

# SIDN272 Assignment 1 — So Co-Design is...

**By Christian D'souza**

1. To me, co-design is a way to express and communicate your ideas with a team of like-minded thinkers to influence a positive effect on the world. Co-design helps to diverge ideas in a much broader sense whilst also expanding your own mindset and scaling it into thinking about problems and solutions in a vast variety of ways, sometimes leading you outside of your comfort zone/educated zone which helps you learn and improve your knowledge and methods. Doing interaction design, we were also only asked to interview end-users at specific points in the project which is the only real assumption that I had coming into co-design as an influence from that course. I Had assumed that co-design just refereed to the idea of working in a team of like-minded thinkers rather than actually working with end-users in each step of the design process as we would only be asked to interview end-users at specific points, done through invitation after a process in half done. On the other hand, the collaboration aspect of co-design was easy to understand as it is a big part of interaction design and I very much enjoy working with others rather than individually.
2. As humans, we are very good at making our own assumptions about certain things and passing judgement as if we already have a clear picture of the situation. Although this is not practical as the situation can only truly be known by someone with lived experience who has physically been in that situation/experienced it.

Co-design is all about designing with end-users (and other candidates, team members, etc) rather than participation only through invite as this brings in the idea of indigenous knowledge and instead gaining physical and 'true' insight into the situation. As I was so sure that co-design refers to just the basic idea of collaboration, I didn't acknowledge the wider perspective of what it means to be a co-designer and getting that vital information from the lecturer/tutor who have lived experience and knowledge of this field helps me to more deeply grasp what it truly means to be a co-designer. Through this, I have learned that the mindset of a designer is very important as we are designing for people — not ourselves which means we must never go into a design process knowing everything as this will cause vulnerability to bias which consequently is shown in a useless design.

Getting and valuing those many perspectives not only from someone with lived experience, but from every team member and even someone with the appropriate knowledge is important not only terms of in making sure everyone has equal power and opportunity, but also in getting those different cultural views and influences which helps you address and acknowledge more pain points and areas to improve in that one area, impacting a wider variety of end-users and eliminating any potential bias that erupted from your initial assumptions. This also helps you to get more creative and think 'outside the box' of different paths you can take and diverge from which opens the door to better and more influential ideas when the converging phase begins.

The mindset of 'being in the grey' and making sure we eliminate our assumptions and use our indigenous knowledge to our advantage is an ability I can take into my Interaction design work because coincidentally we do design with others however it is more through participation methods which is where my initial assumptions came from and this helped me understand the difference between co-creation and co-design.

3. As mentioned earlier, I only had the assumption that co-design meant working more with a team whilst and only including end-users in the interview process. I was convinced that this was only a minor assumption however learned that this assumption was a major influencer and can make or break a design if too strongly considered. To me this means to consider others in designs and ideas before me which equates to inclusive and in-depth primary and secondary research (from an end-user perspective) whilst never assuming or accepting anything for how it originally is and if this does happen, then to use this as interview questions to find out more instead of idealising those assumptions which will have minimal effect on end-user experiences.

Being in that 'third space' when coming into a design process is key for me and will make sure that I am always challenging my initial assumptions and using them as a tool to research and gain 'true' insights. Within this co-design field of work, I plan to include and collaborate with end users rather than just talking about them through voluntary interviews only done when invited. Balancing the power with all potential end-users/clients/team members, etc is a primary attribute I'll make sure to implement as a co-designer moving forward.

My primary goal is to be able to get the maximum impact possible effect on end-users and to do this I have to be able to truly empathise with them to the fullest extent and the only way I can do that is through co-designing with them as I have learnt that they are the ones with the lived experience which is valuable and needed to inform my designs.

Making sure I am designing with qualitative data rather than quantitative data is a major goal for me if I want to create the impact desired. Rather than interviewing them, as a co-designer, including them in the design process will mean that they're the ones driving the decisions and conversations whilst I sit back and listen, letting them drive the ideas for me which again helps me achieve my primary goal as a co-designer to actively include the end-users.

I really do see this importance of working with others and making sure that you are not the "star of the show" as it is always worthwhile and better to think outside of your comfort zone which can only be done through others' input which is something I am focussing on.

## References

- What is co-design? (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.beyondstickynotes.com/what-is-codesign>
- Brown, David & BROWN, C.. (2006). ASSUMPTIONS IN DESIGN AND IN DESIGN RATIONALE.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245514122\\_ASSUMPTIONS\\_IN\\_DESIGN\\_AND\\_IN\\_DESIGN\\_RATIONALE](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245514122_ASSUMPTIONS_IN_DESIGN_AND_IN_DESIGN_RATIONALE)
- J. Freire, personal communication, March 18, 2021. Lecture 2: Assumption & Bias, Lecture 5: Indigenous Knowledge + Co-Design.