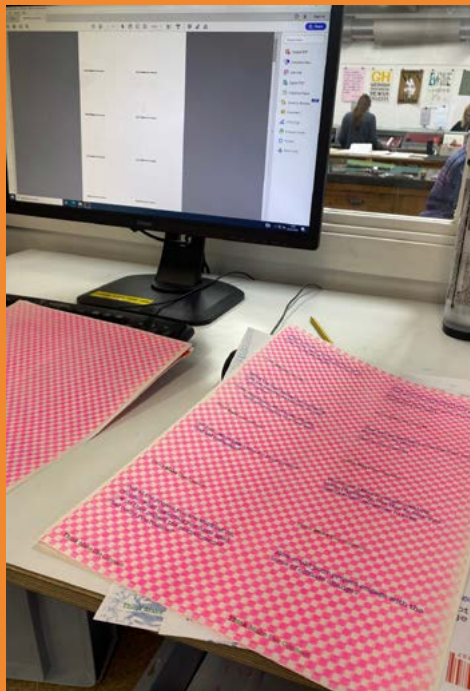
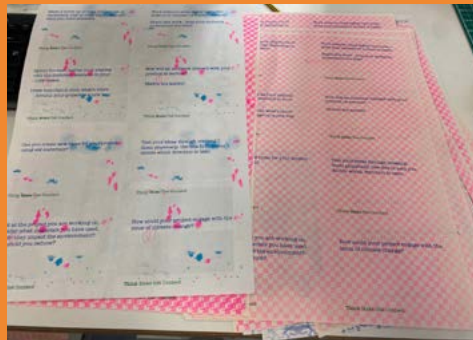
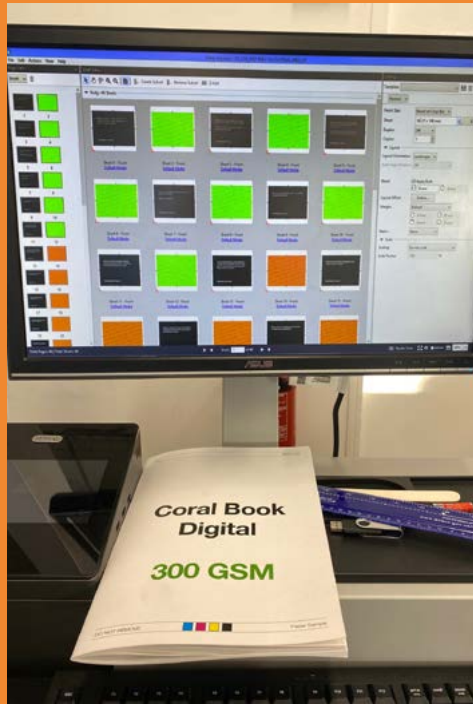
Consider your use of materials. How could they be more sustainable? What would be the most credible version of your project?

A sustainable activity is able to continue without running out of resources or causing harm.

Think **Make** Use Connect



Digital & Risograph print spaces at LCC





Print finishing
at LCC

Professional Practice Unit

Prompt card feedback from year 2 students across the Design School.

“It feels sometimes that Ual talk about sustainable practise, but don’t execute it in the classroom - it just feels like greenwashing. These cards ask direct questions which I can apply to my project, they’re very useful.”

“These prompts make me think about my projects differently, they remind me to stay true to my own values and ensure I’m not producing more trash the world doesn’t need.”

“These questions help me reflect myself from a different perspective. Each question has a certain depth of thought, closely relating to the collective framework.”

‘Evaluation data, if properly communicated and understood can potentially provide [educators] with evidence of what works... This however, requires changes to the nature of evaluation data and how it is communicated and a re-envisioning of the processes which can potentially support teaching enhancement.’
(Winter et al, 2017: 11)



Conclusion

My Action Research Project allowed me to explore and experiment with mixed methods of research, and connect with staff & students to learn more about how they felt in relation to responsible design practice as a Ual policy. Most importantly, I got to make a creative outcome to answer the question I had posed at the beginning of this unit. I learnt how to analyse my data thematically and experience what life is like as a student at LCC. From the feedback I have received, I feel my prompt cards could work as a way of embedding social purpose into GB&I BA (Hons) and I look forward to using them in future workshops I host with students on my course and others.

Next steps

- Use the prompt cards in a range of workshops and gather more feedback.
- Share with GB&I staff for their input and feedback.
- Apply for funding to continue and develop my project.
- Publish packs of these cards for distribution.
- Consider designing some packaging for the set.
- Add a dice to heighten the sense of play & gamification of the experience.
- Create an instagram account where students can share the outcome of their projects.

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