“Dear Design” Postcard Compendium

Archive of student postcards made as a part of three Dear Design seminars in 2020 and one seminar in 2022 at the Human Centered Design & Engineering Department at the University of Washington

Cindy Atman, Grace Barar, Yuliana Flores, Kathryn Shroyer, Khadijah Jordan,
About This Project & Introduction

This is a compendium of postcards created by students who participated in 10-week seminars in 2020 and 2022 called “Dear Design: Creating your ideal design signature”. The title and postcard format was inspired by Lupi and Posavec’s beautiful book *Dear Data*.

The goal of this work is to help students gain awareness of their design processes.

Each week, for nine weeks, the students were asked to create representations of a design process on a postcard. They represented design projects they observed, projects they had done in the past and projects that they did and captured specifically for the seminar. Students used a different lens each week to interpret their selected design process. Example lenses include: “what counts as design”, “many design models”, “expert design processes” and “good designers do X.”

The student’s final Dear Design postcard was their “Ideal Design Signature”, a representation of the way they hope their design processes will look in the future.

** This work is a continuation of Cindy Atman’s research on design process expertise (see, *Design Timelines: Concrete & Sticky Representations of Design Process Expertise*). For more information please contact Cindy Atman at atman@uw.edu.
Ideal Design Signatures

Student samples of ideal design signature postcards
Dear Design,

Week 9

Title: My Ideal Process

The design: A visual representation of my ideal design process.

How to read:
Each color represents a different design process activity.
The size of the shape shows the amount of time spent. Arrows on the bottom show iteration.

- Problem definition
- Gathering info
- Modeling/action
- Generating ideas
- Evaluate

Cindy Atman
Human Centered Design + Engr.
University of Washington
Seattle, WA

Megan, Autumn 2020
Dear Design,

Title: My Design Signature

The Design: Visualizing my own ideal design process

How to Read: From left to right, top to bottom, each hexagon represents a design step.

Problem Definition
Gather Information
Generate ideas

Model - Iterate
Evaluate
Test

Cindy Atman
Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105

April, Autumn 2020
Dear Design
Week 9

[My Design Signature]

The Design:
I combined elements of the Ideal project envelope, Complex linear model and the HCD design process model. These elements are shown both in the shape of my design signature and the steps in the process.

How to Read:
- Timeline: Left to Right
- The arrows show the process is cyclical

Accept  Prototype
Research  Evaluate
(Re)Define  Implement
Ideate   Reflect

Cindy Atmos, Khadija Jodan, Kathryn Sheyer
Human-Centered Design Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA

Dana, Autumn 2020
Dear Design,

Title: The Ideal Design Protein

The Design: A molecular representation of an ideal design process

How to Read:

- Each ‘atom’ represents a different category of design activities:
  - Planning next steps
  - Research, Problem defining
  - Evaluation of product and process
  - Big and small decision making
  - Making, building, creating

The double helix and spiral structure represents the iterative nature of the design process!

Cindy Atman
Human Centered Design + Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105

Khadijah Jordan, Autumn 2020
Dear Design,

This design signature is an abstract representation of an ideal design signature, based on Cindy Atman’s design timelines. The overall shape resembles the IDEAS PROJECT ENVELOPE and different colors represent different design activities. The pointillist nature of the signature represents the great diversity of many transitions between, and blurred lines between design activities.

Cindy Atman & Kathryn Shoyer
Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA

Jordan Yoon-Buck, Winter 2020
Dear Design,

This is my design awareness aid.

How to read:

- \[ \text{\textbullet} \] = different processes

Izzy Armstrong, Winter 2020
Dear Design - Week 9: Your Ideal "Design Signature"

Title: My design signature (design awareness memory aid)

How to Read:

This is my design compass & process order

1. Identify problem/need
2. Gather information
3. Planning
4. Ideate
5. Make prototype
6. Evaluate
7. Make decisions
8. Revise

However, the needle can move & adjust directions as you move through the process.

Rachel Lee, Winter 2020
Dear Design,

[Week 9]

TITLE: DESIGN SIGNATURE

KEY:

- brainstorm
- ask questions
- think out loud
- gathering info
- review
- edit & modify

Vy, Spring 2020

Cindy Atman
MODE

Preble University of WA

Seattle, WA
Dear Design - Week 10

My ideal "design signature"

How to read it:

From left to right, each bubble represents a step in my design process. I hope that as I go on, my process will become more streamlined and unique to me, with outside influence (the extra bubbles on the sides).

Sincerely,

Cindy Arman + Kathrin Shroder

HDE, University of Washington

Seattle, WA
dear design,

signature:

problem?
Ideas?
Test?
Redesign
Restart

Cindy Atman
H.C.D.E.
University of WA
Seattle, WA

Anonymous, Spring 2020
Dear Design,

Week 9

Title: My design journey

The Design: Design Signature

Empathy: Focusing on user needs, wants, pain points
Define: Understand and define the problem scope
Ideate: Brainstorm solutions and weigh the pros and cons of each
Prototype: Converting ideas into design
Test: Gain feedback and iterate your work.

*Length of each slot resembles the time consumed in each slot.
The number of peaks, resemble the hurdles encountered in the process.

Nisha, Autumn 2020
Dear Design,

Week 9: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question: In which steps can I think less?

How to read:

# = more thinking

# = less thinking

Problem Definition

Gather Ideas
Generate Ideas
Making prototypes
Evaluating Ideas
Implementing Ideas

Will Crisando Sanchez, Winter 2022

Dear Design

Human Centered Design + Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105
Dear Design

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:
How did I explore my design awareness?

How to Read:
- Findings/Practices
- Me digging
- Inspirations
- My design awareness
- Questions Met
- and design processes
- Obstacles
- Thoughts/Design Awareness

Dear Design

Human Centered Design and Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA, 98105

Mingyue Weng
Dear Design,

Ideal Design Signature

In this postcard, I am asking you to help me understand and be aware of my design skills and how they can be improved. This postcard is an abstract representation of my design process and serves as a reminder for myself.

From left to right, the growing tree represents a design project as it progresses. The increased intensity of the water source over time signifies the need for more effort, engagement, and involvement throughout the project.

This postcard reminds me to stay committed to my work, even when it is hard.

Mileena Ros

Mileena, Winter 2022
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:
How can I be more intentional about my process?

How to Read:

- Being Mindful about my process
- Striking a Balance in different phases of design process
- Positive vibes
- Reflecting on my process
- Time

Dear Design
Human Centered Design & Engineering
Univ. of Washington
Seattle WA 98105

Lubna Razaq
DEAR DESIGN
DESIGN INSPIRATIONS
FINAL DESIGN SIGNATURE

HOW TO READ

This is a blind contour drawing I made of myself. It represents the unpredictability of the creative process, but it also speaks to the unique joy of embracing ambiguity.

I contrast this with a soft background reminiscent of a summer sunset. Despite the ambiguity, I'd like my process to smoothly envelope from one stratum to the next like the sky approaching dusk.

There is no particular way to read this postcard. If you'd like, you can interpret the work from top to bottom as a timeline of my design journey, or you can view it holistically as a landscape of my creative process.

JULIAN BODY
HUMAN CENTERED DES. & ENG.
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE, WA 98105

Julian, Winter 2022
Dear Design,
Week 9: Ideal Design Signature
Design Awareness Question: How do I incorporate my values into my design process?
How to Read:

Hearts = grounding?

.springframework I will ask myself

♥ = is it meaningful to me?

♥ = does it follow the humane design principles?

Kayla Chea, Winter 2022
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design: Signifies
How do I want personal meaning & signifiers to manifest in the product?

How to read:

1. Project Face
2. Project Size
3. Project Significance
4. Project Significance
5. Project Significance
6. Project Significance
7. Project Significance
8. Project Significance

Size = impact

Project Significance

Eileen Zhang Winter 2022

Human Centered Design Studio
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105

Human Centered Design Studio
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question: What are the guiding principles of my design process?

How to Read

1. Values: personal values
2. Inspiration
3. Creative thinking
4. Action
5. Evaluation: lines simulate quality; frequency of feedback
6. Inspiration: lines represent interconnected nature of finding inspiration

Creative thought: bright colors to stimulate the stimulation of the mind

Action: shapes and colors in a pattern to show the intentional declaration making of the design

IB, Winter 2022

Human-Centered Design & Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105
Dear Design

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:

Am I incorporating my design influences in a drawn out plan for ideas to come?

How to Read:

Each color represents potential influences that are to be included throughout my in-depth problem solving process.

Ex.

- Orange = Stakeholders
- Purple = Sustainability
- Green = Ethicality
- Red = Family

Christian Ramos

Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105

Christian Ramos, Winter 2022
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question: How do internal and external inspiration affect my design process?

How to read:
- wave: timeline of the design process
- sky: external inspirations
- raindrops: the external inspirations that affect my design process
- ocean: internal inspirations
- seaweed: the internal inspirations that affect my design process

Yours truly,
Christina Kuo

Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle WA, 98105

Christina Yu-Lin Kuo, Winter 2022
Dear Design,

This makes total design sense.

The mountain range represents the mysteries, the alpine boss heartstrings, and the river my algorithm mode practices.

The bands of light in the sky repeat the hills of wear, and the clouds the many different design signals of use.

The whole landscape—home—represents living true to myself.

It’s a whole world.

Alainna Brennan Brown, Winter 2022

Dear Design

Human-Centered Design Lab

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105
3/09/2022

Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness:
- Mindfulness/Reflection, Planning, Distractions

How to read:
- Blue = idea
- Green = concept
- Yellow = evaluation, implementation
- Red = size, impact, frequency, over-arch

- Black = word
- Dark blue = meaningful, "correct", reflections
- Yellow = distractions, good + bad
- Green O = "easy"

Human Centered Design + Eng.
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105

Anika Mishra
DEAR DESIGN,
TITL: Initial Design: Signature
DESIGN AWARENESS QUESTION: How often does design and my thought process diverge in the iterative design?

HOW TO READ:
The changing and converging lines indicate an iterative design process. The colors represent mine and my team/stakeholders' thoughts or decisions in that design stage.
- Me — Collaborators
  - Research
  - Ideate
  - Prototype
  - Evaluate
  - Produce

[Signature]
Human-Centered Design + Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA

Aishwarya, Winter 2022
Dear Design,

Title: Landscape Design

Design brief: Landscape Design

How to Read: For additional information, please refer to the guidelines provided on the back cover.

Thank you,

Petrina Chan

Petrina Chan

Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105
Dear Design

**Week 9: Ideal Design Signature**

**Design Activity:** Designing an app (for a client or for fun!)

**How To Read:**

- Each line represents design stage & time taken
- The fingerprints represent my design process
- The arrangement of each line represents the structure of my design process.

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Dear Design

Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105

Pallavi Bagchi
WEEK 7: IDEAL DESIGN SIGNATURE

TITLE: GO WITH THE FLOW

HOW TO READ:

THE SWOOPING LINE IN THE BACK REPRESENTS MOVEMENT FROM PROBLEM DEFINITION TO THE END OF THE DESIGN PROCESS. I HOPE FOR MY IDEAL SIGNATURE TO NOT HAVE A DEFINITIVE PATHWAY, BUT FOR EACH STEP TO BE CLEAR AND FOR ITERATIONS TO BE INEVITABLE!
Dear [Name],

Isha A. Winter 2022

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Dear Design,

Concept working on a design... not sure no 1 gotten this far. Should we come up with an idea of what our idea is? Help on next steps.

[Signature]

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Dear Design

Human Centered Design

And Engineering Design

University of Washington

Seattle, Washington

[Signature]
Dear Design
Week 8: Ideal Design Signature
Design Awareness Question:
What's the most important elements in my design process?

How to read:
Use the pride flag as inspiration to represent different important values of the design process by different colors.

Life ——— Self-Awareness/Reflection
Healing —- Empathy & Compassion
Sunlight —- Ethics
Nature ——— Design Justice
Serenity — Design Process
Spirit ——- Constraint Mindset

Dear Design
Human Centered Design + Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle WA 98105

Hsin-Ya Hung, Winter 2022
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:
what do I value the most in my design process?

How to Read:
Each color represents a different part of my design process.
The length of each line represents the time spent on each phase.

Dear Design

Human Centered Design + Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle WA, 98105
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature
Design Awareness Question: What design stage do I spend the most time on?

How to Read:
The number of snowflakes is the amount of time invested into the design stage.

Layer by layer:

Empathize
Define
Ideate
Prototype
Test

Anonymous, Winter 2022
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:
How does allocation of time to different parts of the design process affect the final product?

How to Read:
- The line in the middle is a representation of multiple design processes in the form of "expert design," each sequence is slightly different to show how design processes are different.
- Pictures around the postcard represent steps of the process and important design aspects.

Alex, Winter 2022
Dont forget to put on your design hat(s)

Ideal Design Signature

Models help us make sense of the world's complexity. Design is complex, there are a number of models for various stages of design process. Different models require different things. It's important to use different models to see situations more clearly.

In my personal work, hats = lenses. A model for seeing the world. It's a reminder to try different lenses and explore different aspects of design.

- Models for making sense of the world
- Ideal as a model
- wearer = the hat + the hat + the hat
- hat = double diamond
- hat = design model
- hat = how it works
- hat = human model
- hat = hat

Kathryn, Spring 2022
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

My ideal design signature has a convergent, cascade shape. It includes a nod to the concept of the wave/particle duality. In a design process it is important to be both fluid/open and concrete/decisive, with an interplay of the two.

key: 
- WAVE: open to input; gather information, ideate, evaluate
- PARTICLE: decisive/daring; model, prototype, implement
- SHAPE: cascade, convergent; ideal project envelope

Cindy Atman, 2022