Design for Real|Science 2020/21   BA Graphic Communication Level 6

Thank you for providing a challenge brief for our L6 project, **Design for Real|Science**
We believe that a combination of rigorous, empirical research and good design can deliver widespread benefits to society. The motivation for this project has been to address the role that design practice and processes play in ensuring that scientific research and data influences the real-life challenges of health, safety and wellbeing in the 21st Century.

Design for Real|Science challenges Level 6 designers to communicate powerful and direct messages, using data and information to persuade people to transform their lives and to consider their own responsibility for the well-being of others.

Working with professional clients from a variety of scientific and public service organisations, students will be invited to contribute a range of proposals that demonstrate how emotive and informative graphic design plays a vital role in transforming the way that the general public engage with issues of scientific relevance. Over a period of 5 weeks, the project will be structured around key milestones and deliverables, during which ideas and concepts will be developed in partnership with clients. Students will work in teams of 4 or 5 with tutors and mentors from the design industry. They will be expected to collaborate on research and client meetings/communication; however, each student will be responsible for producing a range of individual outcomes that express the diversity of approach, expertise and media within the graphic communication discipline.

The project is covered by the Visual Communication Subject Ethics Protocol [03-1213-F].

Please check that you are happy with this client brief by 28th September 2020, we need to allocate the briefs to student teams by 5th October. Many thanks,

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Client Brief

Client name: Frame
First point of contact:
Rosa Robinson rosa@framecollective.org.uk / Ellie Cripps ellie@framecollective.org.uk
Project name: Menstrual Cycle Empowerment
Background / Overview /Research context

- Many people who menstruate (and the people around them) have limited knowledge about their cycles.
- Menstruation is still a taboo subject in society
- Research into menstruation and its links with wellbeing is under researched
- There is a lack of adequate language about menstrual cycle experiences and so people are often unable to understand what's normal or to articulate their needs
- Much of the communication about periods is female focused and fertility focussed--omitting people who are not female but still menstruate...and therefore their experiences.
- Feminist movement has, historically, omitted focus on periods as there was fear they could be perceived as a weakness that would be detrimental to fight for gender equality.
- It's important for individuals (and those around them) to understand the impact of menstruation on people's wellbeing.
- People who menstruate should feel empowered to understand these impacts and how they can manage their cycles
- Policy makers, employers and educators should be encouraged to recognise these impacts and respond in their policies and practice to provide better environments for people who menstruate

What's the issue that needs communicating through this project?
If people were empowered to understand how hormonal fluctuations throughout the menstrual cycle impact different aspects of their lives, wellbeing and work, they would be able to better manage these impacts. This would also need to be supported by those around them (e.g. their employers) who can play a part in creating a better environment for people who menstruate. As a result, we could create more inclusive conversations about menstruation that would reduce inequalities, increase understanding and lead to better policies and practice for people who menstruate.

What is the science that drives the project?
The effects of menstrual cycles on people's wellbeing is under researched. However, there is evidence that:

Young people are often not prepared for starting their periods and therefore this can be a traumatic experience for them, compounded by not feeling able to talk to others' about it (e.g. male family members, where menstruation is seen as a "topic for women" or their teachers), perpetuating menstruation stigma.

Menstrual cycle-related symptoms often interfere with adolescent girls' engagement in school, social, and sports activities—and this increased reluctance to do sports, see friends etc was significantly associated with psychological symptoms.

Plan's focus groups (Plan International, 2018) highlight a dichotomy between the reality that many young people experience physical symptoms during their periods—pain, discomfort, tiredness— and the expectation or pressure to carry on as normal and not let periods stop them from doing anything. Participants talked about feeling guilty for resting and practising self-care (Plan International, 2018).

Secrecy and shame are regularly reported themes in menstruation research. Sveinsdottir's (Sveinsdóttir, 2018) study found that experience of menstrual pain and attitude towards menstruation predicted women's health-related quality of life. Women whose attitude was that menstruation should be secret and not discussed, and who felt embarrassed to talk about periods, were more likely to have lower score for mental wellbeing.

What's going on elsewhere that is similar or different to this project?
Lots of work happening around period poverty, access to period products (including government initiative for free period products in schools) and various campaigns to end stigma around periods - nothing very mainstream so far. E.g. Bloody Good Period, Real Period Project, Hey Girls.

Where are the gaps in existing communication strategies?
Existing strategies are:

- Mostly female focused e.g. highly feminised
- Frequent use of terminology and imagery that medicalises or stigmatises e.g. use of words like feminie hygiene products or sanitary products, use of blue dyes to show period blood (instead of real-life reddy-brown with viscosity)
- Emphasis on stereotypical extremes of experience--netflix and duvets or playing sports...no in between.
- Emphasis on discretion and 'keeping a secret' that compounds stigma
- Men, trans and non-binary people are rarely, if ever, seen.

Objectives: What is the challenge? What does the project seek to change?

- Breakdown stigmas
- Make periods an inclusive conversation
- Sharing stories drives change
- For policy makers, teachers, employers, they need to understand the importance of knowledge for empowerment, enabling people who menstruate to harness the power of their period - and to understand the impact this has on personal wellbeing and wider social equality

Audience: who do you need to communicate to?

1. Policymakers, researchers and practitioners
2. Teachers and educators
3. Employers

What's the most important thing to say or show?
It's time to redesign how we live and work, as half our population experience menstruation - we need to create a society & workforce based on understanding periods & the link to wellbeing/equality

How do your audience need to change [ie their behaviour] as a consequence?
Prototype new ways of working/living/doing things with people who menstruate - commit to listening & making a change

Where [settings/media] are the audience most likely to encounter the message?
Online campaigns, media adverts, social media

What are the most compelling reasons for persuading your audience to try to buy in?
Cost of ignoring it is too high, both for social inequality and women's health (which is never given enough attention)

Helpful resources and links for further information

[Pantone launches new shade to end period stigma](#)
[Can syncing your work with your menstrual cycle improve wellbeing?](#)
[Quick scoping review: Menstruation and Wellbeing in Young People](#)
[Break the Barriers Report - Plan International](#)
https://www.heygirls.co.uk/
https://www.bloodygoodperiod.com/
https://www.realperiodproject.org/

Information for client:

Phases of Creative Development The project begins on 5th October, when the students will be allocated your brief. They are then expected to make contact with you, to introduce themselves and to ask further questions. The project is structured around key milestones and deliverables, in order to ensure parity of each of the student groups we request that all clients are available to provide feedback to students as the work progresses. The feedback sessions should coincide with *Milestones 2, 3 and 4* (see below for details). For Milestones 2 and 3 students must arrange to present their ideas to you either in person or online in accordance with your and Cardiff Met's social distancing policy. The most crucial Milestone is 22nd October, by this time they must have presented a minimum of 3 ideas to you, and to use your feedback to take one ide forward. They will be expected to document your feedback in their design logbook, and to collate and quote specific elements in the final design document. Throughout the project students will also participate in workshops and tutorials with staff and mentors from the design industry. At *Milestone 4* students will be required to create a professional 'pitch' of their work to you, and to provide you with their design document.

Milestone One 12th October 2020: Students produce a Creative Brief and Research Document in response to your challenge. Their Creative Brief follows a similar layout to this brief, however the students must demonstrate that they have researched the issue, and indicate a range of possible approaches.

Milestone Two 22nd October 2020: Working within the guidelines of their Creative Brief, students produce a range of tangible concepts that clearly evidence how *their* ideas could address *your* communication goals. These concepts will be presented to you for feedback before the deadline (most likely, online) to give you the opportunity to provide feedback. This is an opportunity for both clients and students to challenge assumptions and to consider *what if,* and, *what needs to change?* Such as habits and routines, attitudes and culture, environments and systems.

Milestone Three 29th October 2020: On the basis of feedback students should be able to select one concept to research and develop into a more refined prototype (this may have more than one design output, i.e. print, web, social). At milestone three they will present their prototypes to you. A crucial issue at this point, which will need addressing in your feedback, is the feasibility and viability of the project within the real world.

Milestone Four 6th November 2020: Professional 'pitch' of student work to you on Teams. Design documentation made available.