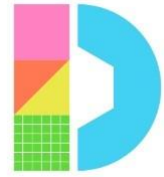


Skills Definitions for Assignment One: Reflection

(Personal Development Plan)



Problem Solving skills

Problem solving has been identified as one of the essential skills required by many employment and life situations. We use analytical and critical thinking skills to help understand and evaluate some problems and to help make decisions, then use various strategies to come up with solutions. In this module, we will focus primarily on ill-defined problems (sometimes known as wicked problems), often characterised by a lack of clear goals or expected solutions. People with good problem solving skills can understand the problem, use interpretations and logic to evaluate and define the root of the problem, then use abstract thinking and creativity to arrive at solutions.

There are various strategies for problem solving; they might include analogy, brainstorming, divide and conquer, trial and error etc. In Design Thinking, we favour a staged but iterative approach to arrive at solutions: empathy – to understand the problem; define - to identify the real problem; ideate – to create a broad range of possible solutions; prototype – to develop the idea in iterate stages; test – to test the idea with those who will use it; and deliver - to implement the solution.

Teamwork and Collaboration

Teamwork and collaboration involve processes of working together in order to achieve a common goal. These processes includes people cooperating, using their individual and collective skills. Productive and effective teamwork includes behaviors such as: providing constructive feedback, building consensus, compromising, delegating to each other, defining mutually acceptable roles, and displaying a willingness to find solutions. There are always challenges in working together, particularly in an interdisciplinary environment.

Teamwork and collaboration in the Design Factory provides plenty of opportunities to work and do things together. Your tutors, and often you yourselves, will facilitate group discussions, listen actively, elicit views and opinions, value the contributions from everyone, and give credit to others. Sometimes this may mean forgiving when someone comes up short, but also praising and celebrating with people when they achieve tasks.

Social Intelligence

Social and Emotional Intelligence are closely linked, and they both refer to skills and capability in areas such as self-awareness, self-management, and relationship management. These skills are about getting on well with others, and recognising the impact your own actions have on others. People with good social intelligence are able to influence others positively, and are able to assess social situations and react appropriately.

We value these skills in the Design Factory, and there are multiple opportunities through co-creation situations, teamwork, in-class activities, industry meetings, and networking events, to develop your social intelligence.

Motivation and Can-do attitude

In the Design Factory, we have a bias towards action and value positivity, as it means we're working actively to achieve things. This allows us to learn quickly and to reach our goals. Motivated people focus on the positive and things that go well; they are confident and are willing to stretch themselves. Individuals with can-do attitudes also have personal drive, demonstrate commitment, show initiative, and have the ability to keep going and pursue goals, even in the face of setbacks.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to manage your own thinking, recognise mistakes or gaps in your research or processes, identify relevant information, and make reasoned judgements. It is about maximising your own thinking through analysis, evaluation, and the synthesis of information and experiences you have had.

Ways to become a better critical thinker include observation, interpretation, analysis, finding evidence through real situations, forming judgments and inferences, and prioritising information. In the Design Factory, we will encourage you to do this by providing tools that assist in this process, along with guided discussions and questioning to help you arrive at well-thought-out, and defensible, solutions.

Professional Communication

Professional communication is written, oral and digital communication that is appropriate for the workplace. Effective communication is essential to develop a good working relationship with your client or work partners. Skills incorporated into professional communication include friendliness, effective listening, speaking concisely and clearly, confidence, good written skills, the ability to give and receive constructive feedback, and the ability to determine the appropriate type and tone of communication.

The Design Factory will place you in many situations where you can develop these skills. For example, the empathy phase of design thinking will encourage active listening, the observation of non-verbal cues and body language. The presentations you give help you tell stories that communicate your ideas in a concise but inspiring way, and the networking events will give you opportunities to build confidence, discuss and present your ideas. The two reports you write will provide a vehicle for developing your writing skills.