ual: london college
of communication

THE CRITICAL CONSIBLE RESPON DESIGN HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK VALUES EVOL RADICA NURTURE ECO EMBED

Design School
Guidance for Courses

'… in this new world, it is we: the message designers, the product designers, and the specialists in the transportation of ideas and their artefacts over great distances and times, who hold the ultimate responsibility.

We have a professional duty to make sure that our inventions are not just clever, but that they are wise; that we don't just create cool things, but that we are in alignment with a sustainable future…'

D. Berman /
Weapons of Mass
Deception: Design
& Responsibility

The Responsible Design Framework recognises the need for design education to respond to the eco-social challenges of our time and to equip Design School students, academics and technical staff with the skills and values to become responsible creative citizens.

The Responsible Design Framework (RDF) gives guidance for embedding responsible approaches and principles within the curriculum while clearly identifying this explicit/tacit knowledge to students. It provides an outline structure to inform staff, students, and other stakeholders, of the School's environmental and social design imperatives.

According to a recent study by the RSA, 'Research showed that when tutors were given flexibility and autonomy, with a supportive management and university culture, constructive relationships with industry and ideally had embedded sustainability in marking criteria, they were able to integrate it in their teaching with very successful results for students,' RSA, Is Design Education Fit for the Future? 2016.

With this in mind, the framework will enable the Design School to /

- build upon existing competencies and/or practices;

- engage with diverse groups locally and globally;

- enable co-design and participatory methods of learning;

- encourage critical and strategic thinking by transformative learning;

- champion collaborative and transdisciplinary approaches;

- positively contribute to ecological, social and political issues;

- build capacity through resource and tool sharing;

- challenge and transform unsustainable and unethical practices.

RESPOND WISE INTRO CITIZEN

'Here's where redesign begins in earnest, where we stop trying to be less bad and we start figuring out how to be good.'

The framework sets out a clear approach to 'the way' and 'the why' we create, so that all design can be made as environmentally and socially responsive as possible. It does so, by proposing a holistic design approach, which considers form, function, value and sustainability in equal measure.

The eight principles of the RDF invite staff and students to examine and evolve design processes and functions; it asks courses to explore:

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.

The Purpose

Investigating and targeting the positive impact of design by /

5 **Raising the bar**: educating and inspiring others through example.

6 **Challenging the status quo**: critical and provoking positive change.

7 **Supporting welfare**: championing causes, enabling inclusivity, nurturing wellbeing.

8 **Innovating to fix**: attempting to solve wicked problems.

PROCESS PRINCIPLES PURPOSE

'We uphold the values of social justice and environmental stewardship through our teaching and research, as well as in the way we live, work and conduct our operations.'

The Design School's vision statement highlights a belief in the 'power of design practice, design thinking and design research to effect strategic change, shape positive futures and produce cultural value'.

The RDF connects with the School's ethos and the commitment to sustainable literacy that is being demonstrated within the School and across UAL's teaching, research and cultural directives.

Teaching & Learning

UAL's Sustainability in the Curriculum document pin-points the 'essential pedagogic principles' required to provide an educational experience that transforms views and empowers students to strive for wellbeing in social, economic and ecological realms and identify the interrelationships between those aspects.

Sustainability in the Curriculum: Enhancing Teaching & Learning Series, UAL Teaching & Learning Exchange, CLTAD 2014:

- **Futures-thinking** engages students in imagining preferred visions for the future to foster ownership and responsibility for more sustainable futures.

- **Critical and creative thinking** enables students to explore new ways of thinking and acting and to respond to problems in new and more sustainable ways.

- **Participatory learning** supports students' abilities to engage communities and stakeholders in order to learn from differing knowledge systems and perspectives.

- **Systemic thinking** challenges students to go beyond simplistic models of cause and effect as problem-solving is seen as simultaneously problem-making.

- **Partnerships** foster change and empower people and students to take action to build capacity for sustainable development.

UAL Sustainability in the Curriculum (online document)

ENGAGE CONTEXT STRATEGIC

Research

The Design School at LCC has 'Sustainability & Social Innovation' as one of its key research themes and is building critical mass in this area – a recent staff development event featured 18 staff presentations on the topic and guest speakers UAL Honorary: Sophie Thomas and Head of Sustainability for UAL: Ian Lane, amongst others.

The RDF supports three of the University's four Research Challenges. UAL Research Strategy 2015 – 2022:

- **Living with Environmental Change**: through creative practice increasing understanding of environmental change, communicating the issues and designing for new business models, social innovations and sustainable living. Using design to reduce waste and to change producer and consumer behaviours.

- **Lifelong Health & Wellbeing**: designing for people's life long economic, social and health impact, in order to maximize societal gains and minimize issues of dependency, isolation, and inequality.

- **Community Resilience**: using art and design to support communities in understanding how to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to the issues they face, through co-design, co-creation, socially responsive practices and social entrepreneurship.

UAL Research Strategy (online document)

Culture & Management

The University's Sustainability Framework has set-out the following commitments:

- To agree and voice our sustainability values.

- To nurture world leading research and education for sustainability.

- To facilitate co-creation of policy and strategy.

- To catalyse inter-college and inter-disciplinary collaboration.

- To develop new and existing business and community partnerships.

- To signpost funding, showcase opportunities and build bridges.

- To ensure health and wellbeing for students and staff.

- To enable environments for sustainable behaviours and lifestyles.

UAL Sustainability (web page)

As responsible creative citizens, the RDF prompts staff and students to reflect on, and respond to, local and global challenges.

Global Imperatives

Looking beyond UAL, The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (2015) articulate a 17-point international agenda to end poverty, combat climate change and fight injustice and inequality:

- End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

- Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.

- Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.

- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.

- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

- Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

- Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

- Reduce inequality within and among countries.

- Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

- Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.

- Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

- Revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

UN Sustainable Development (website)

'Design, if it is to be ecologically responsible and socially responsive, must be revolutionary and radical.'

V. Papanek / Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change

The RDF supports staff to investigate, expand and embed responsible practices. It enables courses to nurture eco-social innovation and drive positive change, whatever the discipline.

The RDF ethos encourages staff and students to examine and evolve design process and purpose; for courses to become attuned they should:

— **Integrate** (via exploration and enquiry) responsible design methodologies and practice **into all teaching levels**.

— **Incorporate** responsible choices (medium, material, process, etc.) **into all projects**, even those that are not explicitly eco-social in subject.

— **Create** and nurture projects **in response to** and informed by **real problems**, for/with real stakeholders.

— **Share** processes and outcomes across the Design School, College, UAL and beyond.
(National Green Week (second week in February) provides a useful opportunity or platform for this).

INTEGRATE
GUIDANCE
DISCOVER

Ways to explore and discover how you might adopt and incorporate the RDF's principles /

Integration into the Curriculum

Drawing on the learning and teaching activities of your course, reflect on the framework to plan, develop and apply the principles.

Consider /

- How will you build on current good practice within your staff team and student cohort?

- How can the 'process and purpose' principles be embedded within your course at each level?

- How might the principles align with learning and teaching activities and/or outcomes?

Reflect on /

- What could be exclusive to your course/discipline and what could be common issues supporting collaboration?

- Methods and modes to inspire and mobilise the sceptics.

- Utilising the assessment processes – can formative and summative feedback help students recognise the responsible design skills they are acquiring?

Enabling Sustainable Futures

Drawing on your subject and course, reflect on the framework to understand ways to respond to the present, and imagine, connect and create for the future.

Consider /

- How does your course empower and prepare students for a sustainable future?

- How might your course collaborate with 'experts'/other disciplines; including those beyond the creative sector e.g. economists, scientists, anthropologists, ecologists, technologists?

- How can your course support eco-social innovation and risk-taking?

Reflect on /

- Why the responsible design principles are of value to your discipline/students/society?

- The sustainable skills-sets that industry is expecting/forecasting.

- The current and future needs of a population and planet in flux.

Design for Impact

Drawing on your values, reflect on the framework to respond to political, social and environmental affairs.

Consider /

- How might design be a catalyst for behaviour or societal change?

- How can you connect with existing groups and communities e.g. coalitions, charities and NGOs?

- How can the design approach and execution be empathetic, respectful and aware of cultural complexities?

Reflect on /

- The locality: are you tackling a local or global problem?

- Activism: how radical or provocative should/will you be?

- The zeitgeist: what are the pressing issues of the Anthropocene?

'… to address large-scale issues such as climate change, climate adaptation, inequality, education for all people and global health, we simply have to stop doing one, one, one. We have to be able to scale and we have to be able to combine.'

K. Hvid /
INDEX: Design
to Improve Life

Responsible and sustainable creativity have been nurtured within the Design School for many years, though until now, not formally embedded. The RDF intends to build upon and expand the current good practice.

EXPLORE
REFERENCES
TOOLS

Examples

To help inspire and inform future teaching and learning, a collection of case studies showcasing a mix of curriculum, collaborative, staff and alumni projects has been collated. These case studies are accessible via the LCC website / Conscientious Communicators Research Hub page.

UAL Resources

LCC Design School Research Groups
Conscientious Communicators Research Hub
Design Activism Research Hub
Space & Place

LCC Projects
Green Week (news/blog articles)

LCC Tools
Multi-disciplinary Eco-Social Assignments (PDF)
Responsible Practice (film)
Access Through Tools Festival (film)

UAL
UAL Sustainability (web page)
UAL Sustainability in the Curriculum (online document)
Cultures of Resilience (UAL)
Materials Library (CSM)

Eco-social Design Awards

Creative Conscience Awards
D&AD White Pencil
INDEX: Award
RSA Student Design Awards

LCC Library List

Green Graphic Design / Ethics in Graphic Design (741.6…)

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