

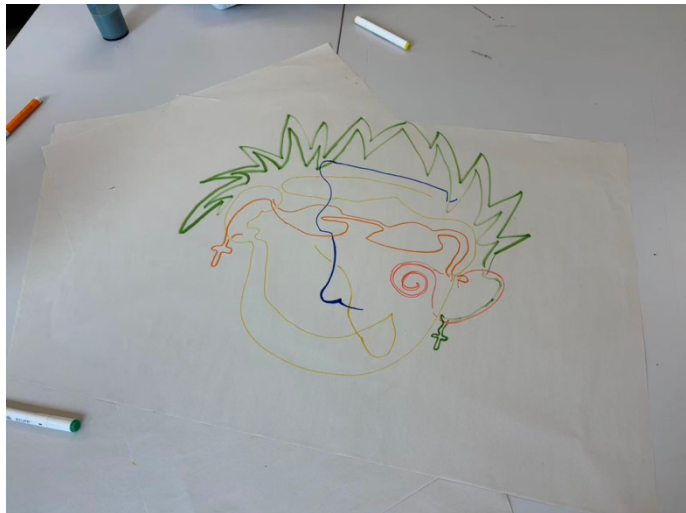
07 DIEP FINAL REPORT

1.Description: Summary of Six R3 Tasks

During the INPUT module, I systematically completed six R3 (Read, Research, Reflect) tasks. Rather than functioning as isolated exercises, these tasks formed a coherent learning trajectory: beginning with foundational design philosophy, progressing through practical methodologies, and culminating in a deeper consideration of empathy and humanistic values. Through the continuous interplay between theory and practice, my understanding of design gradually evolved and deepened.

1.1 Manifesto

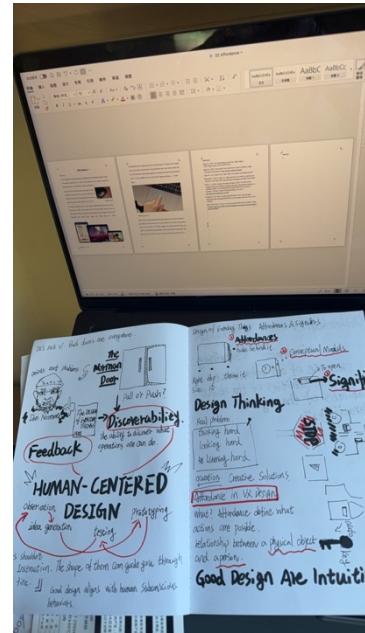
I actively participated in the “Conditional Design Workshop”, which explored the relationship between rules and chance through restricted drawing exercises. When instructed to draw circles and intersecting lines under fixed rules, I initially pursued precision and visual neatness. However, this excessive control resulted in rigid outcomes. When I later relinquished this obsession and responded intuitively to the process, the slightly irregular lines unexpectedly conveyed vitality and rhythm.



This experience prompted me to engage with “The Holstee Manifesto” and Ken Garland’s First Things First. The former encouraged me to reflect on the relationship between design and everyday life, while the latter challenged me to reconsider the social responsibility embedded in design practice. Synthesising these insights, I formulated ten personal design principles, with “progress over perfection” as the core. These principles constantly remind me that design is fundamentally an exploratory process rather than a pursuit of flawless form.

1.2 Affordance

I studied Don Norman's design psychology, focusing on the concepts of affordances and signifiers, using Apple's ecosystem (iPhone, iPad, and MacBook) as a case study. I observed that Apple's success lies in its accurate understanding of user psychology and behaviour. Physically, rounded corners, slim forms, and palm-friendly touchpads intuitively guide users' actions. Digitally, clear icons, colour-changing buttons, and smooth animations provide immediate feedback, while subtle vibrations and sounds reinforce a sense of control. This analysis helped me realise that excellent design operates as a form of "silent understanding"—allowing users to interact instinctively without conscious effort.



1.3 Letter to My Son/Daughter

This task took the form of a temporal dialogue. I critically evaluated a design prediction article written in 1998 and was impressed by its accurate anticipation of mobile technologies, while also noting its failure to address negative consequences such as digital surveillance, privacy loss, and social alienation.

In my letter to a future generation living in 2035, I expressed optimism about AI applications in healthcare and energy, while also voicing concerns about digital addiction and information bubbles. I emphasised that future design must function as a bridge between technology and humanity, rather than a force that separates them. In an increasingly digital world, empathy and emotional awareness remain essential.

1.4 Prototyping

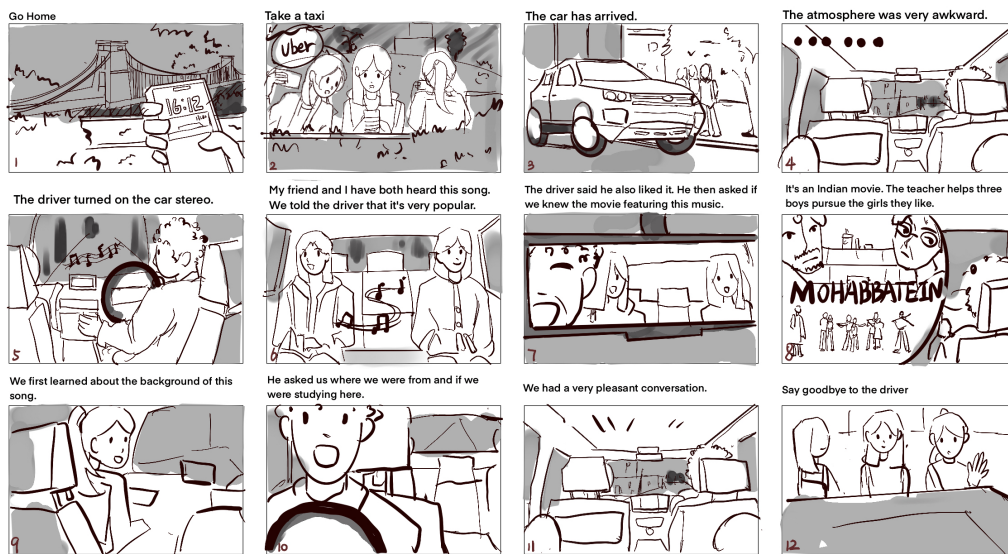
Through case studies of Google's founders, I learned about three levels of prototyping: paper prototypes, digital prototypes, and native code prototypes. The concept that resonated with me most was "fail fast". One entrepreneur noted that the value of early prototypes lies not in demonstrating success, but in exposing problems.

This challenged my tendency to delay action in pursuit of perfection. I came to understand that prototyping is fundamentally about rapid testing and iteration rather than polished presentation. Iteration-driven design is crucial for improving efficiency and refining ideas.

1.5 Storytelling

I documented an unexpected interaction during a trip to Bristol. On a rainy afternoon, I broke the silence in an Uber by singing a folk song from my hometown. This led to a conversation with the Indian driver about folk culture, city life, and personal reflections.

This spontaneous exchange made me realise that storytelling in design does not require elaborate narratives. Ordinary moments from everyday life often serve as the most powerful emotional connectors, reminding me that genuine human connection lies at the heart of communication design.



1.6 Empathy

I studied empathy-based methodologies in user research, including in-depth interviews, focus groups, and empathy mapping (Say, Think, Do, Feel). I learned that empathy is not simply “putting oneself in another’s shoes”, but a structured and analytical process.

Interviews require interpretation beyond surface-level responses; focus groups reveal meaning through the collision of perspectives; and empathy maps enable multidimensional analysis of user behaviour. This research led me to consider how empathetic design can balance business objectives with meaningful user experiences, creating mutual value.

2. Interpretation: Concepts and Self-Development

2.1 From “Controller” to “Dialoguer”

Before the Design Manifesto task, I perceived designers as absolute controllers of their work, aiming to replicate preconceived ideas with precision. However, the collaborative circle-drawing exercise transformed this mindset. Although the circles drawn collectively were imperfect, their overlay created a compelling visual narrative.

I realised that design is not a solo performance, but an ongoing dialogue between rules, materials, users, and uncertainty. Embracing imperfection allowed me to treat unexpected outcomes as creative opportunities, resulting in more dynamic work and greater creative freedom.

2.2 Balancing Technology and Humanity

Combining the letter-writing task with empathy research encouraged me to reflect on design’s social responsibility. Observing people’s dependence on digital devices made me more attentive to the emotional needs behind user behaviour.

While Apple products exemplify technological excellence, meaningful design also requires emotional resonance. Much like the conversation sparked by a folk song in the Uber, design should connect people rather than merely demonstrate technical sophistication. Ultimately, technology must serve humanity, imbuing digital systems with warmth and care.

2.3 Transformation of Prototyping Mindset

Previously, I struggled with perfectionism and procrastination. Learning about Google’s prototyping philosophy helped me shift from an output-oriented to a process-oriented mindset. In a later project, I produced a rough paper prototype on the first day, identified flaws early, and iterated based on peer feedback. The final outcome was significantly more mature than my earlier work.

This shift reduced creative anxiety and improved both efficiency and confidence in my design process.

3.Evaluation: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Performance

3.1 Strengths: Critical Thinking and Emotional Narratives

I demonstrate strong critical reflection skills. When analysing the 1998 prediction

article, I identified its limitations regarding digital privacy and environmental responsibility. This dialectical thinking allows me to examine design within broader social contexts.

Additionally, I excel at extracting narratives from lived experience. Transforming my Bristol journey into a design reflection reinforced my belief that inspiration is embedded in everyday life rather than distant or abstract.

3.2 Weaknesses

3.2.1 Technical Execution

My limited coding skills became evident when studying native code prototyping. Although I understand interaction logic conceptually, my practical knowledge of HTML and CSS remains superficial, restricting me to low-fidelity prototypes. This highlighted the necessity of technical literacy as a foundation for design practice.

3.2.2 Limited User Research Scope

My empathy research relied heavily on secondary data and small-scale observations. The empathy maps I produced were largely inferential rather than grounded in first-hand research. Without extensive user interviews or fieldwork, my research remains somewhat theoretical.

3.3 Future Improvements

If revisiting these tasks, I would integrate a universal design perspective into the affordance analysis, particularly focusing on accessibility for users with disabilities. I would also translate my ten design principles into tangible outputs, such as an “unfinished series” that embodies progress over perfection through iterative practice.

4. Plan: Future-Oriented Personal Practice

4.1 Establishing an Iterative Workflow

I will adopt rapid iteration across all projects, producing at least three low-fidelity prototypes at early stages. By implementing continuous user feedback loops, I aim to refine designs through experimentation rather than perfectionism.

4.2 Deepening Empathetic Research

I plan to prioritise empathy mapping and shadowing in future projects. For example, when designing smart products for older adults, I will conduct on-site observations in senior communities to uncover unarticulated needs and act as an advocate for end users.

4.3 Practising the Design Manifesto

I will display my ten design principles in my workspace and revisit them regularly. Guided by the belief that “design should inspire positive change”, I intend to focus on social issues such as digital inclusion for the elderly and sustainable packaging, ensuring my work generates real social value.

4.4 Building Interdisciplinary Skills

To address technical gaps, I plan to systematically study HTML, CSS, and advanced interaction tools. I will also participate in hands-on workshops in printmaking and paper art, integrating manual techniques with digital media. Alongside this, I will read texts such as Empathic Design to deepen my understanding of user psychology.

Conclusion

The INPUT module has been a profound intellectual recalibration. Through the six R3 tasks, I have evolved from a visually driven designer into a research-oriented practitioner who values empathy, iteration, logic, and social responsibility. The DIEP framework taught me not only to complete tasks, but to reflect critically on my development.

Guided by the principle that “progress matters more than perfection”, I will continue exploring the possibilities of communication design, using In my future study and life, I will continue to apply the knowledge I learned in the "Input" course to constantly improve myself and create designs that more directly address users' pain points.my work to convey warmth, foster connection, and inspire meaningful change.

Webpage: <https://2026.macd.work/hl1n25/index.html>