DESIGN GRADUATES IN TRANSITION:

EARLY CAREER LEARNING IN THE DESIGN AGENCY

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PhD Thesis

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own.

Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

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Juliet and Kay – thank you for all the years of encouragement, the endless

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this thesis is on design graduates as they transition from higher education into the design industry, specifically in relation to their early career learning and development within the design agency setting. Previous research has focused on graduate employability and how higher education prepares students for the world of work; however, there are considerable gaps in how graduates' early career learning occurs in the United Kingdom's (UK) design industry. Furthermore, research has not taken into consideration the complex role that internships play in graduate transition into the design industry. By identifying the process of transition and early career learning that occurs for design graduates, this thesis investigates how design agencies can facilitate, support, and develop workplace learning. Using case studies, it is shown that graduates benefit from learning in design agencies that provide clear expectations and support to assist their development. The research highlighted that graduates often struggle with transition and use internships as opportunities for learning and career progression. These outcomes have provided the design industry and higher education with opportunities to consider the decisions they make about graduate learning. Significantly, the thesis illuminates the complexity involved in graduate transition and early career learning in design agencies. As a result, an approach for developing work-based learning has been recognised to aid early career roles in the design industry.

CONTENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CCS	Creative and Cultural Skills
CEMP	Centre for Excellence in Media Practice
CHEAD	Council for Higher Education in Art and Design
D&AD	Design and Art Direction
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media, and Sport
DLHE	Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education
FE	Further Educaiton
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HECSU	Higher Education Careers Services Unit
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HR	Human Resources
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
LAMDA	London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art
LCC	London College of Communication
OECD	Organisation for Economice Cooperation and Development
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PDR	Performance and Development Review
Q&A	Question and Answer
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
RQF	Regulated Qualifications Framework
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathmatics
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UK	United Kingdom
UKRIO	UK Research Integrity Office
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum

THESIS STRUCTURE

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter One introduces the thesis and why the research was undertaken. Emerging from a personal perspective from working in design agencies, the process of graduate transition from higher education to early career learning emerged as an area that required further investigation. Identifying that graduate transition is hard and often difficult provided context in developing the rationale for the thesis. A substantial amount of research has focused on how learning takes place in the workplace; however, it was identified that there appeared to be a relatively small amount of research specifically on design graduates' transition into the design industry and how learning occurs in the design agency. The identification of the stakeholders is outlined, along with the research setting. The chapter concludes with the aims, objectives and research questions that frame the thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review covers three specific areas relevant to design graduate transition. First, *myths* focuses on the misunderstanding that surrounds design higher education, specifically voiced by the design industry. Here, I explore three key areas that receive criticism from within the design industry and examine whether these views are based on reality or preconceived ideas. Second, *communities* analyses how learning occurs in the early career roles of graduates, focusing on how workplace environment learning occurs and how this could help provide pragmatic benefits to the design agency. The concept of 'the workshop' emerges as a tool for learning in such an environment. Finally, *transition* focuses directly on the graduate and the concept of the 'graduate paradox' and the emergence of the 'place in-between', which examines early career development and the challenges of transition from higher education into the design industry.

Chapter Three: Exploratory Research

This chapter focuses the exploratory research that was used to gain insight into graduate transition, internships, and early career learning from the perspective of the three stakeholders of this research. Using semi-structured interviews, participants across the three stakeholder groups (graduates, design agencies, and higher education) were interviewed using semi-structured interviews to develop an understanding of each stakeholders view point on: graduates in the design

agency, graduates experience of transition from higher education into the design industry, and how higher education prepares graduates for the design industry. The exploratory research was undertaken alongside the literature review, and the key recommendations have directly informed the approach of the proposed the research chapter of this thesis.

Chapter Four: Methodology

The methodology chapter outlines the research approach, methods, and the participants. The chapter begins with the overarching approach to the research, drawing on both the *literature review* and the *exploratory research*. The research was framed by the aims, objectives and research questions outlined in the *introduction.* The research focused on the design agencies and the graduates experiences and their views on the world, as well as the shared place of experience – the design agency as the workplace. Case studies were devised to gain a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed in situations such as the workplace. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews over an eight-month period. This chapter covers the approach to research methods, data collection, interview and question development, participants, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Five: Findings and Discussion

The *findings and discussion* chapter covers both the research data findings and the analysis of the data with relation to the aims, objectives and research questions that define the thesis. Due to the extensive scope of the chapter, it is divided into three core areas that reflect the literature review. The three sections are: *myths*, *communities*, and *transition*; in each section key themes are explored in relation to the graduates' transition and early career learning in design agencies. *Myths* provides an understanding of graduates and design agencies perspectives on the current state of design education, particularly in relation to graduate learning, transition, and early career learning. *Communities* focused on how learning is initiated in design agency communities, what methods were used, and how graduates responded to this. Learning structures that exist in the design agency and the impact on graduate learning were also examined. *Transition* explored the graduates' journey between higher education and their early career roles, particularly around strategies and opportunities that can be utilised to aid the transition.

Chapter Six – Transition and the design agency as a learning community

Chapter Six draws together the findings and discussions from Chapter Five, along with referencing the literature review to provide a cohesive narrative that focuses on the key themes that emerged from the thesis. It emerged that design agencies valued higher education and were involved with institutions through a variety of engagement touchpoints. The *place in-between* was examined in relation to the impact on graduates particularly around uncertainty and the lack of community, and how this affects them as they seek employment in the design agency. The use of internships as a tool to broaden connections and develop relationships for graduates was also examined. Finally, the focus turned to the design agency as a learning community, firstly by turning to the design agency culture to examine the link between transition and early career learning in the design agency; followed by bringing together central themes to discuss the design agency as a learning community. The emergence of themes indicates areas where design agencies can frame early career learning for graduates and how the design agency can be viewed as a place of learning.

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The transition from higher education is a difficult time for graduates, as they leave higher education institutions and enter the design industry (Ball, 2002; Harvey, 2003; Holmes, 2001; Savage et al., 2009). Finding a job in the design industry is not always an easy task. There are few jobs advertised, a high number of applicants per job, and many design agencies are reluctant to employ graduates or junior designers with little or no experience (Creative and Cultural Skills (CCS), 2013b). Internships are seen as a common way of gaining experience in design agencies, and in this way, graduates can gain the experience they need to apply for the entry-level jobs available (Ball, 2002; Harvey, 2003). Frequently, internships are not paid or are underpaid, and often do not lead to permanent jobs at that design agency (CCS, 2013b; The Sutton Trust, 2014).

The overarching aim of this research was twofold: first, to identify the processes of learning that occur in the first roles for graduates in design agencies, and second, to find out how work-based learning is supported and developed by design agencies in the UK. I have worked as a senior designer and creative director for over 18 years in several design agencies in London, where I have observed graduates struggling to find their way as they faced the transition between higher education and their first roles at a design agency. Over the course of the research, I explored the two interrelated aspects of the research aims to understand why the transition period can be a difficult time for graduates joining design agencies, and what can be done to guide and assist them at this time.

For graduates who start in a design agency role in the first few months following graduation, the focus then shifts to how the transition between higher education and learning in the workplace occurs. This time can be challenging for both the graduate and the design agency, as the graduate has to adjust to the shift from university learning to the expectations of a design agency environment. The design agency must manage its own expectations of graduate capability and actively communicate its expectations. This initial process can throw up many issues, such as how work-ready a graduate is expected to be and how design agencies can help graduates develop at this early career stage. Furthermore, there appears to be an emergence of design agencies offering internships for recent graduates before employment, and the research has investigated the impact of this on both graduates and design agencies.

The research focused on three stakeholder groups: design graduates, design agencies, and higher education institutions. The approach was to explore issues arising from the design agencies and design graduates regarding what they perceived the purpose of design education to be, particularly in the context of early career learning. Alongside this, I investigated what design agencies believe higher education should be doing in terms of preparing graduates for the workplace, and whether they could be doing more to help graduate transition. Furthermore, I analysed the role higher education is taking in preparing graduates for the design industry and explored their perceived responsibilities towards graduates for life beyond higher education. Through examining the stakeholders' points of view on these issues, the research aimed to uncover any tensions that exist between higher education and the design industry over what is expected from each other. Finally, the research focused on graduates as they navigated the transition between higher education and their early career roles, and the role the design agencies play in this process.

1.2 A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

My own background as a designer has influenced this research. I have been an experienced designer working in graphic, brand and communication design agencies in London since 2002. I relocated to the UK shortly after graduating in graphic design at the higher education level in New Zealand. I experienced firsthand the challenge of finding employment as an entry-level designer in the UK design industry. My personal experience of approaching design agencies, recruitment agencies, and applying for advertised job roles has given me an invaluable understanding of the struggles and hurdles current design graduates experience when they are transitioning from higher education to the design industry.

My journey of breaking into the design industry came through a word-of-mouth recommendation, which led to my being offered a three-month internship at a large design agency in London. The internship was unpaid, but I was reimbursed for my weekly travel and had a daily lunch allowance. At the end of the internship, I was lucky enough to be offered a full-time job as a junior designer. My own path to employment in the design agency appears straightforward and uncomplicated. But the longer I have worked within the design industry, the more I realise how my progression into a paid role appeared to come about through knowing a contact in the design industry, and an element of luck.

As a design practitioner working with graduates over the last decade, I have seen design agencies take on several roles with design graduates. These include advising and mentoring, facilitating work placements for undergraduates, and providing internships for graduates and junior designer jobs. I heard from graduates about the issues they faced as they transitioned from higher education to the design industry. For me, this highlighted the difficulties of the navigation process and the multiple barriers they faced.

I have observed that internships have become a more typical way of entering the design industry for graduates. Yet, more often than not, these graduates are not employed at the end of the internship, as there are no available junior designer roles within the design agency. In many of the mid-to-large agencies I have worked in, most design job openings were for more experienced and senior designers, as they are able to 'hit the ground running' and get on with the job. This leaves design graduates with the problem of how to get a job if no one is willing to take them on without experience, when they cannot get experience without a job – *the graduate paradox*.

This has led me to develop my interest in the transition between higher education and the design industry. I undertook an MA in Design Education at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2010. During my postgraduate study, I explored the issues that graduates face when entering the design industry. By focusing on how learning can take place in the workplace setting, I investigated how this could benefit graduates when they start their first jobs in a design agency. It became apparent that there was little structured thought about this process in many circumstances, and that graduates found this transition between higher education and working difficult to navigate. Therefore, the research undertaken in this PhD thesis is a natural extension of the outcomes of my MA dissertation.

1.3 RATIONALE

Graduate transition is hard (Harvey, 2003), and this research aimed to discern and determine why it is hard, what the barriers are, and the areas that assist the process. Higher education institutions are aware of these transition difficulties and have made considerable efforts to implement employability skills, entrepreneurship skills, and business awareness into the curriculum (Ball, 2003). Higher Education in the UK are expected to adhere to the subject benchmarks to ensure academic standards are met; for Art and Design, these include the benchmark standards which inform higher education providers of the minimum standard of learning for graduates (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), 2017); however, there is no formal requirement for design agencies to support graduate learning in their workplaces. While some design agencies are actively involved in early career development for graduates, there is unfortunately a large proportion of those who are uncertain of how to approach this or are simply unwilling to take on graduates and early workplace learning (CCS, 2013b).

In their research on higher education engagement, Clews and Mallinder (2010) concluded "It is particularly important that creative industry businesses, organisations and individuals are encouraged to participate in workforce development." (p. 82). This area of engagement brings into focus what currently occurs in design agencies and what more could be done to assist and mentor design graduates and early career designers, particularly through workplace learning. Internships are often used for early career learning in creative industries; however, the lack of regulations surrounding them and how they appear to be a major factor in leading to employment is concerning (Lawton & Potter, 2010; The Sutton Trust, 2014). Other industries, such as engineering, provide a clear purpose for internship placements and focused internship learning and professional knowledge development (Lowden et al., 2011), both of which design agency interns could benefit from. In the last few years, internships have featured heavily in mainstream media outlets (Coughlan, 2017; *The Guardian*, 2016), mainly due to issues around social mobility and lack of regulations. However, there is little research on how learning could be structured in internships. From my background research, there appears to be little (or no) research looking specifically at internships within design agencies and how workplace learning could be enhanced.

There has been a large amount of research undertaken on graduate employability; however, this has tended to focus on graduates as a whole group and is generally not subject-specific. Harvey (2003), Holmes (2001), Lowden et al. (2011), and Savage et al. (2009) have all taken an in-depth look

at what graduate employability is, how higher education has prepared them for the workplace, and employers' expectations of them. These are undeniably useful and provide rich information; however, they focus on the process in general rather than specifically in the design industry.

There also appears to be a relatively small amount of research done specifically on design graduates' transition into the design industry. There has been a smaller amount of research on design graduates, such as a recent study by CCS (2013b), which focused on how young people enter the design industry; however, the focus was predominantly on what path they take to employment. Ball (2002) has also looked at how higher education prepares design graduates for work. Further studies have focused on where design graduates end up in terms of career, such as Kimbell et al. (1998) "Design Skills for Work", Ball (2003) "Future Directions for Employability Research in the Creative Industries" and Ball et al. (2010) "Creative Career Stories". However, specifically looking at design graduates' transition into the commercial design agency sector of the UK appears to be lacking in academic research; the importance of this can bring together areas such as design graduate career paths, workplace learning, and transition into the design industry.

Ball (2003) noted, "there is clearly a need for further qualitative and quantitative research that informs us about the graduate experience, particularly in that crucial period shortly after graduation." (p. 24). Ball (2003) goes on to say that by gathering data for two years after graduation, they can show a better picture of what can be achieved in terms of the career paths for graduates as they navigate the design industry. It could also provide a clearer picture of other issues that have an impact on graduates in transition, such as debt and loss of confidence and motivation.

A substantial amount of research has focused on how learning takes place; specifically, this research focused on learning that occurs through practice, workplace learning, community learning, and experiential learning. Within these areas are several leading figures, such as Argyris & Schön (1974), Boud (2006), Ellström (2006), Eraut (2002), Kolb (1984), and Schön (1983). However, Boud (2006) states that there has been "relatively little research on everyday learning as viewed by workers" (p. 160). When he undertook a study of workers (not within the creative industries) in an employment situation, the observations were monitored and recorded over a two-year period due in part to the fact that research into workplace models of informal learning involving implicit or explicit learning takes place over a long time. Therefore, to ensure a meaningful reflection of graduates' transition, the research would have ideally tracked graduates in transition for at least the first year,

ideally up to two years, out of higher education to understand what other factors could be involved, such as building sustainable careers. However, this was not a longitudinal research study, and the timings were adapted for a shorter timeframe due to PhD course constraints.

It appears the study of work-based learning in design agencies is limited; however, research has covered this subject in other work areas, such as Collin's ethnographic study of design engineers and product developers, which aimed to "describe and understand, how and what workers, and especially designers, learn at work" (Collin, 2008, p. 12), in particular concerning how design thinking is utilised in the environment. This indicates that when a workplace uses design thinking, formal education can be viewed as the first stage in acquiring knowledge, which then should build up over an individual's working life. Nilsson (2010) also argues that higher education cannot always prepare students for the workplace, and many programmes are a "foundation for further development and lifelong learning in the world of work" (p. 1). Nilsson (2010) notes that other factors, such as previous experience and social networking, have become important in gaining a job, not only qualifications from higher education. This highlights an aspect of transition for further research in a design industry that relies heavily on informal and social networks.

The design industry has one of the highest proportions of university degree graduates working within it (Clews & Mallinder, 2010), yet it is one of the least regulated industries in terms of both educational achievements in practice and professional development (Julier, 2010). It also has "a tendency for design practitioners to 'learn on the job' rather than via formal training" (CCS, 2013b, p. 10). Alongside that, "Another characteristic of the UK design industry is the lack of any central, representative organisation." (Design Council & CCS, 2007, p. 15). These factors highlight an industry that has no standard procedures or prerequisites to measure against in terms of continued professional development. Sectors such as architecture or landscape design have a structured set of professional regulations that continue post-education and into their working careers. However, most of the time, design graduates are simply expected to 'learn on the job'. This area is of particular concern within this research: to be able to understand how design agencies help scaffold design graduates' work-based learning within the design industry to the advancement of their careers.

The Design Skills Advisory Panel set out to start providing a framework for skills development in the design industry, by stating, "The objective of the Design Blueprint is to engage with partners in

government, education and industry to secure the resources needed to implement and realise the Design Industry Skills Development Plan." (Design Council, 2008, p. 5). However, this appears to not have got off the ground beyond the initial research and proposal. In the UK, there are currently no comprehensive guidelines, toolkit or support materials to guide the design agency on how they could provide a new approach/learning guidance for graduates entering the design industry.

As a result of the limited insight and support in graduate transition in the design industry, there are two intended original contributions to knowledge from this research. First, an in-depth understanding of the transition of graduates in their first roles in UK's design agencies, through identifying how their learning is supported and developed in the workplace. Second, by gaining an understanding of how graduates transition from higher education into design agencies, and whether this has been defined by internships before employment.

These outcomes could prompt further research, such as the development of a new approach for design agencies to help scaffold and initiate learning in the workplace for graduates, whether during internships or entry career roles.

1.4 STAKEHOLDERS AND RESEARCH SETTING

1.4.1 STAKEHOLDERS

The intended audience for this research is design agencies in the UK. The research questions are directed at design graduates and design agencies, focusing on what support and learning occur in graduates' early-career roles. The outcome of the research is a model developed for work-based learning in design agencies in the hope that this can assist with early career working practices within design agencies. This research will be of further interest to higher education institutions in the UK due to the relevance of developing a better understanding of the graduate transition from higher education into the design industry.

To frame the research for the intended audience, there are three stakeholders: design agencies, design graduates and higher education institutions in the UK. All three stakeholders are directly related to the aims of this research, and this relationship determines the findings and the outcomes of this research.

Design agencies

Design agencies are part of the wider design industry in the UK. Design agencies define themselves through the specific disciplines on which they focus their work and the clients they represent. Therefore, the scope of the work is varied and unique to each design agency. Design agencies are the leading destination for employment within the design industry (Design Council, 2010) and therefore provide an obvious route for graduates looking for their first role. In this research, design agencies will be involved by offering a graduate their first role after graduation, whether that is as an intern or an employee.

Design graduates

The second stakeholder is the design graduate. Two main points define design graduate stakeholders in this research. Firstly, they must have studied design or a design-related degree, and secondly, they will be undertaking their first role in a design agency within a year of graduation. Typically, in the UK, design degrees are three or four years in length and award a degree upon completion. There were 190,190 students in higher education undertaking a course in creative arts and design in 2020/21, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (2022). The majority of these students come from the UK, with a smaller number coming from the European Union and other countries (HESA, 2022).

Higher education

Higher education plays an important role in the research through its involvement with the education of design graduates. The higher education landscape in the UK varies in terms of types of pathways and awards. These can include foundation courses, foundation degrees, undergraduate degrees, and postgraduate degrees. In some situations, tensions exist between higher education and the design industry regarding where the responsibility lies for preparing graduates for the workplace.

1.4.2 RESEARCH SETTING

The physical setting for this research will focus on design agencies and what occurs there in relation to graduates' early career learning. Design agencies typically are found working in the commercial area of the design industry in the UK, with paying clients from other sectors, such as business, management, public sector and charities. The drive to make money is an essential element of the design agency, and this impacts aspects of how they are run, such as who is employed there. Being able to meet the clients' brief, and deliver the job on time and at a professional standard, are key drivers to a design agency's success.

Design agencies are categorised as belonging to the UK's Design Economy as defined by the Design Council (2018a). Design agencies are defined as businesses that focus on and intensively utilise the process of design. Furthermore, they predominantly employ designers at the core of their business, with non-design employees supporting the core design function. The Design Council (2010) found that 36% of all designers in the UK worked in a design consultancy. The Design Council (2010) uses several terms to describe design consultancies, including design agencies and design companies, to define what a design consultancy covers. Their definition of a design consultancy focused on the production of communication, branding, and identity, often alongside offering design strategy. The specific output of design varies; however, the core disciplines identified are predominantly graphic and digital design.

It has been acknowledged that the UK's design industry is diverse and evolving, producing a wide range of design outputs that lead to multiple descriptions of how and what designer companies do (Julier, 2010). It is not just the way design agencies describe how they work; there is also a large number of variations used to describe design businesses such as; design studios, design consultancies, design firms, design businesses, design practices, branding agencies, integrated agencies, corporate design agencies, communications agencies and communication consultancies.

This variety is recognised Julier (2010) who says this "underlines the very diversity of the design industry itself. Just as the design industry has grown, so its base has widened, spawning ever new specialisms and approaches." (p. 243). Julier (2010) found that as the design industry has grown, so have the descriptors of design practices and the definitions of what they offer. He noted that a UK design industry monitoring company identified 25 different types of subdisciplines. The more traditional disciplines such as 'branding and graphics' sit alongside design and innovation, internal communications, and other new skill sets. Julier (2010) found, though, that approximately 70% of UK design activity could be termed that of the design agency. Hence, for this study, I have ring-fenced different types of design businesses under the term 'design agency'. Although they are grouped under a single name, the output of their work in essence is typically multidisciplinary design that is seen to work across branding design, graphic design, packaging design, digital design, web design, and interaction design as their main outputs. How design agencies work internally is often different from how they present themselves externally. Design agencies are often seen by clients as multidisciplinary and fluid and, as such, able to take on jobs that often run across several disciplines. However, internally, the agencies are much more structured in terms of their core team, and they often rely on freelancers to do specific or specialist jobs on their behalf.

A leading UK design industry magazine, *Design Week*, produces an annual survey of design agencies in the UK entitled the 'Design Week Top 100'. This is a comprehensive audit of the design industry in the UK and covers areas such as the specific sector, growth, turnover and employment figures within the UK design industry. The type of design agency for the purpose of this research would not look out of place in the 'Design Week Top 100' survey, which predominantly focuses on design disciplines such as branding, print, digital, and packaging design. The design agencies that feature on 'Design Week Top 100' employ a large number of designers in the UK, with staff numbers between 6 and 555, and an average of 40 to 50 employees (*Design Week*, 2016). However, while these design agencies employ a significantly higher proportion of designers than most, the majority of design agencies in the UK employ relatively few designers. The Design Council (2010) found that almost "90% of UK design consultancies and in-house design teams employ fewer than ten designers." (p. 2). The landscape for design agencies appears to be broadly made up of small- and medium-sized businesses; however, the CCS (2013b) identified that "Young people are more typically employed within large design firms." (p. 20), indicating the possibility of graduates finding early-career employment within larger design agencies.

It has been acknowledged by Julier (2010) that regardless of how we try to describe a typical, normal, or standard design agency, it is almost impossible to do so. As already noted, design agencies work under a multitude of title descriptors for their business, undertake a variety of multidisciplinary work, and employ a diverse number of people within them, from small (under five employees) to extremely large (over 100 employees). There is no one definitive descriptor for a design agency, so this research will focus on the broad definition of a design agency, as it appears that the design industry is, as Julier (2010) describes, "an industry that sits on the edges of professional normative structures." (p. 247).

While this may appear to be a large playing field for this research, I believe this is an accurate representation of the design industry today, and as such, one that a design graduate who is hoping to enter upon graduation will transition into. Many internships and entry career roles are to be found in larger agencies where there is more internal structural support for doing so. It could also shed light on how different-size agencies approach internships and entry-level career roles.

1.5 AIMS, OBJECTIVES, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research focuses on design graduates as they attempt to enter the design industry after they graduate from higher education. The aims, objectives and research questions focus on specific areas of this navigation and transition, of which the outcomes are directed toward design agencies in the UK.

Aims

- To identify the processes of learning that occur in the first roles for graduates in design agencies.

- To investigate how design agencies support and develop work-based learning.

Research questions

RQ1 What determines graduates' transition from higher education into design agencies from the graduate's perspective and understanding?

RQ2 Is graduate transition becoming defined by internships before employment?

RQ3 How could learning be structured, supported, and developed specifically for internships based in design agencies?

RQ4 How does learning currently occur in the design agency for graduates, and how is it supported and developed?

RQ5 How can design agencies facilitate, support, and develop workplace learning and early career development for recent design graduates?

RQ6 In turn, how can this influence and develop a model for work-based learning in design agencies that can help them scaffold and initiate learning in the workplace for graduates, whether during internships or entry career roles?

Objectives that frame the methodology

- To determine the phases of transition from university to the first role as a graduate.

- To examine how graduates learn in the design agency workplace, including formal accreditation schemes.

- To determine whether the first roles for graduates are defined and/or led by internships.

- To discern the skill set expectations of a design agency.

- To develop a model for work-based learning in design agencies that responds to existing internships and junior designer working practices.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review chapter consists of three interrelated sections: *myths*, *communities*, and *transition*. The sections draw directly on literature that informs the aims, objectives, and research questions by focusing on learning that occurs at higher education institutions and in the design agency, as well as the impact of transition on graduates.

Myths focuses on the how and why the myths that surround design higher education have emerged in the UK. Using Barthes' (1993) work *Mythologies* provides insight into how the perceptions of higher education can be blurred by popular opinion and preconceived ideas, particularly within the design industry. By identifying myths that emerge through popular rhetoric, three key areas have been developed: *requirements, reputation,* and *knowledge*. Each area is then considered using academic text, government reports, and research specific to the myths that emerged. Evidence indicates that several common assumptions of the higher education landscape in the UK are not only incorrect, but continue to be perpetuated by people involved in the design industry.

Communities turns the discussion to learning in the workplace. By analysing key theories about learning through practice and work-based learning, key elements are identified and applied to learning in design agencies, in particular for graduates who may need extra support and guidance as they transition into the workplace. Our attention then turns to existing models of learning in the workplace, focusing on apprenticeships and professional development. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of these models in relation to graduates and design agencies, the concept of *the workshop* emerges as a place of learning for early-career designers.

Transition explores the concept of graduate transition, paying particular attention to the physical and psychological well-being of the graduate in the time between leaving higher education and the first stages of their early career in the design industry. The focus on graduates' personal experiences in transition shows parallels to the concept of Augé's (1995) work on 'non-places'. This concept provides insight into many of the factors that are required in navigating transition, and how graduates can develop strategies that are beneficial to success in the design industry. Graduates utilise many strategies to navigate transition; however, the use of internships in design agencies appears to be a popular path into the design industry.

2.2 MYTHS

2.2.1 MYTHS AND DESIGN HIGHER EDUCATION

The first section of the literature review examines the myths that surround design as a subject taught by higher education, and how these can undermine how higher education is perceived. By focusing on several key areas that emerge from and around the design industry through day-to-day discussion, industry events, publications, informal opinion and media outlets, a range of myths surrounding design higher education emerged, and these were analysed.

Myth creation

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2020), there are several meanings for the word 'myth': a traditional story, an untrue but widely spread story that misrepresents the truth, something that exaggerates the truth, and a legend or phenomenon. However, the myths that appear to surround higher education in the media and within the design industry can be contextualised through the framework of Barthes's (1993) work on myths, particularly ones that emerge through popular cultural references, particularly through media and advertising. Comparing the myths that surround higher education alongside Barthes' (1993) work on myths can provide insight into how this influences graduate transition and early career learning in design agencies.

Barthes's (1993) work is grounded in semiotics, defined as the study of signs, drawing on the work of Saussure, a major figure in the field of semiotics. Saussure (2011) looked at the emergence of the sign and the significance of linguistics, for he saw language as a system of signs. Through this work, the concepts of 'signifier' and 'signified' emerged (Saussure, 2011). Barthes (1993) expanded on this definition, identifying that myths go beyond language and consist of layered meanings that exist in all forms of communication. Myths are formed through the 'signifier' (the object) and the 'signified' (the meaning), which in turn equals the 'sign' (how we interpret the combination of the signifier and the signified) (Barthes, 1993, p. 115). Robinson (2011) suggests that Barthes' development of the signifier and signified goes further than Saussure, stating that:

> "The signifier is the image used to stand for something else, while the signified is what it stands for (a real thing or, in a stricter reading, a sense-impression)... Every act is at once an act (signified) and a sign of itself (signifier). It becomes hard to unpack the act from its meaning." (para. 6)

Barthes (1993), in his book on semiotics *Mythologies*, defined myths as 'a type of speech' and as such, myths are created through communication. Barthes (1993) observed that communication covers all forms of messaging within society, including written material, photography, theatre, cinema, publicity, marketing, and more. Due to this variety of communication forms, Barthes developed several guiding 'principle figures' of myth, which essentially are ways that myths can manifest. Barthes (1993) lists seven 'principle figures' of myth, which he says are "a set of fixed, regulated, insistent figures, according to which the varied forms of the mythical signifier arrange themselves" (p. 150). These are 'the inoculation', 'the privation of history', 'identification', 'tautology', 'neither-norism', 'the quantification of quality', and 'the statement of fact'. These figures provide explanations of the techniques used to create myths through making statements without rigorous scrutiny and verification. All of these figures can be understood as signifiers in the myths identified in this research about higher education, for example, 'the privation of history', in which many myths are created without considering the origin and important points of development, seeing only what is currently happening without understanding the past. This figure could be applied to people in the design industry who are unable to grasp why situations have occurred, such as a change in government policy, which affects decisions within higher education. Furthermore, the figure of 'neither-norism' is the idea that "consists of stating two opposites and balancing the one by the other so as to reject them both" (Barthes, 1993, p. 153). Within parts of the design industry and the wider media, some voices argue that design education needs to change, yet they often fail to offer a solution or act, meaning a protracted standoff that provides no way forward. And finally, 'the statement of fact', which is offered without explanation and is taken as a given truth. This often occurs when people of influence make bold statements, and in turn, these are taken at face value, without being justified by research.

The use of Barthes's definition of myths in this research does not imply that their creator creates myths out of hatred, prejudice, or spite; rather, they are simply taken at face value by an audience who does not question further what the truth is. Once myths are embedded in forms of communication, it is often hard to define what the reality is and how these impact higher education, design educators, and graduates. Many of the myths that surround design higher education purport to state the facts, yet these can be challenged by research. This research aims to go beyond communication sources such as news, magazines, and social media by assessing myths for substance and validity. By taking a rigorous approach to uncovering the meaning behind the signs, the clarification of myths can be uncovered.

Many myths about design higher education have emerged primarily from sources in and around the design industry, through multiple channels of communication; whether this is printed, online, blogs, social media, industry-related events and beyond. In this context, information received is often accepted as reality. There are many articles, reports and opinions in both design industry-specific and mainstream communications, which make claims about 'what is wrong' with design higher education. Furthermore, once accepted and circulated amongst peers, such opinion can develop into what Berger and Luckmann (1991) call 'social construction of reality' – when personal and social opinions become accepted as truth. Berger and Luckmann's (1991) work on knowledge within society is relevant, as they ask, "What is real? How is one to know?" (p. 13), which they base on the ideas of 'reality' and 'knowledge'. In this context of myths, knowledge may be viewed as truth, and therefore accepted as reality.

Using Barthes's (1993) theory, it is possible to interpret how myths are created about design in higher education by identifying key areas around graduates, lecturers, course content and higher education institutions. This is influenced by multiple areas, such as changes in national and global economic factors (economic uncertainty, rise of emerging markets), time and history (often commentators went through their education at a different time from today's graduates and have a different experience of higher education and transition), higher graduate numbers (skilled workforce, more competition), design industry evolution (the need for new and evolving skills) and government policies (university fees, funding cuts). Origins of myths include but are not limited to design industry publications (such as *Design Week, Creative Review*), online design industry websites (such as Dezeen, Design Observer, It's Nice That), design industry organisations (such as D&AD, Design Council, CCS), and national news media with contributions coming from design commentators, figureheads in the design community, and designers themselves. The UK design industry (including agencies, individual designers, and design organisations) is often vocal about the shortcomings of the design higher education sector. Many of the myths listed on the following pages come directly from the design industry via design blogs, forums, design publications, and design talks and events. It is in this environment that what Berger and Luckmann (1991) call 'social distribution of knowledge' plays out, for within the design industry a certain type of 'reality' and 'knowledge' exists, constructing a frame for looking at their own industry. Often, these are opinion pieces and claims based on social knowledge.

Focusing on a series of myths that have emerged from the above sources, particularly in and around the design industry, through identifying themes in articles, opinion columns, comments, and blog posts, will pinpoint areas of discontent surrounding design education, teaching, and graduates. These views will be challenged by an investigation of a wide variety of sources, such as academic studies, government reports and design media, to examine the underlying meaning through the work of Barthes's definitions of signified and signifier. Through structuring the myths into three distinct areas, *requirements, reputation,* and *knowledge*, these will be examined as to why they have developed into popular rhetoric. *Requirements* focuses on how early-career designers enter the design industry. *Reputation* focuses on how design higher education, in particular universities, is perceived by the design industry. Lastly, *knowledge* looks at teaching and learning in higher education, particularly in design degree courses.

Areas of myth creation identified through research

Requirements

- To work in design, you do not need a design degree
- There are too many undergraduates in design courses

Reputation

- Design education is unfit for purpose or not very good
- Design education in the UK is getting worse

Knowledge

- Design lecturers do not engage with the design industry
- Design education does not provide employability skills
- Design education does not teach the right skills for the design industry

A wide range of research and literature has been examined about the design industry, design education, pedagogy, careers and employability, and government policy concerning the myths surrounding higher education. These include the UK Government (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS), 2015), think tanks Nesta (Bakhshi et al., 2017), official statistical organisations (Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), 2021), (Office of National Statistics [ONS], 2017), educational organisations, design and cultural organisations (Design Council, 2018a; Design Council, 2018b), a range of academic reports, alongside a range of design media, writers and commentators. However, the key texts I will draw on are a series of reports that were researched

and written by Clews and Mallinder on behalf of the Art Design Media Subject Centre (ADM-HEA), along with the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS). These papers are important to this research as their focus is on the misunderstanding of design education by the wider art and design industries and the UK government. Through analysis of the data in these reports, it can be argued that the myths identified through research are assumptions rather than the truth.

The 'Looking Out' series of reports consists of a lead report and four supplementary reports forming an extensive review of design education in the UK. The reports focus on the core theme of engagement between art, design, and media higher education and the creative industries. The strategy report by DCMS (2008) 'Creative Britain: New Talents for a New Economy' motivated the research behind the 'Looking Out' series; the report highlighted the growth of the creative industries in the UK and the importance of its role in developing the economy of the UK. It also identified that to create and maintain the UK's standing as a creative leader, there must be a strategy in place to nurture talent through education, from the grassroots up. However, the most notable key outcome was a call to action to "support a challenge to industry and academia to build ever-stronger links in the interests of bridging gaps in skills provision." (DCMS, 2008, p. 8).

'Looking Out: Effective Engagements with Creative and Cultural Enterprise – Key Report' challenges the "popular view that there are low levels of engagement between art, design and media higher education schools, colleges, and faculties on the one hand […] and creative and cultural businesses, organisations, and individuals on the other." (Clews & Mallinder, 2010, p. 3). Clews and Mallinder (2010) claimed that the view that higher education and the practitioners who work within it are isolated and out of touch with creative industries is misplaced. Furthermore, they found that this particular group reaches out extensively to creative industries to form links and provide their students with industry experience.

Clews and Mallinder (2010) asserted that policy initiatives by the government and the design sector have been based not on research, but opinion. There is further evidence that myths perpetuate in the creative industries, which the reports challenge. They established that "even a cursory review has shown that this view, that there are low levels of engagement, is far from realistic." (Clews & Mallinder, 2010, p. 3). The 'Looking Out' series focuses on evidence-based research that includes a wide-ranging literature review, surveys of over 75 higher education institutions, over 230 teacher/practitioner surveys, ten semi-structured group interviews with over 120 participants, and

case studies across the arts higher education and creative industry. Not only does this series focus on engagement between the arts higher education and the creative industry organisations, businesses, and individuals, it also recognises the wider picture surrounding art, design and media higher education and its implications. This includes the history and development of arts, design and media education in the UK; the rise of the creative industries and the implications for the government, creative industry and higher education institutions; student population and numbers who undertake art, design and media higher education; learning and teaching within creative higher education; the issue of vocational training versus academic rigour; how successive governments have shaped policy around art, design and media higher education; ideas for a new way of developing higher education and creative industries engagement and finally several in-depth case studies in 'Stepping Out' examine "how practitioners in the creative and cultural sectors engage with art, design and media education." (Clews, 2010d, p. 5).

The 'Looking Out' series of reports is used as the starting point for analysing the three areas of myth creation as they focus on the 'misunderstanding' of design education in the UK, which unpins the notion of myth creation asserted by Barthes. The reports, while forming the basis of the central idea of myths, do not address all perspectives of issues faced in design education, such as equality and diversity. Therefore, further research will be used to support areas that are not necessarily addressed in the reports.

2.2.2 REQUIREMENTS

The myths in this discussion focus on the requirements surrounding entry into the design industry. These are:

- To work in design, you do not need a design degree
- There are too many undergraduates in design courses

As identified, a common theme from the design industry is that you do not need a design degree to work within the design industry. However, the landscape of design education and the design industry has changed immensely over the last two to three decades, from a previous generation that did not require design degrees to find work within the industry.

MillionPlus (2015a), Bakhshi et al. (2017) for Nesta, and the Design Council (2018b) identify the design sector as highly educated: "57. 1% of workers held a degree as their highest level of

qualification (in 2016), compared with a UK average of 34%." (p. 16). The Design Council (2022) identified that not having a degree excludes entry to people who can access university, indicating that a degree is viewed as an entry-level qualification. Furthermore, it was identified that the design sectors with the highest levels of graduates went on to work in advertising, graphic, and digital design; indicating that higher education courses lead to directly relevant roles within each specific sector; showing a clear correlation between degree subject and career projections (Design Council, 2022). There is a correlation between students studying creative subjects at the higher education level and the growth of the creative industries, indicating that the two parallel facts are related (Clews & Mallinder, 2010). Crossick (cited in Clews, 2010a) has expressed a similar view, stating that the creative economy would not exist if it were not for the higher education that feeds it.

The findings by Clews and Mallinder are similar to research undertaken by Creative and Cultural Skills (CCS, 2013b), Design Council (2018b), and Bakhshi et al. (2017) in the creative industries. The Design Council (2018b) recognised the importance of graduates in the growing design economy, with their report highlighting in "2016, there were 1.69 million people employed in design roles. This represents a growth of 6% since our last report, equivalent to 99,604 new jobs (compared to a UK average of 4% since 2014)." (p. 12). Furthermore, CCS (2013b) found that 58% of employers said that the minimum qualification they looked for was a bachelor's degree in creative sector jobs. Their research also found that employers and people entering the workforce expect that a bachelor's degree is a minimum requirement (CCS, 2013b). CCS (2013b) found that this expectation has come from both sides, "for employers because they feel this is the most appropriate route to train a young person to develop creatively, for new entrants in order to compete because 'everyone has one' " (p. 22). The CCS (2013b) research found that employers might consider alternative routes for young people; however, they found that most applicants already have degrees; therefore, this option has become irrelevant. These findings indicate that both employers and young people view degrees as the accepted pathway to entering the design industry, while other paths for entering the design industry become redundant.

The rise in design graduates filling jobs within the design industry can be seen as positive, as the benefits of a graduate workforce in the design industry are far-reaching, such as critical skills, innovation, creativity, confidence, peer learning, teamwork, intellectual learning, and theoretical frameworks (Bakhshi et al., 2017). Higher education is seen as helping provide skills and knowledge that employers value highly (Universities UK, 2018). Employers value graduates over non-graduates

for roles due to their in-depth knowledge and skills in a specific area and relevant qualifications, as well as the potential to grow into roles in the future, and their general intellectual ability and the ability to learn rapidly (BIS, 2015).

A design degree is seen as 'the standard' for employers; however, in some quarters this has led to popular rhetoric that there are now too many design graduates for the design industry. These opinions have largely come from within the design industry and are often expressed in industry magazines such as *Design Week, Creative Review,* and *Eye* magazine. The notion that there are too many graduates is often expressed, yet how they come to this conclusion is rarely spelt out, as in these comments in a *Design Week* article by Dawood (2018b):

> "The fact is that there are insufficient jobs available in the world of design – here or overseas – and colleges really ought to come clean about that. […] The net result is that quantity (of student places and degree courses) is detrimentally affecting the quality."
> (Comments section)

Design organisations are aware of this opinion being expressed, such as the joint Design Council and CCS (2007) consultation, which discovered designers vocalising their thoughts, such as "senior designers, in particular, feel that there is now an excess of courses and students, which they believe is having a detrimental effect on quality" (p. 25). The increase of popularity in studying design at the higher education level is reflected in the figures, with MillionPlus (2015a) finding there has been an increase of undergraduates studying creative subjects year on year over the last decade. There has been a levelling off in terms of students studying creative subjects; however, enrolments have remained steady across the 2019–2021 period, with some fluctuation attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic (HESA, 2022). Furthermore, as particular sectors of the design industry grown there appears to be a skill shortage in emerging areas (Design Council, 2022), therefore this indicates a potential mismatch between the number of design graduates entering the design industry, particularly around the skills they possess. However, more recently, there is growing concern that the continued decline in students studying design at A-Level will affect the supply of designers in the future (Design Council, 2018b). It is apparent that there is a proportion of people in the design industry who believe there are too many graduates, however there is a range of contributing factors to why this might be the case including an increase in graduate numbers (HESA, 2022). However, the creative industries supply a wide and diverse range of sectors and has a large proportion of graduates who are self-employed. However, this has led to a belief in the design industry that "too

many graduates are 'delivered' to a shrinking and more demanding employment environment, with inappropriate exposure to professional practice learning" (Clews & Mallinder, 2010, p. 61). Graduate outcomes for design students may contribute to the opinion that there are too many graduates; however, MillionPlus (2015a) understands that design graduates' entry into the design industry can appear haphazard compared to other sectors. Therefore, this can "lead to a perception that studying creative subjects at university is an unwise choice for potential students and that the universities which offer these courses are underperforming in respect of graduate outcomes" (p. 12). While others point to there being too many graduates for the roles available in the design industry, the Design Council (2018a) identified skill shortages across the design industries, with UK "design firms have a slightly higher level of vacancies compared to the wider UK economy" (p. 10).

It has been highlighted in numerous studies that the creative industries have been growing faster than the rest of the UK's economy (Design Council, 2022; Policy Connect, 2018; The Creative Industries, 2019). Due to this, there has been a claim that the UK needs more graduates, not fewer (Hackett et al., 2012), and that the UK economy needs better-educated citizens, not graduates trained for specific jobs (BIS, 2015). The Design Council (2018a) sees the growth of the creative sector as a significant area in the future of the UK's economy and as such, has proposed that there needs to be a better pathway for young people to enter the creative sector. The Design Council highlighted the importance of the design economy as a major employer, in "2020 there were 1.97 million people working in the design economy [...] of these 1.62 million were designers." (Design Council, 2022, p.13). Finally, The Creative Industries (2019) identifies the creative sector as employing people at a higher rate than any other industry in the UK economy. All these views point to a need and demand for more graduates to enter the design industry in the coming years.

Hackett et al. (2012) used the four indicators from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to conclude that the UK's economy points towards a need for more graduates. They found that the indicators "provide clear evidence available about whether or not there is an oversupply of graduates to the labour market" (Hackett et al., 2012, p. 19). They concluded that there is no oversupply of graduates in the labour market; however, there is a shortage of the attributes and capabilities graduates possess. BIS (2015) found graduate numbers are higher and from a more diverse background, which has fuelled the conversations around "over-education and under-employment of graduates and the erosion of the graduate premium, and this has not been helped by the challenging economic climate in recent years" p. 11). Despite this, the

Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HESCU) (2018) found that graduates are in strong demand in the UK workforce, especially as the creative sector continues to grow, saying "having experienced the strongest growth in employment figures in the last five years' with creative industries showing the largest growth in employment, rising by 25.4% between 2011–2016, when general UK employment only increased by 7.6%." (p. 27).

Harvey (2003) notes that since the universities have become 'open for all', also identified by Clews and Mallinder (2010), there have been claims of 'too many graduates'. However, Harvey (2003) looks beyond the relationship between education and employability and focuses on the reason why higher education exists in the first place, arguing that the point of higher education is not to provide graduates for specific jobs, but to provide Britain with a 'better-educated citizenry'. It is this point especially that resonates in this research, as there appears to be a conflict between higher education institutions and the design industry about the direction and purpose that higher education should take.

2.2.3 REPUTATION

The second area of *myths* focuses on the reputation of design education in the UK. These are:

- Design education is unfit for purpose or not very good
- Design education in the UK is getting worse

The opinion from some within the design industry is reinforced by their belief that graduates entering the design industry are not fit enough to work in it and higher education institutions are not teaching the 'right' skills needed. Furniss (2015) identified within the design industry that there are figureheads who believe the current university system is not working, with the view that "It is outdated, it does not reflect contemporary and evolving design practice, and it struggles to prepare or deliver the creative talent that industry needs." (p. 5). In industry publications, it is not uncommon to see designers comment on the state of design education, such as: "We take in interns (paid) and it's very rare that they have the knowledge to do the basics of the job" (*Design Week*, 2018, comments section). This leads to the general conclusion that design education is getting worse and therefore something needs to be done about it, although solutions are seldom offered. The overall effect of these opinions insinuates that design education is a waste of time in its current state. These opinions are challenging for higher education, with unsubstantiated claims appearing on opinion boards and comments sections in industry publications.

Academic research and policy documents confirm the UK's reputation for design higher education as being a world leader, both at home and internationally (Clews, 2010a; Design Council, 2018a; MillionPlus, 2015a; University Alliance and Intellectual Property Office, 2014). MillionPlus (2015a) stated "The UK has the talent and world-leading creative universities and conservatories." (p. 2); Policy Connect (2018) highlighted the UK's reputation as a world leader in design education on the international stage. Due to this, the UK draws a high level of international design students in the UK (UCAS, 2014), with the main draw being the quality of design education and its international standing as an education leader (Cox, 2005).

The last few decades have been a turbulent time for design higher education and the purpose of its role, with the growth in student numbers along with funding cuts, government policy changes, and the narrowing of the design pathway at GCSE level (Design Council, 2022). However, it has brought about positive changes that Clews identifies:

> "Today, the learning processes in Arts HE is a mix of instructive, discursive and enquiry-led learning and teaching. Students are instructed during lectures and in specialist spaces like workshops and media labs through more discursive teaching and learning." (Clews, 2010a, pp. 31–32)

Rambhoros (2011) identified that 'practitioner-teachers' can aid the transfer of knowledge by understating the workplace needs, alongside knowledge transfer, as well as bring industry links and expertise. This gives an excellent opportunity to develop links between industry and education and provide new ways of learning, with Clews (2010a) identifying that "Learning-by-doing in the studio becomes commonplace and there is increasing specialisation as students focus on roles that are needed in the emerging creative industries." (p. 37). The Design Commission (2011) recognises that the UK's design education is of high quality and identifies the connection between this and the success of the creative industries; however, they warn "If this goes unrecognised it is all the more likely to be neglected in policymaking decisions." (p. 30). For all the success of the UK's design education, both historic and current, it appears that it does not get the recognition it deserves. A joint report between the University Alliance and the Intellectual Property Office (IPO, 2014) identified and recognised that the UK design economy relies on innovative design to lead the world, and at the heart of this, cutting-edge design education is the key driver. Both the Design Commission (2011) and the University Alliance and IPO (2014) believe that to keep design education strong, innovative,

and world-leading, they need the support of the government, with the recommendation that they recognise "the key role of universities with strengths in Design and close links with industry as an important part of the Industrial Strategy and a catalyst to future success and innovation in the sector" (p. 4).

Beyond government support, MillionPlus (2015a) proposes that the design industry, as a key player in the knowledge economy, should be encouraged to help workforce development, and this must be a collaborative effort between higher education and industry. The Design Council (2018b) also suggests that if this relationship was nurtured, the UK could unlock the further potential to develop and retain its reputation for creativity and innovation. Clews and Mallinder (2010) found that people in creative industries think higher education institutions "are failing to engage effectively with individuals, businesses and organisations in the creative and cultural sectors, the wider economy and society" (p. 13). However, their research found that higher education was not only actively engaging with the creative industries, but at a very high level.

There has been a shift in higher education to approach learning through practices that are set in professional contexts and reinforce this with industry professionals who provide work-based learning opportunities (MillionPlus, 2015b). Universities understand that linking and forming relationships with industry can enhance graduate employability (MillionPlus, 2015b). Clews (2010a) also recognised this shift within design courses, finding that the workplace learning experience provides an "increasing specialisation as students focus on roles that are needed in the emerging creative industries" (p. 37).

Clews and Mallinder (2010) found there are high levels of engagement between higher education and creative industries when it came to undergraduate placements while studying; they also highlighted the need for employers to "recognise that they need to take on greater responsibility for developing graduates' professional skills in their early years of employment" (p. 49). In this area, the design industry fails to account for when they believe that design education is unfit for purpose or getting worse. Learning needs to continue beyond higher education and into the workplace. Therefore, this area of early career development requires input from the design industry, rather than falling back on claims of inadequate design education. However, the Design Council (2018a) highlighted that employers in the design industries are "more likely than average to report that

university leavers lack the required skills and competencies, as well as being more likely than average to suggest that university leavers have had a poor education." (p. 54).

A case study in the 'Looking Out' series highlighted that the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice (CEMP) had researched creative industry preconceptions of higher education before they got involved with university engagement. It found that individuals expected universities to be under-funded and under-resourced, out of touch with the industry, overly academic, and theory-driven (Clews & Mallinder, 2010). A report by the Department of Education identified that overall work placements were highly positive; with employers indicating there was a benefit for both the students and the workplace through running the placements. The employers often felt motivated to offer regular placements in the future (Newton et al., 2018). Clews (2010d) acknowledges this perspective, saying "No doubt, for many practitioners, whose only contact with HE is through the graduates they interview, the gap between their own experience and knowledge and that they see courses through the lens of the graduate interviewees' portfolio and first work performance will seem immense." (p. 13–14).

2.2.4 KNOWLEDGE

The third area of *myths* focuses on the imparting of knowledge in design higher education institutions, specifically what is taught at the institutions and how educators teach it. These are:

- Design lecturers do not engage with the design industry
- Design education does not provide employability skills
- Design education does not teach the right skills for the design industry

The design industry is prone to portraying design higher education as inadequate, often implying that something needs to be done about it. Looking through popular online design publications it is not hard to find the opinions of designers who agree with this, for example, "There is a large gap between design education and market needs, and it is a common barrier around the world." (Winston, 2014, comments section), "…it seems to be the same story across the board – a lack of knowledge and awareness of the basics, such as setting type, visual composition or knowing how to interrogate a brief." (Dawood, 2018a, comments section), and "It gave me the impression that their tutors may be letting them down in helping them to prepare for and be in a strong position to actually get a job." (It's Nice That, 2014, comments section). There are occasional comments from

educators who attempt to highlight positive attributes within education, but overall, the tone is regularly negative towards design education in the UK.

It is not just the comments that reinforce this opinion, with a poll by the D&AD showing that "nine out of ten designers think design education is not preparing students for work in the design industry" (Montgomery, 2014, para. 1). Furthermore, articles appearing in publications such as *Design Week* stating that "Universities aren't the future of design education" (Spencer, 2016, para. 1) and It's Nice That (2014) identifying industry grumblings about "employers suggesting that prospective new recruits don't have the skill-sets they need; and universities trying to balance their responsibilities to students, subject development and industry expectations." (para. 6).

Design higher education has experienced many changes in the last two decades; however, Clews and Mallinder (2010) found that despite this, design higher education has remained resilient, and they continue to focus on curriculum development, contact with the design industry and the well-being of their students. The UK has world-leading educational institutions that are considered centres of excellence, which develop high-quality, innovative practices and produce talented graduates who enter the workforce (Design Council, 2018a). However, the primary concern of the Design Commission (2011) and MillionPlus (2015a) is for the government to recognise the importance of design education, to ensure talent can be developed and supported for future growth and remain a world leader in innovation.

It has been recognised by several leading design organisations, such as the MillionPlus (2015b), Policy Connect (2018) and The Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD, 2016), that design education needs a higher level of recognition and support from the government. They believe that a succession of policies has led to the letting down of design higher education, in particular the lack of design education in schools. Design Council (2020a) identified at the school level that design as a subject is undervalued, with pupil numbers studying at the GCSE level sharply declining between 2002 and 2019. The V&A Museum has launched the Innovate programme aimed to showcase design and technology as a pathway at the school level, as a response to the need for a well-developed design curriculum in schools (Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), 2020). Clews (2010a) found that successive governments for over 80 years have produced reports on design higher education and that "Each of these was critical of art and design education and its lack of relevance to industry." (p. 36). This shows ingrained thinking at the government level and the lack of

support for an industry that contributes greatly to the economy. With design skills in 2015 contributing approximately £209.3bn in gross value added to the UK economy, alongside the uptake and demand of employees with design skills, design education should be viewed as a priority by the government. Yet, at the secondary school level, there has been a decrease in teachers, teaching hours and pupils, with the Design Council (2018a) finding the traditional pathway to a design career has been eroded. Furthermore, design skills are valued and used across the UK economy, suggesting a projected increase in the demand for graduates with design skills in the future (Bakhshi et al., 2017).

If the opinion is that design higher education is failing in the transfer of knowledge, it has overlooked and underplayed the role of the QAA. The monitoring and advisory role of the QAA is vital to upholding the standards and quality across higher education providers in the UK. Their role is not only to safeguard standards for the students in higher education, but also to provide subject benchmark statements for institutions on individual subject areas to ensure that the quality of teaching provision is met. The institutions and their lecturers must adhere to the QAA's (2015) UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), which "is used to assure the standards and quality of UK higher education." (p. 2). The purpose of this code is to provide higher education institutions with guidelines to ensure that students receive a high-quality education, in terms of academic standards and the quality of learning they receive. The overarching purpose of the Quality Code is to safeguard the academic standards, ensure the academic quality of learning opportunities, promote continuous and systematic improvement and ensure that information about UK higher education is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy (QAA, 2015).

Even the acknowledgement that there is a governing body for higher education standards does not detract from the opinion that a percentage of the design industry uses design education performance as a tool to justify why they do not believe higher education is providing the right skills, both in terms of employability and specific skills for the evolving design industry. Yet, pedagogies developed through creative arts higher education have been used as a model for other subjects as "they appear to offer the most favourable contexts for learning higher-level skills." (Clews & Mallinder, 2010, p. 58). Inevitably, a proportion of the design industry feels that lacklustre teaching is to blame for poorly skilled graduates. Alternatively, one of the most effective ways of preparing students for the design industry is through the employment of teacher practitioners (Rambhoros, 2011). The direct effect of this has led to positive developments in the design curriculum, in particular

strong links to the design industry. In terms of ensuring graduates entering the design industry have the right knowledge, it was highlighted that there needs to be positive engagement between industry and higher education to ensure this (All-Party Parliamentary Design and Innovation Group, Design Business Association and Design and Technology Association, 2018).

MillionPlus (2015a) stated that universities understand the importance of making connections with the design industry and ensuring that students are prepared for employment. Research has shown that the majority of higher education institutions have forged good contacts with industry, and "85% of departments and faculties are actively engaged with industry bodies and organisations in student projects, in curriculum development and course validations." (Clews & Mallinder, 2010, p. 4). Gilmore and Comunian (2015) acknowledged the increased role of teacher practitioners who contribute their skills and knowledge in higher education settings and add further value through their networks in the design industry. Engagement with the design industry occurs through student placements, providing exposure to industry practices and workplace realities. Placements are common, although there are barriers, such as reluctance from the design industry and the length of placements being too short to be effective (Clews & Mallinder, 2010). Although many design industry commentators have expressed disappointment with the standard of graduates entering the design industry, conversely, it has been shown that the majority of placements are successful with only a few disappointing scenarios (Newton, 2018).

Overall, if the design industry is critical of the state of design education, there is an opportunity for them to influence change and make their voices heard. Spencer (2016), although critical of design higher education, concedes that transforming it would require industry input by stating: "if our industry is genuinely bothered by the poor quality of university design education, we ought to do something about it" (para. 10). This view, regardless of the distortion of education, argues that the design industry must be involved to propagate its ideas on what education could be for the future. The seeming ambivalence towards design higher education is therefore problematic.

2.3 COMMUNITIES

In this section of the literature review, the focus turns to workplace learning; specifically, how this affects graduates in their first roles within a design agency and how this environment can help their professional development within the design industry. This will be done by examining the concept of workplace learning and establishing how learning can occur in settings such as the design agency. Then the focus turns to exploring models of learning that occur in the workplace, such as apprenticeships and professional development, and how particular aspects can link to learning in the design industry. Finally, the concept of *'The Workshop'* is examined, and this will be discussed to show why this is relevant to this research.

2.3.1 LEARNING IN COMMUNITIES

In this section, I examine the community that design graduates become part of and how learning takes place within it. This will be through a dual focus on how graduates learn within the workplace environment (the design agency) and how design agencies facilitate and support the graduate in their transition from higher education into their early career roles within the design industry. As the graduate moves into the design industry, this marks a significant change in the place of learning— the shift from higher education to the workplace. It is how graduates learn in the workplace that will be of interest in this research.

Graduate learning does not stop after leaving higher education, and there is a sharp learning curve upon entering the workplace, particularly in the creative industries (Daniel & Daniel, 2013). One of the outcomes in Chapter Three: Exploratory Research revealed several design agencies that require graduates who can 'hit the ground running' or be 'very quick to adapt' to the workplace. This reveals a common theme within the design industry, believing graduates should be work-ready upon leaving university without further training or professional development. The transition period— from being a student in higher education to working in the design industry—can be a challenging adjustment for graduates. Importantly, if this stage was given more attention by the design industry, this could lead to a better understanding of expectations and, crucially, could be approached with more insight into early career learning for graduates. The topic of workplace learning and professional development has been well developed by several key thinkers, such as Schön (1983), Argyris and Schön (1974), Billet (2003; 2014), Boud (1999; 2006), Ellström (2006), Kolb (2015), Eraut (2000; 2002), Wenger (1988) and Sennett (2008). As a starting point, these texts will be analysed, alongside others, to explore key themes regarding models of learning in the workplace.

Learning in the workplace

First, it is important to define what constitutes workplace learning and its relevance to the graduate. Using Wenger's (1998) concept of *'communities of practice'* in relation to design agencies, workplace learning can be defined as a process of social learning. In this instance, learning can be held together through common interests, such as subjects, interest areas, or collaborations. Through working together and sharing ideas, the community learns and improves over time through shared interaction. Wenger's *'communities of practice'* are defined through three areas that are related: joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and shared repertoire. It is these three areas, when combined, that could provide an ideal environment for graduates to learn in. Workplaces, such as design agencies, can be defined as a *'community of practice'.* Design agencies possess the following characteristics - "a community of mutual engagement, a negotiated enterprise, and a repertoire or negotiable resources accumulated over time" (Wenger, 1998, p. 126). For learning to occur in the workplace, the community should be accepting and tolerant of new members who enter the workplace; this provides the benefit of providing the link between learning, identity, belonging and support that can be beneficial to graduates when faced with the transition to workplace learning.

Within this community, learning in the workplace deals with creating new knowledge. Eraut (2000) has defined this by using two parallel definitions of knowledge: the first is codified knowledge, described as: "(1) subject to quality control by editors, peer review and debate and (2) given status by incorporation into educational programmes, examinations, and courses. It includes propositions about skilled behaviour, but not skills or 'knowing how'." (p. 114). The second is personal knowledge, which is defined as: "the cognitive resource which a person brings to a situation that enables them to think and perform [...] personal knowledge may be either explicit or tacit" (Eraut, 2000, p. 114).

Graduates are now reliant on learning beyond codified knowledge, something they were used to in higher education. Now in the workplace, graduates are dealing with situations where they are reliant on their personal knowledge to help them navigate unfamiliar environments and situations, and how well they do so may depend on their personal skills to become capable and competent in their new roles in industry.

Barriers to learning in the workplace

However, there are issues in the transition to learning in the workplace for the graduate, which can cause complications if unacknowledged. Ellström (2006) identifies three issues indicating the limits of workplace learning: the 'Catch-22' of learning through experience, the difficulty of developing explicit knowledge through experience, and the fact that in working life, learning often has an "adaptive and instrumental character" (p. 43). Ellström (2006) highlights these issues as he perceives them to be caused by a lack of organisation in the workplace. However, Ellström (2006) goes on to argue that to support learning at work, employers must be responsible for organising their company's work environment, not solely for monetary output, but to place value on improving the workplace environment for employees. Ellström (2006) concludes, "learning at work (like learning in formal educational settings) is a matter of design, not evolution" (p. 43). Although Ellström (2006) and Billet (2014) hold similar views on workplace learning, in contrast, Billet (2014) asserts workplace learning is part of a deliberate practice within the workplace to maintain the structure and continuity of the business. However, this is concerned more with the working practices of the workplace than with individual learning. Billet (2014) suggested that individual learning occurs through participatory practices the workplace can offer. Consequently, employees are more likely to learn and develop skills in the workplace, as these are the prime situations for knowledge creation through situations such as interaction with colleagues, goal orientation process and the ability to gain guidance from more experienced workers.

The use of reflection in learning

The role of reflection has long been identified in the process of learning. Ellström (2006) proposed the idea of 'cultivation of habits of reflection', which illustrates that the key to experimental learning appears to be reflection and reflective practices. Freire (1974) acknowledges reflection in his concept of praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 36). Kolb (2015), in defining the attributes of an effective learner, lists "reflective observation abilities... they must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives" (p. 30). However, it was Schön (1983) who defined the concept of reflection as reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, making a substantive contribution to the understanding of how people learn, particularly in professional practice. Schön's (1983) definition of the role of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action is in two parts. 'In-action' is thinking on one's feet, to be reflecting while undertaking a task or action; the ability to combine while undertaking something is the ability to be taking in and making notes about what is being dealt with. 'On-action' is a reflection on the situation after it occurs, which

can be done as individuals reflecting on the moment themselves, or in the case of a workplace, it could mean talking through with others, writing up the event, supervision reports. However, what Schön sees as being of importance is the outcomes of reflection-in-action:

> "his inquiry is not limited to a deliberation about means which depends on a prior agreement about ends. He does not keep means and ends separate but defines them interactively as he frames a problematic situation. He does not separate thinking from doing, ratiocinating his way to a decision which he must later convert to action." (Schön, 1983, p. 68)

What is particularly striking about this method of reflection during and after, in the case of designers, is the constant ability to contribute to the outcome of the design. Moreover, for graduates, it is a vital ability for them to be able to judge how they are working and, in the case of a design agency, to be able to communicate how the process went. This back-and-forth action of doing, making, and reflecting enables graduates to embed their skills and thus improve their knowledge. Therefore, when a graduate is in the transition stage, the ability to reflect is a vital tool. In this sense, graduates could use reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action to navigate and make sense of their new workplace by building knowledge as they learn on the job. This could be implemented using either deliberate or implicit learning. By referencing Eraut's (2000) 'Typology of Non-Formal Learning' learning can utilise time to focus on learning in the workplace. By classifying the time of learning stimulus into past episodes, current experiences and future behaviours, the learner can link associated events to their current situation. Therefore, the ability not just to reflect on prior learning but also to contemplate how future learning may occur is important.

Although Schön's work on reflection has been significant, in contrast, Eraut's (2002) view diverges on the extent of "how far such transformation is possible" (p. 15) and Boud (2006) casts doubt on the effectiveness of reflective practices in the workplace, stressing that reflection is not used as often or as well as in formal education, and is seen more as "a break from routine" (p. 160). Both views raise the issue of how an employer can use the role of reflection effectively within the workplace and how graduates can implement reflection in their own learning while in early-career roles. What is needed to create effective learning within the workplace is acknowledging and understanding how graduates can develop knowledge and be effective learners. One issue is that employers and senior team members (such as experienced designers) are unaware of how they can pass on their knowledge and skills to their employees. Boud (2006) and Ellström (2000) both make it clear that there is a strong link between how the workplace is run and the effect on the

employees, and how this affects learning in the workplace. However, Boud (2006) warns of creating a contrived attempt at trying to implement reflection in the workplace for the sake of it, as when it is forced, it can be worthless. Boud (2006) notes that reflection can be structured; however, this needs to be done sensitively to allow for employees to discuss their learning in a way that they feel comfortable and allows for the process to be effective in developing new knowledge. Fenwick (2003) recognised that simply acknowledging the need to have ongoing learning within workplaces was as important as allocating learning time. Design agencies need to be mindful that graduates will require ongoing support in their roles when they are new to the industry. For graduates, the acknowledgement that learning was of value and importance, coupled with the desire to continue learning in the job and a need for acknowledgement and structure from their employers, was highlighted in the 'Mind the Gap' project, which discussed graduate expectations in the design industry (Cook & Mackle, 2010).

Tacit knowledge

Learning can be developed and implemented through multiple practices within the workplace, as highlighted by Argyris and Schön (1974) when discussing 'Theories of Action'. They suggest that practitioners come to understand learning as two separate skills: one being practising skills, and the other as learning skills. However, Argyris and Schön (1974) state that learning in this manner is often too complex to break up and

> "learning a theory of action so as to become competent in professional practice does not consist of learning to recite the theory; the theory of action has not been learnt in the important sense unless it can be put into practice" (p. 12)

This idea is echoed in the first of Eraut's (2000) 'Three Modes of Cognition', which is 'analytical'. He noted that practitioners often take the viewpoint of separating evidence-based practice and theory-based arguments. Eraut's (2000) belief is that evidence-based practice is important and should be built upon with theory-based learning, as "additional knowledge is required beyond the set of propositions taught as theory, and the evidence suggests that this additional knowledge is highly situated and very often tacit" (p. 125). The role of tacit knowledge is a significant contributor to learning, specifically in situations where theoretical information cannot be made explicit. Polanyi (2012) defines tacit knowledge as *'that which we know but cannot tell'*—a significant way of understanding professional knowledge that is difficult to explain or easily measure. Eraut (2000) acknowledged that tacit knowledge is difficult to explain, and tacit actions are often spontaneous,

as they fall within what we have learnt but are unaware of how. Often, tacit knowledge involves

decisions that are largely intuitive and are individually adjusted to suit the circumstances to which

they are applied. Learning in the design agency will undoubtedly involve knowledge learnt tacitly;

however, the challenge is raising awareness and educating those within the design industry on the

importance of how learning is transferred in this manner. Graduates can expand upon their

knowledge through exposure to other designers' working methods in the workplace, and it is

through this process that practical skills are added to a graduate's repertoire. Although this is

imperative to learning, quality feedback is just as important. Eraut (2002) states, "practical skills can

only be acquired through practice with feedback" (p. 81) and elaborates this argument to show that

this is not the case in many circumstances. Employers need to be aware that to develop graduates'

skills and knowledge, they require feedback to implement knowledge transfer.

Mentorship

The role of mentorship within the workplace is significant through passing on knowledge from an

experienced team member to a novice learner, using guidance and practice-based experience.

Sennett (2008) draws a parallel between learning from a master or mentor and the concept of

learning through craftsmanship. He introduces the idea that the *'notion of being a craftsman'* can be

applied beyond the traditional understanding of who a craftsman is. Sennett (2008) acknowledges

that the idea of what a craftsman is, is poorly understood, but defines it as someone who

undertakes a "practical activity, but their labour is not simply a means to another end." (Sennett,

2008, p. 20). The notion that craftsmanship is founded on learning to a high level over a long period

of time is often used to define craft, with Sennett (2010) referring to the commonly used '10,000

hours of experience' to define mastery of a skill. Ericsson et al. (1993) described the success of

students through 'deliberate practice' – a combination of learning over a long time, sometimes as

much as 10,000 hours. However, they identified that the key component to the student's

development was the guidance of a teacher to provide instruction, to ensure that practice was

deliberate and remained structured.

Sennett (2008) provides several key ideas that can be applied to early career learning of design

graduates and to foster understanding of this situation for design agencies in the area of work

environment learning. Sennett's (2008) concept of the *'craftsman'* explores the idea of

craftsmanship, both historically and in current times. He believes the values of the craftsman—which

are based on high-level skill development—can enrich lives. The rewards of craftsmanship are

twofold: "people are anchored in tangible reality" and "they can take pride in their work" (Sennett, 2008, p. 21). A central theme in Sennett's work is the ability to learn and develop within the workplace; therefore, it is essential to be able to do this in an environment that is supportive and enables learning through passing on knowledge, and collaborative ways of working, helping to embed skills and mentorship. Without this structure, novice learners would have very little in the way of being able to develop further. Design graduates can be compared to Sennett's craftsman as apprentices of design in design agencies. It is the relationship between master/mentor and apprentice/mentee, which exists to enable knowledge transfer. As such, design agencies could view design graduates who are on internships or early-career jobs as novice learners, who need support and the provision of professional learning on their paths to becoming well-balanced craftsmen of design. However, this model of knowledge transfer is reliant on design agencies providing a stable master/apprentice situation. This would require regular shadowing and communication, which a small number of design agencies in Chapter Three: Exploratory Research indicated was not feasible in their workplace.

Communities beyond the workplace

For design graduates, the workplace is not the only place for developing knowledge. Creative industries are known for extensive networking to discover new opportunities and create employment. Graduates tend to stay in contact with their peers, which helps with ideas, opportunities, and critique (Ball et al., 2010, p. ix). There are specific resources set up to help graduates navigate the creative industry, such as ShellsuitZombie, an online project that outlines its purpose as "run by graduate creatives that encourages interaction between graduating students and the creative industry" (ShellsuitZombie, 2016, webpage). It is through networks such as this that the graduates' knowledge base extends through discussion and critique amongst others in the same situation. Boud (1999) notes that "peer learning takes place spontaneously and informally in many circumstances" (p. 4). For graduates, learning can occur beyond dedicated networks, such as catching up with industry friends to compare their experiences and make sense of what they are learning and how they are developing.

Learning in communities—summary

By exploring the concepts of learning in the workplace, specifically for graduates in the design industry, it is apparent that it is a complex and highly emotive issue. The literature suggests that, although graduates have honed their knowledge and developed skills from their time in higher

education, they require further support from the design industry to help them transfer their knowledge into the workplace. To enable this process, they need guidance and support from the design industry to navigate this transition, and for many design agencies, this potentially is a difficult task. Helping navigate graduates in transition requires skill and empathy to provide and nurture specific learning in both early careers and the workplace. There are certainly good practices being applied in the design industry for developing graduate expectations; however, are these learning systems a product of a well-thought-out learning programme, inspirational leadership, or plain good luck? The design industry often calls for higher education to provide more industry-based curricula to be part of design courses, yet perhaps the challenge is for the industry to respond to the graduates' call to provide supportive continued learning in a valued team environment where there are clear job expectations and an awareness of future expectations and goals.

2.3.2 LEARNING MODELS AND DEVELOPMENT

Billett (2002) identifies that workplace learning is unavoidable, as the practice of learning through participation and people's experiences within the workplace is "inherently pedagogical as they are concerned with the continuity of the practice through participant learning" (p. 4). This section suggests that learning does occur, although it is how it occurs, and what structures are in place, that make it effective and of value to people within the workplace. As learning can occur in a multitude of ways, in this section I will look at two broad models of learning in the workplace: apprenticeships and learning through professional development.

Apprenticeships

The history of apprenticeship learning in the UK can be traced back to mediaeval times (BIS, 2012). Apprenticeships have evolved through time, becoming associated with guilds, such as goldsmiths and carpenters, and at their core was the concept of training in the workplace through the passing down of knowledge (Sennett, 2008). By the late nineteenth century, apprenticeships had evolved beyond traditional trades and begun to branch out into other sectors (BIS, 2012). Modern-day apprenticeships in the UK are often associated with manual or low-skilled labour, such as building and construction, childcare, hairdressing, and agriculture. Despite these perceptions, there are many high-skill apprenticeships available in sectors such as engineering, finance and chemicals, and they remain a popular way for young people to enter the workplace in particular sectors (Unwin & Wellington, 1995). The public perception of apprenticeships can be negative, with Unwin and Wellington (1995) finding that "post-compulsory education and training has been struggling to

create a respectable image" (p. 337). Furthermore, this perception extends to the notion that apprenticeships are for school leavers who do not want to pursue an academic route or are unable to gain the qualifications to enter university.

What is of particular interest to this research is how learning occurs in apprenticeships. The apprenticeship structure is ordered so that the majority of learning occurs and is developed *'on the job'*, which is recognised by Schön (1983), Boud (2006), Eraut (2002) and Sennett (2008) as a valuable aspect of learning through doing or practice. The experiential learning that occurs is further supported through embedding knowledge by undertaking studies, such as coursework or modules that provide scaffolding towards qualifications, including the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) in England and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) in Scotland. These help signpost levels of learning and build professional qualifications within the apprenticeship, and finally give an overall framework for how long it will take to become fully qualified.

The structure of apprenticeships uses practice-based learning, which Wenger (1998) identified as a learning process that is effective in terms of learning, because "actual participation is effective in fostering learning not just because they are better pedagogical ideas, but more fundamentally because they are "epistemologically correct", so to speak." (p. 101). However, Sennett (2008) found that there can be issues with developing skills through practice, as it can be repetitive, and impaired through incorrect tools or instructions that are unclear and ambiguous. These observations indicate that to learn through practice, there needs to be a clear focus on the processes that occur in the workplace. By doing so, an effective learning experience for the graduate can occur. Furthermore, developing a dedicated approach will be constructive in understanding how learning can be achieved.

The main ideology of an apprenticeship is that the workplace is the hub of learning, and learning takes place through practice and experiential learning. A key feature is the role of the mentor who passes on knowledge. Knowledge can be passed on from *'master'* or *'mentor'* to apprentice explicitly, such as instructions and directions, but also implicitly, such as tacit knowledge and visual cues. Both forms of knowledge embed learning for the apprentice; however, Sennett (2008) places a high value on the constant interplay of both explicit and implicit knowledge as the driver for higher skill development. Through this, Sennett (2008) believes that higher-quality craft emerges from the process of learning.

Apprenticeships come in many formats, including structure, length, outcome, and qualification, and there are also variations on the concept of a traditional apprenticeship, with apprenticeship-style learning built into some degree courses. For example, built into several of the undergraduate design courses at London College of Communication (LCC), there is an option to add an industry placement year within the degree (LCC, 2021). This year gives students the opportunity to work in an established workplace with a structured learning path through practice as learning, clear feedback systems, and mentorship. Temple (Creative Review, 2010), an LCC course leader, argues that students from departments such as chemistry or engineering would "expect their curriculum to build in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust, ICI, or Nokia, so why are design courses in the UK so divorced from professional practice, from design-led business both in the UK and internationally?" (para. 4).

Professional development and training

The second model of structured learning in the workplace I will examine is professional development and training. Some degrees incorporate on-the-job training through professional accreditation that is required throughout their early career; examples include medical and architecture training. While it is not suggested that these are apprenticeship-based vocations, the requirement of post-degree training is vital to being able to complete professional-level requirements. These roles require not only a degree but also acknowledge that a large element of professional training is achieved through application in practice to qualify.

For example, in the architecture sector, the pathway to becoming fully qualified goes beyond obtaining a degree, typically taking five years at university and two years of practical experience (Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA|), 2017). After studying at university and achieving an undergraduate degree, it is advised to undertake a practice-based year. Practical experience is achieved using mentorship and is monitored and recorded by a professional body to ensure that the practical experience is adhered to. Further training in the form of university papers and examinations, followed by more intensive work placements, and a final exam all contribute to the training route of becoming an architect. This process is divided into stages – RIBA Part 1, 2 and 3. Completion of all three stages allows the registration of the title 'architect' through The Architects Registration Board (RIBA, 2017).

By considering how practice-based learning and learning from mentors occurs, there are significant lessons to be drawn from this process that could be applied to the design industry, such as higher-level professional qualifications. There has been resistance from within the design industry, who feel that post-degree qualifications are not justifiable in this situation (Boulton, 2006). On the other hand, increasing post-degree learning in the workplace would be welcomed by organisations such as the Design Council (2018a) which has stated that "designers are less likely [than other industries] to receive the additional training they require after leaving formal education." (p. 62). Furthermore, the CCS (2013b) found training budgets in the creative industries lack funding for young people and are well behind the national average. In the early years after graduation, this is particularly important, as practical experience is vital to help embed knowledge.

The use of mentors

Mentorship plays an important role in both apprenticeships and professional development programmes. Positive leadership and mentors within the workplace can have a beneficial effect on morale and learning for employees when structured well; Billet (2003) acknowledges that there is "evidence to suggest that learners benefit from the support for learning provided by mentors." (Billet, 2003, p.105) Wenger (1998) discussed how positive engagement can occur in his work on identity and practice, which he describes as: "developing a practice [that] requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants." (Wenger, 1998, p. 149). This links learning in a workplace and the people that are part of that community. Bringing these elements together will effectively contribute to how someone can learn in a community and, in particular, how a newcomer, such as a graduate, will be treated when entering a new community. Wenger (1998) and Sennett (2008) both found that employees or workers do not solely determine the output of a workplace or community; as such, all members of the wider scope are inherently responsible. Sennett (2008) lamented that in some workplaces, a lack of positive leaders and mentors can effectively weaken or reduce morale amongst employees. In these situations, workers are poorly motivated, and their work is compromised (Sennett, 2008). The concept of poor craftsmanship is apparent here, with "workers demoralised by command and by competition" (Sennett, 2008, p.28), with the suggestion that those in command, whether they are running a business or leading a team, remain connected to the output of the workplace for success. For graduates to learn within the workplace, a mentorship model that provides a supportive structure is necessary. This can motivate the graduate to improve their performance and set goals

for achievement and skill acquisition, alongside being a recognised and valued member of the workplace community.

An alternative model for graduate learning in the design agency

By acknowledging that graduates have already completed a degree but understanding that there is currently no formal requirement to undertake any professional development or training within the design industry, it is plausible that there is an alternative model that learning design agencies can use. Through drawing elements from apprenticeships, professional development training, and mentorships, a bespoke or individual approach to supporting graduates can be developed. Furthermore, design agencies could contribute to learning in the workplace by providing more funding dedicated to training budgets (Design Council, 2018a).

Developing a type of apprenticeship after graduation, however, has possible negative connotations. First, it can undermine the need for university education in design. A university education contributes not only to developing critical design practice, but other skills that are vital for the workplace (MillionPlus, 2015a). Second, the concept would require structured and formal qualifications by an accredited professional body. However, there are parallels between apprenticeship models and early career learning that can be applied to the workplaces of design agencies in terms of mentorship and practice-based learning in the workplace for graduates. A combination of factors drawn from professional development and training budgets can enhance early career learning for graduates. If design agencies acknowledge that graduates have already undertaken a significant proportion of education, yet require workplace development, this can encourage the focus on early career development for graduates. The focus on high skill acquisition to enhance the knowledge gained from education can benefit both the graduate and the design agency. There has been resistance to developing 'professional accreditation' in the design industry (Design Council, 2018a), yet an alternative could be a model of learning that both graduates and design agencies can recognise the benefit of. By avoiding government interference or accreditation, there is potential for a design organisation to step up to the challenge and provide guidance with a framework and outcomes for design agencies. While not intentionally outlined as a structured learning system, an alternative model of learning could allow graduates to focus on learning through practice within the workplace if the correct pathways were put into place within the design agency.

There are parallels to be drawn with graduate schemes in other sectors. Industries such as marketing, retail, and finance often run dedicated graduate schemes by providing a long-term transition programme into the workplace. These are tailored by the individual organisations, but the general aim is to introduce the graduate to multiple aspects of the job, allow them to shadow a more experienced person with that role, provide mentorship and generally provide a scaffold to transition into their role by using feedback and mentorship. Graduate schemes are often broad, allowing for individual personal choices and specialisations further into the programme. An example is Unilever's Future Leaders Programme (Unilever, 2017), where graduates are employed and provided with learning opportunities, rather than using the scheme as a form of on-the-job interview. The purpose of the graduate scheme is to provide a bridge between university and taking on a specific role within the business. In contrast, the design industry appears to favour internships, which are short-term, often between six weeks and 12 weeks long. They are often unpaid and unlikely to lead to permanent employment (Montacute, 2018). Notable exceptions are emerging with some larger design agencies, such as Karmarama, who run dedicated 'graduate schemes' to give recent graduates their first taste in the design industry without any commitment to employment (Karmarama, 2021). However, they are still based on the internship model rather than a more traditional graduate scheme as in other industries.

The idea that the workplace is the hub of learning for design graduates in their early careers is something that should not be ignored. It is vital in this transition period that their practice-based learning is fostered and nurtured to allow for greater development of their skills. This could involve recognition on both sides—graduate and agency—that there is a purpose and point to early-career development. Recognising that there is a purpose to early-career development in design agencies would help provide clear guidance, develop an understanding of how learning occurs, and create an ideal learning environment.

2.3.3 THE WORKSHOP

Although an alternative model could be proposed for early career earning – that is, to restructure internships and scaffold junior designers in design agencies – I believe a key factor is how the design agencies facilitate learning in the workplace. The concept of *'the workshop'* in design, as both a metaphor and a physical space for learning, offers a way into considering how this facilitation might work in practice.

Drawing together Sennett's (2008) assertion that craft takes place within the workshop and Wenger's (1998) concept that communities are vital for learning and Schön's (1983) theory of reflection in-action and on-action leads to the idea of *'the workshop'* as the craftsman's home in the design agency. The suggestion is *'the workshop'* is used as a metaphor for the design agency in terms of work developed as a craft, and where a community learns together through a shared experience. Sennett (2008) placed great emphasis on the physical space of the workshop as a place of learning, whether it is a craft, an apprenticeship, or a place of sharing knowledge. There is a strong parallel between the workshop and the design agency. Sennett (2008) describes the function of workshops as having "glued people together through work rituals, whether these be a shared cup of tea or the urban parade; through mentoring, whether the formal surrogate parenting of mediaeval times or informal advising on the worksite; through face-to-face sharing of information" (Sennett, 2008, p. 73). In fact, many design agencies label their businesses as 'studio', 'atelier' and 'workshop', descriptors that imply their services are creative, more relaxed, elevated artistically and less formal workplaces. These labels, either directly or indirectly, imply that the ways people work within them are different, and they are informal spaces for learning.

Sennett (2008) breaks down how skills are developed within the workshop that can be applied to a broad range of situations, from large corporate organisations right through to individuals learning musical instruments. These are identified in four areas: the development between head and hand, how they interpret instructions, how they can use and manipulate tools, and how they navigate resistance and ambiguity (Sennett, 2008). By establishing a relationship of the master as a mentor which facilitates learning and sets standards within the workshop, Sennett (2008) states, "In the workshop, inequalities of skill and experience become face-to-face issues. The successful workshop will establish legitimate authority in the flesh, not in rights or duties set down on paper." (p. 54).

The workshop can also be analysed as a learning community through Wenger's (1998) theories on communities of practice, specifically that learning is made easier through belonging to a community. Wenger (1998) argues, "Communities of practice are not only a context for the learning of newcomers but also, and for the same reasons, a context for new insights to be transformed into knowledge." (p. 214). It is through this process that newcomers enter the workshop with their own personal trajectories of learning. To enable this, Wenger (1998) identifies three modes of belonging that must occur by all members of the community. Through engagement, it allows "active involvement in mutual processes of negotiations of meaning" (p. 173). Through imagination, which

projects images of our past and present, of us and of possibilities. Lastly, the alignment allows people to fit within the broader structures of a community. Through this combination, Wenger (1998) ascertains the "combination of engagement and imagination results in a reflective practice." (p. 217).

Sennett (2008) also recognises reflection as an important tool for craftsmen, so they "can pause in the work and reflect on what he or she is doing." (p. 296). While Sennett (2008) discusses learning as a craft within the workshop and how this knowledge needs to be embedded to gain skills, Schön's (1983) concept of reflection is vital to the progression of learning and how knowledge can be embedded. An individual's ability to reflect while the activity is occurring is fundamental to how the learning occurs—that constant adjustment and readjustment, the ability to divert from the path if it is not flowing smoothly or to reflect on something that worked unexpectedly and why. This is particularly useful in a workshop situation, an environment where there is plenty of problem solving, writing, solving puzzles, and tackling issues that seem to have no solution. This constant interplay is perfectly suited, even necessary, to work on client projects in a design agency. Reflection-on-action is a tool that can bring together both the graduate and the design agency. Here, the graduate can analyse how they have performed earlier tasks. But perhaps the biggest advantage of *'the workshop'* environment is the ability to be able to reflect-on-action in a shared environment through talking, discussions, and feedback. This can be done one-to-one or within a larger group; but this ability to share and discuss, to reflect again, is part of a good design process.

Original ownership of the concept of *'the workshop'*, however, lies with the design agency. The environment and culture created here could be the main drivers in how the community operates. How design agencies can redefine workplace learning is particularly important for graduates, as newcomers to the community. The literature discussed suggests that graduate learning would most certainly occur in the workplace, but arguably, design agencies would benefit from understanding how this process occurs. This is critical to design agencies, giving them a better position to facilitate and provide ways to help graduates in this transition phase. The theoretical ideas raised in *'the workshop'* could form the outline of a framework to develop work-based learning in design agencies.

2.4 TRANSITION

2.4.1 THE GRADUATE PARADOX

After leaving higher education, the majority of design graduates start the search for employment, with a large proportion looking within the design and design-related industries (Ball et al., 2010). In this section, I will explore the transition between higher education and the design industry from the graduates' perspective and explore the relevance of internships in the design industry.

One of the most significant hurdles for the design graduate is the specification by design agencies that junior designers have relevant work experience, alongside the requirement of a design or design-related degree, to gain employment. These attributes were raised in the *'Myths'* section of this chapter, where I outlined key points that act as markers to entry into the design industry, such as the design industry preferring employees with design or design-related degrees and the preference for having undertaken work experience or internships during studies and after graduation. Clews and Mallinder's (2010) research of higher education institutions showed that 82.5% of design graduates undertake work experience while still studying, and armed with a degree in design, this indicated a high proportion of graduates that appear to have made the first step towards entering the design industry. However, to gain entry into the design industry, more is often demanded of the graduate, and this is often implicit, variable, and specific to individual design agencies.

The design graduate faces competition not only from other design graduates, but also from those within the design industry, for instance, designers with more industry experience, freelance designers, and recent graduates who have gained more design industry experience (CCS, 2013b). Further challenges include agencies in the design industry that voice an objection to employing graduates for a variety of reasons, as discussed earlier in Section 2.2. Competition is fierce for any jobs available in the design industry, and this allows the design industry to be selective about whom, why, and how they select to employ. Often, design agencies voice their lack of time and resources to be able to take on a graduate who needs more guidance and overseeing in their work. Often the preference is for a 'middleweight' designer or an experienced freelance designer, who has the expertise and ability to run with the job, thus perceived as saving time and money (CCS, 2013b). This is the 'graduate paradox'—they have gained a design degree and, in most cases, work experience and industry exposure, yet they are unable to secure a junior designer role, as employers usually specify a minimum amount of work-based experience to apply. This, of course,

varies, but from personal experience, it is not uncommon for a junior designer role within a design agency to specify a minimum of one year of work experience in a design agency.

So, for the graduate, how does this process of finding employment work? For some graduates, the path from higher education to employment is relatively straightforward, with offers of employment coming around the time of graduation, through contact points such as degree shows, previous work experience, and other contacts within the design industry. Although this path may seem ideal in terms of employment, the graduate is experiencing a transition between higher education and the workplace through the process of adaption to a new situation, which in turn influences how their first job experience unfolds. For many design graduates, gaining valuable work experience is often solved by applying for internships at design agencies. CCS (2013b) research found that design agencies expect to use unpaid interns as a preferred route for employing young people. This implies that to work in a design agency, the internship route is an expected pathway to employment, and this experience adds another component to the graduate transition process.

Internships and the implications of internships on graduates, higher education, and the design industry will be elaborated on further in this section, but first I will examine what defines an internship and how they differ from work experience. The Sutton Trust (2014) says "there is no concrete definition of what constitutes an internship" (p. 1), as they differ enormously from industry to industry and from employer to employer. Put simply, there is no set standard for what an internship is and what to expect of one. The Institute for Public Policy Research identified three ways to define an internship: internships tend to last months rather than weeks, interns are expected to keep the same full-time hours as other members of staff, and are expected to do real work for the employees (Lawton & Potter, 2010). Work experience tends to differ as the person is there for experience rather than to undertake work, and the timeframe is usually for days or a few weeks. Normally, work experience for design graduates is undertaken as part of a degree course to gain experience in the design industry (Clews & Mallinder, 2010).

For many design graduates, the graduate paradox extends beyond the concept *'to get a job they need experience, yet they cannot get experience until they get a job'*. In an already challenging industry to find employment, the graduate paradox throws up two main issues. First, is the *transition* the graduate makes between higher education and entering the design industry. Second, is the

navigation the graduate will experience while going through the process of transition. In the following sections, I will look at transition, navigation, and the implications for the design graduate.

2.4.2 THE PLACE IN-BETWEEN

Transition, simply defined, is a change from one situation to another, and in the case of this research, it is the change from studying in higher education to early-career employment in the design industry, specifically at a design agency. Harvey (2003), Hays and Clements (2012), Holmes (2001), and Savage et al. (2009) all acknowledge that transition between higher education and the workplace is difficult for graduates.

Bridgstock (2011) explains that graduates in the creative industries find it difficult to secure work, they take considerable time to make the transition into work, and they find it difficult to adjust to working life. Not only can the transition be hard, but Ball's (2002) findings confirm that if the transition period goes on too long, many graduates give up due to other factors such as the pressure to get a job, confidence, and isolation. Harvey (2003) considers multiple research papers and concludes "Transitions do tend to be hard. There is no claim here that transitions can be made Teflon smooth, but there is a claim that higher education can help students to prepare better for transition to the workplace." (p. 3).

However, Harvey (2003) concludes that higher education does go some way towards preparing graduates for transition, but this varies from institute to institute and is prone to difficulties, such as funding cuts. He also highlights that employers' criticisms of "graduate recruits are not so much the result of failure in the higher education curriculum, rather of failure in the transfer process" (Harvey, 2003, p. 3), but how this can be rectified is not expanded on. Holmes (2001) agrees that the transition to the workplace is complex and difficult but has an issue with the agenda of pushing a skills-based curriculum within higher education; instead, he argues for alternative perspectives on the approach to employability, which can help the transition between higher education and the workplace. Holmes (2001) proposes this as a starting point for discussion and suggests that more funding and research are needed to develop a fresh debate about graduate employability. Savage et al. (2009) go further, outlining how the transition is a difficult time, "however, understanding the learning that occurs during the transition-to-work phase is complex." (p. 3). Savage et al.'s (2009) research suggests that a better understanding of the transition process comes through initiating dialogue about the needs and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved. They also believe that

higher education bears the brunt of this responsibility, but there appears to be little research investigating the contributions of industry (Savage et al., 2009).

Transition is difficult, and complex to understand, highlighting an issue that requires further attention. Research on the graduate transition to the workplace has focused heavily on employment skills, yet employment skills are a set of attributes that help towards employment. However, Harvey (2003) warns "Employability is not just about getting a job." (p. 3). If research focused on a wider scope of elements that are important to graduate transition, such as graduate identity (Cassidy & Wright, 2008), external factors (Christie, 2016) and creating a better dialogue between higher education and industry (Savage et al., 2009), progress to understanding transition could be made. Therefore, if the transition between higher education and the design industry is complex and difficult to understand, and research has tended to be arbitrary on the issue, this area needs further research to develop a richer understanding of the subject. Therefore, this research aims to investigate transition by breaking it down into a series of phases from higher education to the first role as a graduate.

A change in situation can often be accompanied by upheaval and unrest. Graduates usually experience a transition before they leave higher education, and this continues into their first experiences within the design industry. Therefore, change from one situation to another and a time of uncertainty is familiar for graduates as they transition out of higher education, although this can generate worry and trepidation as well as excitement and positivity. Graduate transition is effectively a process, and this section will analyse this process to determine what contributes to transition, particularly identifying how physically and psychologically this affects the graduate.

Augé and 'non-places'

Through an exploration of Augé's (1995) work on *'non-places'* in relation to graduates in the process of transition, it is feasible that there is a relationship between the space that graduates inhabit in the transitional experience and the definition of space in the non-place. Augé's (1995) work in *'Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity'* asserts that supermodernity creates non-places. Supermodernity is characterised as an acceleration of history and an overabundance of events that accumulate as excess. Augé (1995) says there are "three figures of excess which we have employed to characterise the situation of supermodernity – overabundance of events, spatial overabundance, the individualisation of references" (p. 40). Through these characteristics, Augé

implies that supermodernity is highly complex and full of contradictions. Although he discusses this in an anthropological sense about how people interact with space, place, and architecture, and through these lenses how the world is perceived, these characteristics echo transition as a complex and contradictory process. The concept of supermodernity could be perceived as how the world feels to a graduate—one when there is an overabundance of new experiences, change, and the loss of the recent past.

Augé (1995) defined 'non-place' as the opposite of a place. The concept of a place is one that exhibits three characteristics: identity, relations, and history. Non-place, in contrast, is defined as having no identity, no relationships, and no history. For the graduate, their life during higher education represented a place where they have created sense and developed within their experiences of learning, alongside their peers and lecturers. After graduation, they find themselves navigating a new space where their identity, relations and history are being redefined. They are suddenly experiencing what Augé defines as a non-place, as the graduate's non-place exists as they move between higher education and the design industry. This transition for graduates parallels Augé's (1995) concept that "super modernity produces non-places, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places" (p. 78); they are temporary, transient, fleeting and ephemeral. Augé (1995) applies his ideas to travel, and this is useful if we consider a graduate travelling through phases of transition. Augé (1995) states that non-place "designates two complementary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces." (p. 94). Given that graduates pass through the space—the space between higher education and the design industry—they also experience a new perspective on reality and how they deal with this in-between. As the end goal is to move out of the non-place, it is only interpreted as a temporary means to an end until they can enter a place again, start to develop new identities and relationships, and build a new history through new experiences. And it is in this place—the workplace—that the graduate can create meaning, experiences, and relationships.

The place in-between

During their time in higher education, the graduates had a sense of place in the world; they knew the campus, the town or city surrounding it, the lecturers, and their peers. They had come to understand how the system worked and how they worked within it. This cemented their relationship in the wider higher education community, and after graduation upon entering the *place in-between*,

this relationship is effectively transformed into the past. When the graduate leaves higher education, they are no longer a student of design, but neither are they a designer. Loss of identity can cause issues with confidence and isolation, causing distress during the transition period (Cassidy & Wright, 2008).

For Augé (1995) non-places are where you can be an anonymous individual within transitory spaces, for example, an airport. This non-place is divorced from reality and, as such, may offer pain or enjoyment. I argue that for graduates, the *place in-between* is not necessarily recognised as transitory, as there is no guarantee of when they will leave. This can be compared to being trapped. The graduate's transition space then becomes atypical of a non-place—one from which there is no escape until the first step into employment is obtained—hence the defining difference between the non-place and the place in-between. Augé's definition of a non-place, however, has a defined start and end, unlike the place in-between. For graduates, they have the start, but the journey is not definitive, does not have a clear or linear path, and can pass up unanticipated outcomes. It may even be that their journey diverts from the planned path, and they may not end up working in the design industry. I suggest it is how the graduate *navigates* this place in-between that determines how their personal transition process occurs.

2.4.3 NAVIGATION

If transition represents the process from higher education into the design industry, navigation can be viewed as how the graduate copes with the transition. Like transition, navigation has often been overlooked in research, with a focus on employability skills and the skills required for employment. It has been debated who is responsible for teaching employability skills, with the responsibility heavily biased towards higher education institutions to implement these within the curriculum. Higher education provides an opportunity to allow for the development of skills; this fails to consider it is not the sole responsibility of higher education institutes. Due to the broad nature of employability skills, there are numerous opportunities for graduates to learn these skills in a multitude of places beyond higher education. Research has identified the need for graduates to be lifelong learners, to acquire soft skills, and to have relevant industry skills (Harvey, 2003). Beyond this, it is possible to measure how many graduates find employment (DCMS, 2018; HESA, 2021). Nevertheless, there has been a lack of research on how graduates navigate the transition between higher education and the design industry. The navigation of the place in-between, for the graduate, focuses on how they cope with this anticipated but no less challenging situation.

This research, alongside anecdotal evidence from those within the design industry and previous design graduates, suggests that design graduates often find their situation challenging after leaving higher education. The sudden change in circumstances from a student to a graduate seeking work affects the graduate's identity, alongside other changes in their situation. These could include relocation, unstable accommodation, financial implications, a shift in mental well-being, temporary jobs, or multiple jobs, and taking an internship to gain work experience in the hope of finding employment. Previous research, such as Harvey (2003) and Yorke and Knight (2004), has tended to focus on employability skills, rather than specifically on what constitutes successful navigation of transition.

Family and friends

Ball et al. (2010) stated that "Family and friends are a strong source of support and their largely hidden contribution to the growth of the cultural and creative sector deserves wider recognition." (p. x). The research undertaken by Christie (2016) revealed similar findings, with 82% of graduates who are well supported by family and friends. In these instances, graduates have practical and emotional support; however, the return home can be a frustrating experience for some. Lack of independence and interference in graduates' lives could cause conflict, and not all graduates could draw on family or friends. Overall, support from family and friends contributed to providing a morale boost and support when feeling despondent (Christie, 2016).

Geographical location

Returning home after graduation may provide a barrier to employment for a proportion of graduates, depending on their geographical location. Roberts (2017) highlighted the lack of accessibility to opportunities for graduates who do not live in London or another major city, where the majority of jobs and work experience are located. Design industry employment is predominantly found in creative hubs around the UK, such as the West Midlands, the South West, and London, with the largest concentration of design agencies and designers in the UK. The Design Council (2010) found that 23% of all design businesses are based in London. London and the South East also employ over 40% of working designers, showing that London particularly has a clear pull for graduates.

Financial implications

Financial support is an important factor during the transition, as it is a period of little or no income. Ball et al. (2010) understood support for graduates extended beyond practical and emotional, with financial support providing the ability to continue searching for job roles. If a graduate can access financial cushioning for some time, they can accept opportunities that can develop their experience and career (Guile 2006). However, research acknowledges that experiences are influenced by social backgrounds, with lower social class graduates struggling to overcome financial barriers in transition (Christie, 2016). Roberts (2017) identified money as a major barrier for graduates entering the creative industries. Work experience and internships were often unpaid or badly paid, leaving graduates unable to cover costs to commit to opportunities. Others take on work outside the design industry to stay financially afloat, and Ball (2003) linked the tendency for graduates to take casual or low-level jobs with basic living costs.

Peer and industry support

Peer and industry support can be valuable for graduates during navigation, through shared experience and industry insight, and can lay the foundations for a professional network in the design industry. Organisations such as D&AD, CCS, and New Designers regularly offer graduate networking, showcase events, and boot camps. Online communities like It's Nice That and Lecture in Progress have specific graduate areas to provide Q&As, spotlights, industry insights, workshops, and talks (Brewer, 2021). Design agencies can offer practical support, such as portfolio and interview workshops; however, these tend not to be advertised or promoted and often are tied into higher education (Clews & Mallinder, 2010). HESCU (2018) highlighted the importance of social and professional networking in the creative industries, particularly design, where a higher-than-normal proportion of graduates find their jobs through networking. Peer support is valuable for graduates due to their shared experiences in transition. Graduates can remain connected both professionally and personally with their peers, which can be used for support, finding opportunities, and developing further work (Ball et al., 2010). Developing a good network, including maintaining contact with tutors, peers, and previous work placements, provides graduates with contacts to draw upon in navigation and helps with confidence (Ball et al., 2010).

Well-being, resilience, and personal skills

How a graduate approaches and deals with situations that occur in their transition is integral to how well it will go, and some graduates' confidence can suffer at the time of transition. This time can be

fraught with worry, stress, loneliness, anxiety and uncertainty, which are often not anticipated by the graduate (Perrone & Vickers, 2003). Research has demonstrated a correlation between the mental well-being of graduates, determining that unemployed graduates suffered significantly higher levels of psychological distress than graduates who had been employed in their desired role (Cassidy & Wright, 2008).

Research has also shown that graduates often lack self-belief and confidence, yet are also aware that it is an important asset to have, especially when it comes to employment (Ball et al., 2010; Confederation of British Industry (CBI) 2009; Lees, 2002; Lowden et al., 2011). It is often cited by employers that a positive attitude is one of the main factors in considering hiring a graduate (CBI, 2009). The CBI found that students identified it as their own responsibility to develop their employment skills, under which personal qualities fall. However, the CBI supported a collaborative effort by individuals, higher education, and industry to ensure that skills development occurs. For graduates in transition, confidence can often be undermined when they are unsure of their next steps, particularly if they are not experiencing success in finding opportunities.

When describing graduate attributes, employers often discuss employability skills they value. When separated, these skills tend to be personal attributes, often described as 'soft skills' such as problem solving, teamwork, using initiative and communication skills (Lowden et al., 2011). Soft skills are highly valued by employers who require creativity as a key skill, such as the design industry which values graduates' soft skills including leadership, collaboration, innovation, and communication (Rampersad & Patel, 2014). Employers seek graduates who have more than just technical skills; they require them to have soft skills to be effective communicators and be able to interact and empathise effectively within the workplace (Cord & Clements, 2010). Employers want graduates who are quick to learn and adaptable, and sought-after attributes are often based on personal attributes such as a willingness to learn and being self-motivated (Harvey, 2003). CBI (2009) highlighted that employers often required graduates with a 'can-do' attitude, open to new ideas, and a willingness to participate and contribute. Higher education institutes are aware of how important graduates' personal skills are in future career development, with Lowden et al. (2011) finding in their research that higher education lists 'motivated and enthusiastic' and 'self-confidence' as some of the most vital attributes and characteristics of graduates.

Lowden et al. (2011) viewed employability as a complex issue, and as such, there is not one component that makes a graduate more employable. It is a combination of a graduate's academic performance, their confidence in their skills and the student's ambition (Lowden et al., 2011). By developing strong 'soft skills', a graduate possesses greater awareness of their work and what they can achieve. Graduates who can make judgements about their work and progress using reflection and evaluations (both self and peer) are better equipped to deal with entering the design industry (Ball, 2002).

Informal recruitment

Graduates describe finding an internship or employment as aided by knowing the right people (Roberts, 2017). Often, graduates are recruited by an employer if the graduate had completed work experience with them previously (Harvey, 2003). CCS (2013b) found that recruitment adversely affects particular graduates through the preference for word-of-mouth recruitment and internships. It is these circumstances that contribute to the prevalence of informal recruitment, and networking for recruitment means that many graduates may miss employment opportunities. This method of recruitment excludes many graduates and contributes to a lack of diversity in the creative sector (CCS, 2013b).

There has been a rise in employers using internships as a recruitment tool or as a prerequisite to offering a job role (Roberts, 2017). For graduates, the implication of undertaking an internship is often a financial challenge, with many positions poorly paid or unpaid. The Sutton Trust (2014) has calculated that on average it costs a graduate £926 a month in London and £788 a month in Manchester, excluding transport, to do an internship. This is supported Lawton and Potter (2010)), who highlighted their main concern that unpaid internships can only be taken on by people who can work for free. To do so, this often requires family support to cover living expenses while undertaking an internship. This situation means that many graduates are excluded from being able to do an internship (Lawton & Potter, 2010), thus missing out on opportunities to progress into employment.

Strategies

When looking to find employment in a design agency, there are multiple strategies a graduate can apply to enhance their success. Word-of-mouth and industry contacts are frequently cited as two of the best strategies for entering the design industry (Ball et al., 2010). In an industry that relies heavily on informal recruitment, a high proportion of design agencies employ only informally (CCS, 2013a).

When in higher education, many graduates complete a work placement at a design agency, with employers viewing graduates with work experience favourably. Work experience provides students or graduates with exposure to and understanding of workplace processes and allows them to develop desirable skills (Harvey, 2003). Higher education provides graduates with exposure to networks of lecturers, tutors, peers, and career services, which can also be used to start developing contacts outside of higher education. Reflecting on their experiences, a graduate remarked "the biggest help has always been from people I have worked with in the past and/or ex tutors putting in a good word for me." (Ball et al., 2010, p. 9). Universities are well-positioned to offer graduates support and access to industry contacts (Roberts, 2017). Graduates often find work placements with design agencies they have connected with while in higher education (CCS, 2013a).

Beyond contacts and networking, the ability to show positive personal qualities, values and attributes is highly valued within the design industry—values such as willingness to work hard, enthusiasm for work, a degree of ambition and a drive to do well (BIS, 2015). Lowden et al. (2011) found that employers value graduates who fit into the workplace culture and who are good at teamwork.

Employment in creative industries often does not follow traditional paths to employment. As such, graduates need to be proactive to seek out opportunities and routes into the design industry. Attributes such as tenacity and directness were identified as important qualities, with the suggestion that graduates cannot rely on advertised job roles to get ahead (Roberts, 2017).

Overall, graduates face multiple challenges and obstacles when navigating the place in-between. Graduates need to engage in strategies to help them navigate transitions. Important coping strategies include "strong work ethic, resourcefulness, and good industry contacts to inspire, support, and collaborate with." (Ball et al., 2010, p. *xx*). To start work in a design agency, it appears that the best strategy is to undertake an internship. To find an internship requires many of the attributes above; graduates need to knock on doors, be persistent, use all their contacts, and be proactive. Internships are similar to jobs in the design industry; they are often found informally or by word of mouth. Ball (2003) found that graduates used the time in transition to gain design industry experience, often unpaid while they supported themselves, in the hope that eventually it would lead to paid work or employment. It has been shown that a range of strategies can be used by graduates in transition; however, research suggests that the main factor helping graduates navigate the place

in-between is work experience and internships (Ball et al., 2010; Lowden et al., 2010; Roberts, 2017). There are no official figures of the number of internships offered; however, in the UK, the government estimates there are 70,000 interns at any given time (Montacute, 2018), and internships are seen as important for getting a foot in the door, especially in the creative industry (Roberts, 2017). Research showed that 42% of respondents in their survey of creative industries had undertaken unpaid internships to get industry experience in the hope of gaining employment (Ball et al., 2010). If internships have become a permanent feature of entry into the design industry, it is important to understand the implications for graduates, higher education, and design agencies.

2.4.4 INTERNSHIPS

Internships: the code for transition

Many graduates who want to gain employment in a design agency often turn to internships at design agencies to solve the *'graduate paradox'*. Medium-to-large-sized design agencies regularly run informal graduate internship programmes. There are internship websites and job boards to find internships in design agencies that graduates turn to with the hope that these opportunities will provide the graduate with a '*foot in the door'* into the design industry. The main reasons for graduates applying for an internship were to gain experience, develop skills, make contacts, and secure paid employment (Roberts, 2017).

Design agencies have offered internships for several years now, yet internships in the UK have increased over the last five to ten years (Montacute, 2018). Internships are accepted as the code word for transition, as many design agencies do not employ graduates who have not interned with them first (IPPR, 2017). In this way, design agencies can use internships as an informal trial period to see if the graduate fits in—not just in the sense of their design ability, but also if they are a fit for the culture of the design agency. There is no doubt that internships provide graduates invaluable experience in the design agency through exposure to working practices, client exposure, and daily working life. However, it also provides design agencies with the opportunity to have a steady supply of graduates in internship roles; in some instances, this can be exploited by employers to undertake work that should be done by employees (Montacute, 2018).

The most common reason for offering internships to graduates is to provide work experience; notably, only 26% of employers offered internships with a view to offering employment (BIS, 2015). Employers often cite moral reasons, with design agencies saying they are 'doing their bit' to help. A

good internship should allow for growth, learning, and development, with the design agency providing support towards learning and achievable goals (Creative Lives in Progress, 2018). No doubt there are well-run internship programmes run by design agencies that are thoughtful about graduates' futures; there also appears to be a minority who take advantage of graduates to take on work that could otherwise be undertaken by a paid employee.

Although there are no firm figures or research into the number of design graduates who go on to work directly within design agencies after graduation, a research paper by the CCS (2013a) found that in the design industry "31% of employers that recruited young people use unpaid internships as a source of employment." (p. 11). Internships, by their transient nature, have serious implications for graduates, such as unsecured future employment, low or unpaid remuneration and possible exploitation. This in turn throws up questions that need addressing, such as: Do design agencies see internships as a vital way of contributing to graduates' learning? What type of work do design agencies expect interns to do? How is learning measured or achieved in internships? Are interns doing work that a paid employee should be doing? Regarding employment law, why are so many interns not paid for their work? Should the government do more to provide regulation through policy change on internships? If internships are the way for graduates to obtain employment in a design agency, should the design industry themselves take control of this and provide design agencies with a better understanding of a successful internship?

A significant focus of this research will, therefore, be to investigate whether graduate entry roles in design agencies are being defined by and/or led by internships. This aspect of the research will be led by four main questions:

1. Why are design agencies using internships?
2. How are internships affecting graduate transition into design agencies?
3. Should design agencies provide a clear purpose for graduate internships?
4. Are internships being used in lieu of early career training?

These questions have instigated the research in Chapter 3: Exploratory Research, where the discussion of internships becomes an important element of enquiry to graduate transition and early career progression.

CHAPTER THREE – EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will turn to the exploratory research that was used to gain insight into graduate transition and learning from the perspective of the three stakeholders of this research. Chapter 2: Literature Review highlighted areas where research covered broad points about graduate experiences, which were not specific to design graduates or the design industry. The purpose of the exploratory research was to explore areas specific to design graduates and to provide additional insight for the research stage.

The aims and objectives were to investigate the stakeholder's views about the graduate transition from higher education into the design industry. The three stakeholder groups are design agencies, design graduates, and higher education institutions, all in the UK. The exploratory research aimed to discover the views of:

- Design agencies in relation to their experience of design graduates in the workplace
- Higher education in relation to how graduates transition into the design industry
- Design graduates' experience of the transition into the design industry

Further to this, the literature review highlighted a tendency for the design industry and higher education institutions to have differing views on the purpose of design education, particularly concerning industry-specific skills. It also highlighted the use of internships in graduate transition; however, further insight was beneficial, especially applied to the specific practice in design agencies and how they are used and structured. Due to this, there was a further focus on gaining insight around specific areas such as learning and early career development of graduates, the role of internships and what role they provided for graduates, and how higher education prepares graduates for the design industry. The findings from this research, along with the literature review, have been used to provide insight and direction for Chapter 4: Methodology of this thesis.

This chapter covers four areas. First, research methods focuses on the approach to research, who will be involved and the rationale for the methods used for gathering the data. Following this, the writing turns to participant recruitment and ethics, as well as the location and situation of the research, how the interviews were conducted, and how the data was analysed. Then, the focus

turns to the findings of the research, which are outlined in themes that emerged from the data.

Finally, recommendations and next steps are presented for further research.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

Approach to research

The exploratory research aims were to uncover the participants' views on graduate transition and early career learning; therefore, the nature of what people think and feel about this topic was important. The individual participants' experiences and views were the focus of gathering data. This is because people construct their own views and thoughts on the world, allowing for multiple views on how the world can exist (Gray, 2014). The research provided data that were unique to each participant, shaped by their experience in the design industry and higher education, alongside their own experiences that were unique to their personal situation.

Due to the nature of what was to be found out—what people think and feel about the world they live in—the data gathered was qualitative. The focus on individuals' unique views is part of the social world, where qualitative data can provide the richness of the human view of the world (Crotty, 1998). When gathering data about the social world, interviews are almost always used to gain knowledge from participants (Gray, 2014). Furthermore, Creswell (2003) draws the link between giving the participants broad and open questions, so their meaning and interpretation of their experience are the focus of the data gained.

Participant focus

The participants for the exploratory research were informed by the stakeholder groups outlined in Section 1.4. As the aim of this research was to obtain the views of design graduates, design agencies, and higher education institutes in the UK, this, in turn, determined the participants.

The specific focus was how each of the participants viewed graduate transition, particularly around the areas of internships, early career learning, how learning occurs in the workplace, and how higher education had prepared the graduates for the design industry. Therefore, the participants were required to contribute to the exploratory research by talking about their experiences and viewpoints on graduate transition and early career experiences in the design industry. The use of a cross-section of participants from the stakeholder groups provided a broad range of scenarios and experiences, even with a small-scale group of participants.

Semi-structured interviews

At the exploratory research stage, the aim was to find out, quickly and efficiently, what a small sample of defined stakeholders thought about design graduates, the early career paths of designers, the role of design agencies in graduate learning, and the role of higher education in the design industry. Research approaches should be appropriate to what needs to be discovered, and if the requirement is to find out what people think, feel, or believe, then interviews are ideal (Robson, 2011). The research method used to gather data was semi-structured interviews, as they provide rich data, with the added benefit that it can quickly be developed into further research (Bryman, 2006). The data required needed to be gathered with an impartial view of what the participants think by giving them the opportunity to provide their own perspectives and thoughts on this area of research. The use of semi-structured interviews provided the ability to find out quickly how individuals responded to the questions within the interview, and provided the further opportunity to ask more questions and expand on topics. This was then used to find emerging ideas and themes, leading to development alongside the literature review to develop the main research.

Question development

The questions developed for the exploratory research emerged from Chapter Two: Literature Review, where three key areas *myths, community* and *transition* highlighted areas where exploratory research could assist in developing a broader understanding of how graduates, design agencies and higher education view and experience themes around graduate transition in the design industry.

Drawing on the literature review, a broad set of questions was developed; these were then refined for each of the stakeholder groups. The question development was aligned with the aims and objectives of the exploratory research, covering areas on graduate transitions, finding internships/jobs, the role of internships, how learning occurs in the design agency, and how higher education has developed graduates' skills.

All questions were formatted to be open-ended to encourage participants to discuss their views and draw on their own experiences. Question development also focused on creating a neutral stance towards topics to avoid directing the participant towards a particular response. Each stakeholder group had between eight and nine prepared questions for the interview process. Alongside this, further questions were developed to be used as prompts if the interview required this.

The questions used to frame the semi-structured interviews are presented in Table 1. The table is formatted to indicate questions that were similar across the stakeholder groups; in these instances, the questions all sit together horizontally on the table.

Table 1: Exploratory Research Interview Questions

	GRADUATES	DESIGN AGENCIES	HIGHER EDUCATION
QUESTIONS	What makes a good graduate?	What makes a good graduate?	What makes a good graduate?
		How do you find interns and/or junior designers when you need to take someone on?	How has this university helped graduates find work in the design industry?
	What influenced your placement or choice of internship?	What influences your choice of graduate or intern?	
	What makes a good environment for a graduate/intern to learn and develop?	What makes a good environment for a graduate/intern to learn and develop?	What makes a good environment for a graduate/intern to learn and develop?
	What are the outcomes of taking an internship at a design agency?	What are the outcomes of having an intern in your design agency?	What are your opinions of graduates taking internships at design agencies?
			How does this university facilitate the transition into the design industry for graduates?
	How does interning in a design agency help develop your skills as a graduate?	How have internships developed the graduates skills in the design agency?	
	How has the design agency helped with your skill development?	How has the design agency helped graduates with workplace learning?	
	Do you think that being an intern in a design agency will help your career in the design industry?		Should the design industry take more responsibility towards the career development of graduates?
	What are you plans after you finish this internship and for the future?		
		Are there any barriers to taking on an intern or junior designer in your workplace?	
	How do you think your higher education/ university has prepared you for the design industry?		Do you think the design course at this university provides the relevant skills for the design industry?
		What is your opinion of design education in the United Kingdom?	Should design education change to meet the demands of the design industry?

3.3 PARTICPANTS, INTERVIEWS, AND DATA

Participant recruitment approach

Using networking and contacts in the design industry, participants were approached via email as the first point of contact. This consisted of a brief outline of the exploratory research and how it would be involved. Further emails and phone calls provided further context, culminating in eleven agreeing to be involved in the research. Twelve design agencies were asked to participate in the research, with five replying and agreeing to take part in the exploratory research. Five graduates were approached, and three agreed to participate in the research. It was agreed at this stage, to protect the anonymity of the graduates, that none of the research materials, recordings, or associated materials would be made available to the design agency they were interning at. Three higher education institutions were asked to contribute, and all three agreed to be interviewed for the research.

Research location and timing

All the participants—graduates, higher education institutions, and design agencies—were based in Greater London, UK. The recruitment approach through networking and contacts provided suitable contacts; however, this determined the participants' locations to a geographically smaller area. Due to the purpose of the exploratory research, only a small number of participants were required, and the restricted location scope was acceptable, particularly as Greater London is considered the hub of the creative economy in the UK. The interviews all took place within a three-month period in 2015.

Ethics

Before the process of contacting potential participants, advice was taken from the Goldsmiths Code of Practice on Research Ethics and Integrity regarding research with participants, data collection and the consent required for the exploratory research. All initial contact with the participants occurred through email, and it was at this stage that the information relating to research ethics was communicated. It was outlined that the researcher would ensure confidentiality around their identity and place of work/internship, and all data would be kept securely. A letter of consent was provided; however, all participants gave informed consent through email confirmation.

Participants

Design agencies

- DA01: A small design agency in Greater London with approximately five team members. The agency has regularly offered internships and junior designer roles in the past, however, it does not offer these currently. The interview was conducted with the creative director/owner.

- DA02: A large design agency in Greater London with approximately 80 employees. The agency runs a dedicated internship programme that runs throughout the year, and occasionally offers interns permanent roles at the agency. The interview was conducted with a senior designer, who is also the internship programme director.

- DA03: A large design agency in Greater London with approximately 40 people. The agency offers internships on an ad hoc basis. The interview was conducted with the creative director and co-founder of the agency.

- DA04: A large design agency in Greater London, with international offices and over 100 employees. They do not offer internships; however, occasionally they will offer one to a select graduate, and the agency does not employ junior designers. The interview was conducted with a creative director.

- DA05: A medium-sized design agency with approximately 12 designers in Greater London. The agency has no formal hiring policy; it offers internships infrequently. However, internships are offered to people irrespective of their formal educational backgrounds. The interview was conducted with the founder and a senior designer who oversees any internships.

Graduates

- GRAD01: They had graduated six months before the time of the interview, with a design degree from a university in Greater London. They had previously interned at another design agency. The current internship was approximately four months; the design agency had just offered a permanent junior designer role at the time of the interview.

- GRAD02: They had graduated six months before the time of the interview, with a design degree from a university in southwest England. This internship was the first one taken since graduating, and they had been interning at the design agency for four months. There was no indication of future roles or plans at the design agency.

- GRAD03: They had graduated five months before the time of the interview, with a design degree from a university in Greater London. This internship was for three months and was the second since graduating. At the time of the interview, they had just accepted a job offer at another design agency as a junior designer and would be leaving the current internship early.

Higher education

- HE01: A Greater London university that specialises in art and design. The interview was conducted with a professor who specialises in communication and graphic design.

- HE02: A Greater London university that specialises in design, media, and film. The interview was conducted with the course leader in design.

- HE03: A Greater London university that specialises in a broad range of arts, with a well-recognised design department. The interview was conducted with the head of design.

Interviewing and data collection

All the interviews took place at the participants' place of work; however, they were given the option to choose a location of their choice. Each interview was conducted in a variety of workplace areas, from open plan areas, private meeting rooms and communal social areas. There was an added benefit of being able to visit the participants' place of work, as it provided an opportunity to gain an understanding of how the workplace was set up and how the employees interacted. Creswell (2003) noted the advantage of interviewing in an environment in which the participants are comfortable, as "This enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about an individual or place and to be highly involved in actual experiences of the participants." (p. 207). Another advantage of interviewing at the participants' workplace was that it provided a familiar environment without distracting and unknown elements.

All the interviews were conducted one-to-one and face-to-face with the researcher, as agreed upon in the email exchanges before the interviews. There was one exception to this, which occurred during the interview when the participant requested their colleague be involved at a specific point due to their direct work with graduates in the agency.

Each interview started with an introduction and an informal chat to put the participants at ease, such as asking them a little bit about themselves and how their day was going. Generally, the aim was to build rapport and make the interview process relaxed. Often, the participant gave a tour of the workplace before the start of the interview. Some participants, particularly the graduates, chose to have the interview in a private meeting room. This provided the opportunity for privacy and allowed the graduate to talk openly, and there was no chance of colleagues overhearing.

During the interviews, it was important to remain friendly, impartial, and nonjudgmental to the responses, opinions, and thoughts of the participants. Through being attentive, the participants remained relaxed, and this provided the opportunity for them to continue giving their responses. At certain points, it was necessary to ask for clarification on their answers, so these were noted to avoid confusion when the data was analysed.

Before each interview started, the participant gave consent for the interview to be recorded and was briefed on the interview length and timing, so they were clear about the process. The outline and purpose of the interviews were also discussed. All the interviews were voice recorded, and handwritten notes were taken to support the voice recordings, taking note of anything that was of interest. Voice recordings were used as they are an effective tool in qualitative research, as they are easily transcribed for the purpose of analysis. As an interviewer, they have the added benefit of capturing the voice data while you can remain focused on the interview and engage with the participant.

Analysing the data

The voice recordings from the interviews were transcribed, and along with the notes from the interviews, the data was analysed using a method described by Creswell (2003) as coding and describing. This consists of classifying, categorising, identifying themes; connecting and interrelating data; and interpreting and providing meaning.

Data analysis method

- Each stakeholder group was organised together, forming three groups

- Patterns and themes were noted from each group

- The questions from each group were put into eight categories

- Each group's data was added to the appropriate category

- Each cluster was analysed overall, both individually and in groups

- Data from each question group was contrasted and compared

- Each question cluster had conclusions drawn from it

- Themes emerging within the various clusters were categorised

3.4 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section examines the findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with graduates, design agencies, and higher education institutions. The findings have been grouped into the following eight areas:

1. What makes a good graduate?
2. What influences the choice of intern/junior designer *or* design agency?
3. How are internships/junior designer roles found in the design industry?
4. What makes a good environment for graduates to learn in?
5. How has an internship role helped the career progression of graduates?
6. What are the outcomes of having an intern/junior designer in a design agency?
7. How has the university prepared graduates for the design industry?
8. Are there any barriers to graduates entering the design industry?

1. What makes a good graduate?

The graduates in the exploratory research interviews believed that a good graduate possesses good design skills, specifically the ability to be creative and to think differently. Individually, the graduates believed their design skills gave them an advantage over other graduates when looking for roles in the design industry. The three graduates indicated that the ability to think creatively was valued by design agencies, and they thought this was more important than software skills. GRAD01 said they didn't believe agencies are concerned about the lack of software skills, saying: "they (design agencies) can't teach you to think, they can only teach you to do." They referenced the advice they had received from tutors to experiment with design disciplines and style while at university, but to develop a clear idea of their path after graduation. The three graduates indicated that having a clear plan after university would help with their transition into the design industry.

Higher education institutions acknowledged that the design industry has a broad scope when it comes to defining what makes a good graduate; this is due to the diverse nature of the industry and the wide scope of roles within it. The findings from the interviews with higher education institutions confirmed that they believed that graduates' design skills contribute to their success in the design industry. Alongside this, the institutions also recognised graduate success goes beyond design skills, with employability and personal skills, such as communication skills, teamwork, and work ethic playing an important role in how well graduates do in the design industry. Higher education

institutions indicated that they are approached by design agencies looking for graduates to fill internships and/or junior designer roles, and this has provided higher education institutions with an insight into what the agencies request for these roles. The observations by the institutions indicated that design agencies are often attracted to graduates who would fit into the workplace, with HE03 saying: "people attract people like each other", who regularly saw design agencies extending internships or offering roles when the graduate's personality is a natural fit to the workplace.

The findings from the interviews with the graduates and higher education institutions focused on the graduate's positive attributes, however, the design agencies' responses were varied when discussing what makes a good graduate, and they also talked about what makes a bad graduate. The five design agencies gave a wide range of thoughts on what makes a good graduate. They recognised that good design skills are vital, as without these graduates will struggle to make an impression in the industry. However, all the agencies placed a high level of importance on graduates' personal skills and employability skills combined with their design skills. The agencies placed a high value on attributes such as a positive attitude/personality, team player, good communicator, work ethic, being keen, and having interests outside of design. The agencies recognised they look for a combination of a good designer and a good person to be around, such as DA03, who used the 'transatlantic flight test' for new employees, saying "Could I sit on a plane with them for ten hours? Would they be interesting and hold their own?" DA05 summed up what it takes for a graduate to be successful, they have to possess two things, saying "To get noticed requires two things: nice person, good work. Then you have a chance." It was acknowledged by the design agencies that there is an element of luck when it comes to graduate success, attributed to being in the right place at the right time due to only using graduates irregularly in the workplace.

All five of the agencies talked about what made a bad graduate, with a focus on poor employability skills, underdeveloped professional knowledge, and personal skills in the workplace. DA01 has stopped employing graduates or offering internships due to the lack of knowledge and experience, saying the process is hard work and takes up too much time. Other agencies gave examples of graduates who were arrogant and overly confident in their skills or poor work ethic and a poor team player.

2. What influences the choice of intern/junior designer or design agency?

The three graduates expressed how difficult it was to find a role in a design agency and enter the industry; therefore, they were open to gaining experience through any opportunity they could find. GRAD03 said "Anywhere! Just to get work experience and experience." GRAD02 also said, "To be honest, I'd intern anywhere." This was because of the difficulties they had experienced in entering the design industry due to factors such as competition from other graduates, the scarcity of roles for graduates and their current lack of industry experience.

While the graduates said they would do anything to break into the industry, they all discussed the implication of working for free or unpaid roles and indicated they did not agree with the practice and would not accept these roles. GRAD01 saw a correlation between being valued and being paid for your skills, saying "If they value you, they should be paying you. [...] Everyone else I know (in the same position) has the same opinion. Internships should be paid."

At the time of the interviews, the three graduates were interning and indicated there was a good match between their career aspirations and the design agency output. This was attributed to identifying their design strengths and focusing on their design specialisation post-university. Two graduates had undertaken previous internships, but upon reflection, expressed they were not ideal in terms of learning or career outcomes. However, these experiences helped them with their next internship choices, leading to informed decisions on what design agency was right for them.

Regarding internships, graduates, and design agencies, the viewpoint of higher education institutions focused on the relationship between the education system and design agencies (and the wider design industry). The institutions highlighted that design agencies expect newcomers to the industry to have been educated to a degree level, and yet felt the industry often expressed negative connotations about the state of the graduate's education. The interviews highlighted that higher education institutions felt there must be an element of trust by the design industry to educate and teach, and highlighted that industries beyond the design industry value graduates with design degrees, with HE03 saying: "they [graduates] are really smart, had a great education, can think laterally about problems, work in teams and deal in complexity."

The three higher education institutions recognised that design agencies show a preference for graduates from a select pool of universities, and they indicated there is a correlation between

graduate university choice and future career paths. However, they understood that graduate success is complex and not solely down to university choice, with HE01 noting at degree shows there are exceptions to this, saying "Every so often you get a gem from an unknown university." There was an acknowledgement that university courses can cater to a wide variety of approaches and specialisms that make design curricula unique. HE03 explained that "education can accept loads of different styles and types of practice." Furthermore, the institutions understood that the variety within the design industry requires a wide scope of design graduates beyond specific skills design agencies regularly specify. The interviews showed that higher education institutions believe graduates can contribute to their own success through being involved at university by networking, interacting with staff and students, and being visible. For graduates, this can lead to referrals by tutors and more opportunities. HE01 highlighted this, saying "I'm more apt to say yes, if I see you around and you're committed" – leading to potential internships and job role offers over other students or graduates. Overall, the institutions concluded that design agencies are really after graduates who are "nice human beings" (HE02) and "someone who's not a dick" (HE03), alongside well-developed communication skills.

All design agencies in the exploratory research specified that they would only give opportunities to graduates if they considered them exceptional candidates. The reasoning behind this decision was to maintain the agencies' work standards and the need to fit into the workplace seamlessly. DA01 was concerned graduates would "dilute your workforce" and were seen as not performing as well as more experienced designers. The agency DA04 only employs experienced designers, saying "all designers take a step down in their roles to come here.", indicating that graduates are not good or capable enough. All of the agencies placed a criterion regarding the university attended by graduates, and this was important to them, only selecting graduates from the select list. Beyond university choice, the agencies looked for good design skills, employability skills and personality. The focus on fitting in was a priority, with the agencies specifying graduates needed to be social and part of the team.

3. How are internships/junior designer roles found in design agencies?

The graduates were all offered potential internship roles at their degree shows; two graduates were offered multiple internships, and the third was offered one. However, there was a period after the shows before the agencies contacted the graduates to set up the internships, leaving the graduates unsure of outcomes and next steps. Before the degree show, the graduates indicated they

understood the importance of the degree show for finding internships and job roles. All three graduates recognised the need to stand out from other graduates and the importance of self-promotion to make an impression with the design agencies who visited the degree show.

This process highlights one of the issues graduates experience when searching for early-career roles in design agencies. The three graduates all talked about their experience of applying for internships and entry-level roles in design agencies after graduation; this process was time-consuming, with no or few responses. The graduates expressed how they felt at this time, saying it was emotionally challenging, with feelings of low morale and self-doubt. The cycle of waiting and rejection was difficult to deal with, and the graduates indicated they felt a loss of momentum and considered whether they should rethink their career paths. One graduate had to take a low-paid unskilled job to cover living costs during this time.

The graduates showed a strong preference for finding a junior designer role rather than having to take internships, although they were all aware of the assumptions that internships are the path to employment in the design industry. Upon reflection, they admitted they learnt a great deal from well-structured internships and these provided valuable experience. However, they all mentioned that their university cohort did not all enjoy positive internship experiences.

Higher education institutions are aware of the value of end-of-degree shows for their students to access early career opportunities in the design industry. It was highlighted by one institution that there was a need to create a graduate database for the design industry to access; this is due to the industry focus on searching for recent graduates, rather than current students. This identifies an inability to link up opportunities for recent graduates that could be beneficial.

The main discussion point, however, was the focus on internships and work experience opportunities during students' degrees. The higher education institutions all mentioned that the design industry approached them to access students for a variety of opportunities, with two institutions vetting requests to protect their students. This ranges from unacceptable practices and remuneration to the appropriateness of work. The third institute did not screen opportunities but admitted that perhaps there was a need to do so. Of the institutions, one rejects all unpaid roles, another takes an executive decision based on the benefit to the student, and the third does not have a policy. Overall, all three institutions believed students should be paid for their time from a

philosophical viewpoint, but admitted there were always exceptions to this. The concluding thoughts by all three institutions indicated that they view graduates as adults, and they alone are responsible for their actions and decisions regarding internships and opportunities within the design industry.

The findings showed that most design agencies use university end-of-degree shows to connect with graduates. There was a tendency to visit the same shows year-on-year; this was because of links with course lecturers or contacts at universities and the preference for graduates from specific universities as they view them as 'better graduates'. Beyond degree shows, all the agencies indicated they did not need to look hard, as they have a consistent stream of graduates emailing them, looking for internship opportunities. Therefore, opportunities are seldom advertised, and roles are filled organically. Out of the five agencies interviewed, four offer internships, but interestingly, only two agencies are prepared to recruit interns for junior roles in the agency. This indicates that internships are being used to provide experience for graduates without employment opportunities.

It was apparent that recruitment remains informal across the agencies, with few advertised roles or a transparent process in place, often placing people based on 'a feeling'. One agency commented on the recruitment process, saying "the best jobs are never advertised. The people find you." (DA03). DA03 also said, "Every now and then someone just fits, and that is an indescribable thing that happens."

4. What makes a good environment for graduates to learn in?

Two of the graduates' experiences of internships were varied, experiencing positive and negative situations. Both of their first intern experiences were defined by very low pay, long hours, lack of structure, and no mentoring or support. Furthermore, they did not have support from more experienced designers and tended to work in isolation on jobs. Worryingly, GRAD01 was concerned about 'sweatshop design', where the workforce of the agency was predominantly interns. While these were unpleasant experiences for the graduates, they acknowledged the situation has given them the confidence to stand up for themselves and not be taken advantage of again.

All three graduates identified that their learning was enhanced in agencies where there was a structure for interns, such as a programme where learning expectations were met, like GRAD01 who said, "I felt comfortable in the way it is organised." Individually, the graduates talked about how they

felt valued by the agencies, and in return, they were motivated to work harder; alongside this, the graduates found their confidence increased in these situations. Tools used by agencies included partnering graduates with an experienced designer, who acted as a mentor. This allowed the graduates to feel they could ask questions and make mistakes, without being judged. The graduates all described the agencies as friendly and welcoming, providing a supportive work environment that made them feel comfortable. All three graduates stated that interning provided learning opportunities they could not learn at university, such as real-life briefs, deadlines, workflow, and 'trade secrets.' However, the sudden transition from university to the workplace was a steep learning curve that was challenging and unexpected.

External circumstances during the time of interning, whether positive or negative, impacted the graduates' learning progression at the agencies. Personal situations were described as unstable, predominantly due to interning and the search for employment, with graduates talking about experiencing high levels of stress, financial worries, precarious living situations, long commutes, and lack of family support that affected how graduates feel about interning.

The higher education institutions all understood that learning continues for graduates in the design industry. All three had several concerns about how design agencies would approach this and ultimately who was responsible for early career learning. The first concern centred on time and resources in design agencies to provide valuable learning experiences. They highlighted that there was a lack of help to support early career learning, particularly in small agencies, and noted that larger agencies have the capabilities to set up learning programmes and internship models, with higher education institutions identifying that a good model could be transferable to small agencies. Higher education institutions had sympathy for agencies, indicating they need help to develop early career learning, with HE01 saying "No one seems to be taking on the fight here.", indicating support needs to come from a variety of sources, such as government and design organisations. Second, higher education institutions was concerned about who would mentor and guide the graduates in their early career learning. With their knowledge of learning, the higher education institutions understood that graduates' learning could be enhanced through mentoring and close guidance, and they understood some agencies do care about nurturing and developing graduates' knowledge of the industry in the workplace. However, the concern was raised regarding the inconsistency of this from agency to agency, with HE02 saying "Generally thinking, without being naive, most companies do care. So, it's astonishing that some people don't care, because it's the future of your company

and your industry." There was annoyance that some agencies do not care or value training, impacting on the graduate and their future, but also the industry overall. HE03 talked about this attitude, saying "The idea bugs the hell out of me, because they need to take on the responsibility for their employees. When Tesco's employees stack shelves, Tesco will still train them to do this. Why is it different in design agencies?"

Interestingly, the five design agencies were vague or did not acknowledge what makes a good learning environment for graduates. Instead, they focused on the effect of having interns in their workplace and how it affects their business. Two agencies talked about how they approached interns in the agency, while the remaining three agencies did not have a learning programme or outline for internships. The agencies DA02 and DA03 discussed the structure they follow when they have interns, such as portfolio presentation, personal plans, mentoring, shadowing, regular meetings, working in teams and exit interviews. This indicated an understanding of how they can support a graduate with an introduction and learning after university. Expanding on this, DA03 found the process time consuming and required planning to deal with. On top of this, DA03 focused on how interns deal with work, saying "it's madness, chaotic and they need the ability to respond in the work situation." This meant the agency restricted interns as they could not cope with the process regularly.

5. How has an internship role helped the career progression of graduates?

The graduates had already indicated they would prefer not to intern after graduation (3.4.2 and 3.4.3); however, in hindsight, the three graduates viewed their internships as learning experiences, with some positive outcomes from this. Through internships, they have gained an understanding of what it is like to work in a design agency. Furthermore, they realised that workplace learning was different from university, and the internship process had provided them with industry-specific skills. Upon reflection, the graduates commented that if they had taken a junior designer role immediately after graduation, they may have been too scared to take risks and would not have had a full understanding of what was expected of them. Alongside this, the graduates have been able to 'test drive' agencies to see whether the fit is right in terms of work and people, and internships have provided an opportunity to be more open with questions and make mistakes. Overall, they viewed internships as the first step to working in design agencies, and they recognised the correlation between interning and the informal route to employment at design agencies.

The higher education institutions recognised the role of internships in graduates' career progression in the design industry. However, individually, they all had reservations about how this affects graduates, and there were concerns around graduate welfare regarding internships in design agencies. All three institutions believe graduates need to value themselves and not put themselves into a position of abuse, which includes not being paid, a lack of opportunities to learn, lack of mentoring, and using interns to create work in place of paid employees. HE02 discussed the need for graduates to be part of negotiations when discussing internships. They highlighted that the terms of internships should not be set out solely by agencies but should be a mutually negotiated agreement, with both sides settling on terms, conditions, and outcomes. Asking questions such as whether there is a valid outcome to interning and what the result of the internship should look like was recommended to help graduates understand why they should accept an internship. Although there appeared to be reservations about the outcomes and the power balance of internships for graduates, all three higher education institutions felt there was little they could do beyond educating graduates about internships, and all agreed that graduates are responsible for their own choices and decisions.

Across the five design agencies, there were no decisive answers on how internships assist graduate career progression. It was mentioned that if a graduate had impressed them during an internship, the agency would be happy to recommend them to other agencies, and the graduate could keep in contact with the agency for future openings. Two of the agencies have hired interns as junior designers; however, this reflected a small percentage compared to the total number of interns they have had through the agency.

6. What are the outcomes of having an intern/junior designer in a design agency?

At the time of the interviews, all three graduates were interning; however, two had also secured permanent roles at a design agency. One graduate had been offered a role at the agency they were currently interning at, while the other had applied successfully at a different design agency from their internship, and the other graduate was still looking for a permanent role. The graduates recognised that they were fortunate to be able to intern and use the process to find jobs. They acknowledged that not everyone could take this path because of the implications of money and living situations, with GRAD02 saying "Internships refine the graduate group. It's the survival of the fittest."

While the graduates were pleased with the outcome of securing employment, they talked at length about the emotional impact this had taken on them. They all found their time since leaving university stressful, as they spent approximately six months applying for internships and jobs, as well as interning. All three experienced challenging living situations, long commutes and inadequate income. The unpredictability of their situations has caused them a great deal of stress; all three graduates had set a time limit of approximately six months on their job search before they would run out of money or change their plans and explore other industries for work.

The higher education institutions recognised that internships offer exposure and experience at design agencies that graduates might never get to try if they went straight into a junior designer role. However, their reservations around internships were still echoed in their responses in Section 3.4.5. Furthermore, higher education institutions all felt that graduates have a multitude of skills and creativity to offer agencies, saying it is not just about the benefits to the industry. This highlights the positive benefits graduates bring to agencies through new and innovative design practices, and higher education institutions wanted to raise the importance of this point.

The five design agencies' responses to the outcomes of having an intern varied, but they did tend to focus solely on employment outcomes. One agency does not offer internships or employ junior designers, and another agency occasionally offers internships; however, it would not employ interns as they have a company policy of not employing junior designers. One agency talked about how difficult it is to have a junior designer in the agency due to the amount of time and effort it takes to oversee development; therefore, it does not employ at this level. Two agencies have offered job roles to a couple of graduates; however, it was highlighted that most interns only stay the length of the placement before finishing up and moving on. Only two agencies briefly touched on internship outcomes beyond employment, with two agencies acknowledging that graduates have new and fresh ways of looking at design problems. This was welcomed, as it contributed new knowledge to the agencies.

When asked whether the agencies provided paid internships for graduates, the four agencies that offer internships said they do pay. Three agencies decline to say how much they pay, and the fourth stated they pay interns £250 a month (*quote from 2015*).

7. How has the university prepared graduates for the design industry?

Overall, the graduates were positive about their time at university and the contribution it has made to their development as designers. All three graduates thought that university choice was an important factor in their job success. The graduates all attended different universities, but felt their courses offered a balance of design skills, critical thinking, real-life briefs, and understanding of the design industry. All three stated the focus of design degrees should be design education, with GRAD01 saying the university should not be about training for the design industry, as this would be meaningless, and all graduates would be the same. Two of the graduates had work experience built into the curriculum, while the third did not have the opportunity. The graduates talked about how a design degree provided them with the opportunity to enter the design industry; through their courses, they were able to make industry connections and provide networking opportunities. After graduation, the graduates felt it was up to them to find a job, with GRAD03 noting, "My experience was, it comes down to you." While they did not believe it was up to the university to make them more employable, GRAD03 found their tutor offered advice on finding jobs, saying "my tutor was a big help—good guidance at school."

University offered the graduates the opportunity to develop beyond design skills that were important for working life, with two of the graduates talking about the positives of learning life skills such as time management, budgeting, and living away from home. GRAD02 found this useful, saying "the uni experience is about preparing you for the real world as such; it gives you life skills." Upon graduation, the graduates missed university life, particularly friendships and the community they had created around them. GRAD01 found the transition difficult as the change had been intense, saying that after graduation it felt like "everything shattered really. A completely different world."

Overall, higher education institutions viewed the main purpose of their design degree courses as delivering education for students, with HE03 clarifying this, saying "design education is not training. It's education." There was concern that there was a push to train graduates to enter the design industry, with HE03 saying "I do not see the primary role of education is to feed an existing industry. I think if undergraduate education was about producing a skilled workforce for the design agencies, we would be hugely underselling the package of education." The higher education institutions stated that the design industry does value design graduates, as they recruit extensively, therefore presenting a link between education and employability. HE01 elaborated, saying "I think that if they

(design agencies) are asking for specific design education qualifications, there must be a trust of the system to provide industry requirements." (HE01). While they highlighted that the design industry pushed for specific industry skills in the curriculum, there were concerns that building employability skills in the curriculum was a big focus, particularly from a government perspective. HE01 asked why it appeared to be focused on subjects in the creative industries, saying "The question is, on the government agenda, why do they feel that employability only comes to certain disciplines and not others. Why do they feel that design graduates need to be employable?"

All five agencies only expressed generalities when talking about how universities prepare graduates for working in the design industry; often, these were negative in context. Opinions covered a range of topics; however, teaching quality was the focus of most complaints; alongside this, the agencies discussed the lack of graduate skills, outdated curriculum, and the lack of preparation for the design industry. Three agencies raised concerns about the teaching standards at universities, stating they believed lecturers and tutors often take jobs in education as they are 'failed designers', and thought the level of teaching was poor. Two agencies acknowledged there are good lecturers out there; however, they believed there are not enough, and teaching standards need to be raised. Two agencies thought that developing closer links between industry and higher education would help to raise standards in education; however, they also considered it the responsibility of higher education to initiate this, as agencies lack time and are running a business.

The design agencies acknowledge that the university has developed the graduates' skills, however, the agencies believed better skills could be taught. Specific areas were branding and communication skills, with DA03 saying "branding is taught really, really badly at the higher education level." Other agencies thought the curriculum was outdated and did not reflect the industry the graduates entered. The agencies talked about the variation of curricula, with some universities viewing this favourably, and how this was reflected in the quality of the graduate. There were further concerns that higher education is turning out 'identikit graduates', again reflected in teaching. Three agencies offered thoughts on how to improve education, including better briefs, time-based projects, and more insight into the design industry. Overall, all the agencies believed that graduates were not prepared for working in a design agency.

8. Are there any barriers to graduates entering the design industry?

The three graduates identified multiple barriers to entering the design industry; these ranged from challenging personal situations, the reliance on internships to gain the experience required to get a junior designer role, the lack of adequate remuneration for internship positions, and the lack of regulation around internships. The time after university had been challenging for all three graduates and appeared to affect them the most. Each graduate interviewed had to overcome personal situations alongside their internships, resulting in added stress and worry. These included financial issues, unstable accommodation, lack of support from family and friends, and having to combine the internship with part-time jobs.

The graduates also highlighted that internships appeared to be the only path to securing a job in a design agency. The three graduates had previously applied for junior designer roles but had been unsuccessful, as they lacked experience. They stated that through internships, they found permanent roles, a common theme amongst their peers too. The internships the graduates had were paid; however, all three indicated this did not cover their basic living expenses during this time. They recognised that it was due to the financial and personal support of family and friends that they have been able to take these opportunities. They were aware that not all graduates were able to draw on the support they had received, limiting their choices. These graduates did not take any unpaid internships, but were aware of others doing so, which they equated to the exploitation of graduates. Finally, the graduates found that not all internships offer the same learning opportunities. Two of the graduates had experienced internships that lacked structure, provided no mentoring, had long hours, and lacked employment opportunities. One graduate described their internship at an agency with 15 interns, and two employees to oversee their work output.

The higher education institutions also highlighted multiple barriers for graduates entering the design industry. Higher education institutions identified internships as a common feature of the graduate transition into the design industry; therefore, they had concerns about the structure of internships and how this affects graduates. They recognised that many design agencies offer good quality internships that are organised and provide learning opportunities. Their concern was that there is no guidance or support for agencies that are inexperienced or unsure of how to run successful internships. This led to higher education institutions questioning why the UK does not have a 'code of practice' or similar that can assist the design industry in focusing on early-career learning in the workplace. They highlighted that other countries have developed levels of

attainment within the industry, yet in the UK there is no push for this from the government, design organisations and the design industry. They also noted that design organisations can and do give guidance; however, they cannot enforce workplace learning practices. Two of the higher education institutions felt internships needed a level of compliance built into them; this could be through a legal definition as to what an internship is, and how it can be implemented. One area the institutions felt was a big barrier to graduates was the lack of pay or low levels of pay for interns, and how this can lead to the exclusion of graduates who cannot afford to intern for free or very little pay.

Higher education institutions were concerned for graduates once they started in design agencies, as they felt there was no requirement for developing industry knowledge and workplace learning. They felt that learning often appears to happen by chance, and furthermore, there appears to be little or no support for agencies to provide this. They highlighted examples of some agencies that provide excellent mentoring opportunities and understand how graduates can learn in the workplace. However, they are aware that there are agencies with little vision of what the role and purpose of an internship are for graduate outcomes.

When the design agencies talked about the barriers graduates face entering the design industry, the focus was on two areas: there are too many design graduates, and the attitudes of design graduates are a problem. The design agencies all felt there were too many design graduates for the roles available in the design industry and, due to this, see it as a barrier to entry. The agencies used their experiences in enquiries for positions as a measure of this. When DA02 advertised a junior designer role, they received over 400 applications, while for an internship role, they had 165 applications; they consider these numbers normal. Other agencies received enquires every day requesting internships; due to this, they do not reply to many. The second barrier was identified as graduates' attitudes, with all five agencies commenting on graduates' bad attitudes and lack of work ethic. While recognising this does not apply to all graduates, the agencies indicated this tainted the view of graduates as a group. The agencies used examples where graduates were too confident in their design skills or could not get on with work, citing these as off-putting.

Conclusion

Graduates and higher education institutions were positive about design learning and teaching, seeing it as a transformative process. However, the design industry was less enthusiastic about design education and the graduates that emerged with design degrees. The graduates valued the

teaching, specifically the development of design thinking, creativity, and conceptual work. Alongside this, they recognised that the university has helped them develop further skills that could be identified as employability skills, such as teamwork, time management, communication and problem solving. Higher education indicated that design degree graduates are not solely trained for the design industry, with many graduates finding employment in a wide range of roles across a broad range of sectors. Because of this, there is not a particular type of graduate required, as the future career paths of graduates are varied.

However, the design agencies brought up several points regarding the shortcomings of higher education and the impact this has not only on graduates, but also specifically on the design industry. The design agencies were particularly scathing about the quality of lecturers and tutors, with one agency describing them as 'failed designers'. Some design agencies suggest that the design degree course could be improved with better briefs, time-based projects, and more insight into the design industry. Interestingly, the graduates and higher education indicated in their responses that these elements were already embedded into the curriculum. This could imply that the design agencies might be unaware of the course curriculum. However, it appeared that the design agencies thought a closer relationship between higher education and the design industry would be beneficial, but there was reluctance to get involved. They suggested that it was the role of higher education to start the process, and the agencies admitted they were time-poor, with their focus on running a business.

There was a preference by the graduates to go straight into a junior design role upon graduation. They confirmed that their initial efforts to apply for these roles were unsuccessful, as it was a job requirement to have experience, and therefore they turned to internships to gain experience. Degree shows appeared to be recognised by graduates, higher education institutions and design agencies as the place to recruit and network. The graduates all received verbal offers for internships here, and the design agencies indicated they would use shows to offer internships. One higher education institution highlighted that it would be useful to develop a database of graduates, as the design industry regularly contacts them to find graduates, but unfortunately, once the students have left, they were unable to put them in touch. Both design agencies and higher education institutions indicated there is a clear preference by the design industry for graduates from specific universities. The agencies indicated the graduates were 'better' and implied they had been

taught well, particularly in the context of what design agencies require in their workplace. The higher education institutions did not elaborate on this point.

Design agencies talked about what they look for in a graduate, with design skills and conceptual thinking as a given. What they really look for is graduates who have great personalities, are friendly, helpful, and positive; they want them to be like them to fit into the agency. It appears they are looking for an elusive fit – something they can only identify when they meet the person. The higher education institutions confirmed that agencies appeared to take on graduates who fit into the agency and are similar – the right fit. The design agencies were often negative about higher education and graduates, even when they offered internships for graduates. The areas discussed indicated they felt graduates often had bad attitudes, were not work-ready, and lacked a work ethic. It is a matter of concern that there were design agencies that would not take on interns or graduates, as they indicated it is too much work and stress for them. Interestingly, these two agencies were the most damning towards higher education and their failings.

The graduates had varying experiences of interning. Some agencies provided a senior team member to mentor them, used seating arrangements for learning opportunities, and the team were friendly and welcoming. However, some graduates had also experienced internships where there was little or no opportunity to learn, they worked long hours and they described them as exploitative. The graduates' experiences showed that not all internships are equal, and their quality appears to be determined by the design agencies. Higher education had concerns about internships, mostly around graduate exploitation. They worried about graduates' ability to differentiate between internship opportunities, particularly around pay and conditions. Furthermore, higher education would prefer graduates to negotiate the terms of internships with agencies. They conceded that graduates are adults and are responsible for their own decisions regarding their futures.

Overall, the design agencies were unable to articulate what constitutes a good learning environment for graduates in the workplace. Two agencies talked briefly regarding the tasks they utilise for graduate onboarding and exiting from the agency. Furthermore, when asked how internships help graduate career progression, they were unable to elaborate on the topic, other than whether the graduate was employed or not, and the offer to stay in touch in the future.

Regarding the barriers that graduates face when entering the design industry, higher education institutions and the graduates were broadly aligned. They were concerned about internship structure, pay, learning opportunities and future employment. Graduates also had concerns that their personal situation would impact opportunities. However, when the design agencies talked about barriers for graduates entering the design industry, the focus was different. There was concern that there were too many graduates, creating a competitive job market for limited job roles. However, the most talked-about barrier was the graduates themselves, with agencies talking about their bad attitudes and overconfidence.

For the graduates, the transition has been challenging and they experienced instability from changes in their personal life, money issues, accommodation problems and taking low-paid jobs, all while looking and applying for jobs. The unexpectedness of the changes in their lives appeared to impact them greatly. Furthermore, they missed their university lives, particularly the support network they had built around them.

3.5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

While the exploratory research consisted of a small group of participants, it provided valuable insight into how higher education, graduates and design agencies view graduate transition into the design industry. The four recommendations below contributed to defining the main research and to guiding areas that need further research around graduate transition.

Recommendation One – Develop a deeper understanding of graduate transition

Design agencies, and, to a lesser extent, higher education institutions, are not particularly invested in the process of graduate transition. Higher education institutions shows concern for graduates during this time, yet they say they are adults and are responsible for themselves. Design agencies appeared to be oblivious to the experiences of graduates and the impact of transition on them. It appears there is a lack of empathy for graduates' personal situations during the transition. Unfortunately, the graduates indicated that the transition is a difficult time and they do need support to assist them in navigating the many barriers they face.

Recommendation Two – Identify how learning occurs in early career learning
in design agencies

The research highlighted a lack of understanding around how learning occurs in the design agency and how learning can be implemented. There is concern that design agencies are offering internships that lack a clear structure and plan, which impacts graduates' learning outcomes. Design agencies acknowledge that they could take more responsibility for the learning and career progression of graduates. Higher education institutions indicated there was a range of internships, from effective to exploitative, and there was concern that graduates could be taken advantage of. Graduates indicated they understand not all internships are equal; however, this appeared to be learnt from experiencing it themselves.

Recommendation Three – Develop a deeper understanding of the internship process

Internships appear to be the accepted route for graduates to enter the design industry. With higher education, graduates, and design agencies all indicating this process is standard within the design industry, more research is required to understand how internships contribute to early career development for graduates. Areas of interest include how internships affect employment, how learning is developed in internships, internship conditions, the role of employability skills, and what

design agencies look for in an intern. With such importance placed on the internship process, there is a need to understand how to make internships more effective.

Recommendation Four – Identify how higher education has contributed to graduate development

While graduates and higher education were broadly positive about design degrees, the design agencies indicated that they were unhappy with the current state of design education. The graduates felt their education contributed to their development as designers and were aware they were still learning, with the expectation that their first roles in design agencies would contribute to this development. Higher education institutions believe that design education is not industry training. However, the design agencies felt they needed to be more focused on the specific skills the design industry needs.

CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The research aims were to identify the process of how learning occurs in the first role graduates take in design agencies while also understanding how work-based learning is supported and developed by design agencies; therefore, the research is focused on these two interrelated aims. Furthermore, five objectives framed the methodology: to determine the phases of transition from university to the first role as a graduate, to examine how graduates learn in the design agency workplace, including formal accreditation schemes, to determine if first roles for graduates are defined and/or led by internships, to discern skill set expectations of a design agency, and to develop a model for work-based learning in design agencies that responds to existing internship and junior designer working practices. The stakeholders for this research are design agencies, design graduates and higher education institutions, all in the UK.

The literature review highlighted three themes that influenced and impacted graduate transition and learning – myths, communities, and transition. *Myths* explored how and why myths have emerged around design higher education and how this has affected the perception of design courses, design graduates, and higher education institutions, particularly by the design industry. *Communities* focused on how learning occurs in the workplace, particularly for early career designers who require support and guidance as they enter the design agency. Finally, *transition* looked at the challenges faced by graduates as they navigated between higher education and finding their first roles in the design agency.

The exploratory research was devised to explore the early themes emerging in the literature review, and it was through interviews with design agencies, graduates, and higher education institutions that four key recommendations emerged from this process: to develop a deeper understanding of graduate transition, identify how learning occurs in early career learning in a design agency, develop a deeper understanding of the internship process and identify how higher education has contributed to graduate development.

The literature review and exploratory research found that each stakeholder group had different and sometimes opposing ideas of what they believe in about graduate transition, and how learning can occur in first roles in design agencies. Graduates found the transition a stressful time, particularly regarding feeling uncertain about the future. The assumption by graduates is that internships are almost certainly a requirement for gaining employment. However, graduates are often let down by

their own lack of awareness of the importance of personal skills and attitude, which design agencies place a high value on. Transition can be difficult for graduates; design agencies are often oblivious to how this impacts graduates in their early careers. However, it appears there is a knowledge gap about how to structure or implement learning during first roles in design agencies; and although the design agencies acknowledged they could take more responsibility in this area, it often is not their priority. The research focused on these issues and how they can provide a deeper understanding of what happens in the process of early career learning for graduates.

Although there are three stakeholders in the research – design agencies, design graduates, and higher education – the research component of the PhD thesis did not include higher education participants. The aims and objectives focused on the relationship between design agencies and graduates' early career learning. By exploring this unique and overlooked area of transition – when the graduate enters the design agency – the research looked at this specific time to gain an in-depth understanding of what occurred. The research aimed to uncover how higher education has influenced and impacted graduate transition, from the perspective of design agencies and graduates. Finally, the outcome of the research should provide insight for higher education regarding what occurs to their student cohorts once they have graduated, and how they used their education and applied this to working in design agencies.

Both the literature review and the exploratory research provided direction and data that influenced the direction of the PhD research outlined in this chapter. The research focused on people's experiences and their views on the world, in this instance, the design agencies and the graduates. Furthermore, there was a shared place of experience – the design agency as the workplace – where further exploration focused on how workplace communities influence graduate learning. Therefore, the research encompassed two interlinked spheres – the individual and the community in which they participate.

This chapter will cover six areas: research methods, data collection, interviews and question development, participants, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Each area contributes to the framework, design, and development of the PhD research.

Research methods are social constructivist in approach, as the aims and objectives are to understand how meaning is constructed through engagement and interaction as design agencies

and graduates make sense of their world. Through the application of case studies, it is possible to gain a better understanding of real people in real situations, such as the design agency. Finally, this section looks at the relevance of 'insider-researcher' and the benefits and implications of researching within your own community.

Data collection explores the use of semi-structured interviews to gather data from the case studies. The format of semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to ask open-ended questions that allow participants to describe their interpretation of situations and how they experience this.

Interview and question development looks at how the case study interviews were structured in terms of the approach to the timeframe through the use of a flexible framework. The development of questions for both graduates and design agencies was explored. Finally, the case study application was provided, covering introductions, when, where, and format.

Participants focuses on how participants were selected, from the rationale, method of recruitment, numbers and variables and a description of all the final participants in the research.

Data analysis describes how the data that emerged from the case study interviews was processed and analysed. The use of content analysis through summarising content, explicating content and structuring content the findings of the research emerged.

Ethical considerations shows the complexities of research regarding permissions, consent, confidentiality, data protection, and storage.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODS

Exploratory research impact on the main research

The learnings from the exploratory research impacted how the main research was structured, the move from individual experiences to the experience of a community. The aim of the exploratory research was to understand individuals and their opinions, allowing for participants to be interviewed about how they felt about a particular topic, rather than to focus uniquely on their own position. The exploratory data was unique as it focused on the participants drawing on their own experiences rather than a specific incident, particularly so of the design agencies and higher education institutions.

However, in the case studies the aim was to uncover how a specific experience that was share through the workplace emerged. The exploratory research methods and outcome assisted with the direction of the framework, that is to build case studies into the methodology, to enable understanding from the perspective of the design agency and the graduate for their respective viewpoints. The graduate and design agency were paired together to understand how work-based learning occurred in a singular workplace. The importance of this was to understand the different perspectives and dynamics that occur in a workplace community.

Framework

The two interrelated aims of this PhD research were to identify the processes of learning that occur in the first roles for graduates in design agencies and to investigate how work-based learning is supported and developed by design agencies in early-career roles. Alongside this, further research questions surrounded graduate transition from higher education into design agencies from the perspectives of the design agencies and graduates. To develop an understanding of how this occurs, the research was designed to gain an understanding from graduates and design agencies of their experiences in these situations. Through the examination and understanding of epistemological stances and how the philosophical background determines what it means to know, Gray (2004) defines constructivism as the meaning that is constructed, as opposed to discovered; therefore, individuals create their own meaning in a variety of ways. Creswell's (2013) interpretation of constructivism differs in name – social constructivism – yet broadly aligns with the overarching worldview, describing individuals as seeking to understand through "subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things. Their meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings

into a few categories or ideas." (p. 24). Meaning is constructed through engagement and interaction, as human beings make sense of their world (Robson, 2011). Robson's (2011) summary of why social constructivism is important when it relates to human beings states that "The central aim or purpose of research is understanding." (p. 24). This research aims to identify and understand how graduates navigate transition and learn in their early careers in design agencies. The essence is to understand their lived experiences and how they construct and make sense of the world.

Robson (2011) states that in social constructivist research, the research aims to gain understanding, particularly where issues are set in social situations, such as the design agency workplace. As the research focused on the participants' views of their situation, social constructivism aligns with the overarching research. The aim was to understand how graduates and design agencies interact in their social situations, and the beliefs they construct regarding their experiences; therefore, a constructivist perspective provides the philosophical framework to uncover knowledge about the participants' situation. As social constructionist research is defined as developing an understanding of how people view and understand the world they live in, the research approach, although flexible, tends to almost always be a qualitative data collection method (Robson, 2011). The next section will focus on case studies, as the method used to understand real people in real situations was through developing case studies. Following on from this is a section that examines the role of the researcher as an 'insider-researcher' in relation to the research method and approach.

Case studies

Cohen et al. (2011) describe case studies as "a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly" (p. 289). In qualitative research, case studies are a well-established research strategy and enable a better understanding of how ideas and abstract themes can fit together (Robson, 2011). Case studies begin by identifying a specific area of research; this can be singular or multiple case studies for comparison (Creswell, 2013). Robson (2011) elaborates on what defines a case study, which can range from individual case studies, community studies, organisational studies and cross-national comparative studies. In many instances, it is appropriate to run multiple case studies for comparative purposes (Cohen et al., 2011). Case studies are useful in situations where there is a specific focus, in this case, graduates in their first roles in design agencies. Both the graduates and the design agencies are viewed as individuals, but importantly, as the research focus examines the interrelated participant relationships within the workplace, the case study provides an effective method for understanding the dynamics that exist

between them. To gain a perspective from a range of design agency/graduate pairings, it was valuable to run multiple case studies to ensure a broad range of data for comparative purposes. To enable an in-depth understanding of graduate transition and early career learning, it was anticipated that a minimum of six case studies would be required to gather sufficient data to understand the issues identified in the research questions. The graduates were in their first paid early-career role in the design industry after graduation. The design agency involved was the provider of this role, whether it was an internship or junior designer role.

Case study data collection can be eclectic, and research can be gathered using a wide variety of techniques (Robson, 2011). Focusing on interviews as one of the main ways of gathering data in case studies, Gray (2014) discussed the strengths and weaknesses of interviewing. Interviews are seen as targeted and insightful methods of gathering original and direct data; however, weaknesses include response bias and interviewees providing answers they think the interviewer wants to hear. Interviews, specifically semi-structured interviews, were chosen as the technique to gather data in the case studies; this was to be done through three semi-structured interviews over the course of three months. Participants in the case studies were carefully chosen to allow for variations; this was important, as it allows for several experiences to emerge from the research. For graduates, the criteria focused on several points: an almost even split between genders, they should have recently graduated from university, and only recently started working in a design agency. The requirements for the design agencies focused on their work output. This was broadly defined around the criteria of the design agencies that feature in the Design Week's 'Top 100' (2016) covering disciplines such as branding design, graphic design, packaging design, digital design, web design, and interaction design. The design agencies were also considered to provide a range of different-sized workplaces, allowing for different approaches due to different employee levels. Finally, the location of the research is defined by the geographical scope of the UK.

Insider-researcher

'Insider-researcher' is a research approach that is set within the context of the researcher's own community or one that is familiar to them (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Costley et al., 2010; Mercer, 2007). Costley et al. (2010) define 'insider-researchers' as practitioners who research within the communities they work in or where they are already familiar with the setting. Insider research is often when researchers are within their own workplace – the setting uses colleagues and environments they themselves work in (Fleming, 2018); however, in this research acting as an

insider researcher relates directly to the industry, rather than the specific workplace and existing personal relationships.

As a researcher, who is also a practicing designer working in the design industry, this had advantages in understanding and interpreting the design agency setting; specifically, there were two areas where the dual role contributed during the research. Firstly, my knowledge of the design industry, the landscape of design agencies, how they work, and key contacts. The understanding of the scope of design agencies in the UK was beneficial to approaching the type of design agency required for the research. Through industry resources, publications, and networking; this assisted with approaching agencies to participate in the research. Maintaining a sense of distance in insider research is important (Mercer, 2007); during the research process the participants were unaware of my role beyond PhD researcher, and all participants were unknown personally before the case studies proceeded. This provided a level of impartiality and the sense of the researcher as a defined role.

Secondly, the understanding the context of the design agency as a working environment. A significant advantage of insider research is the in-depth understanding that the researcher contributes to the study (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). As a practicing designer there is scope to be defined as an insider researcher, as there are shared characteristics (Mercer, 2007), particularly the culture of working within the design agency. All design agencies have their own unique structure and how they work, however, there is a shared approach that exists in their everyday practices – from terminology, project development, team structure, industry software, and job roles. This provides understanding during the participants interviews and in turn ask further questions, and during analysis has a deeper understanding of the data gathered (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

However, this knowledge and connection can complicate the relationships with the participants in the case studies (Toy-Cronin, 2018). There are concerns about bias and subjectivity in insider research, particularly around role conflict and existing relationships (Toy-Cronin, 2018). Role conflict emerges from the duality of the researchers' role – as an insider their knowledge and understanding can influence direction and outcomes of the research. It has been acknowledged that this brings up issues of impartiality and the subjective nature of researching one's own practice area (Costley et al., 2010).

Insider research often involved existing relationships and negating the ethical issue of knowing participants can be problematic (Taylor, 2011). This research avoided approaching design agencies that were existing contacts to mitigate the dilemma of managing roles and research outcomes. This approach provided the ability to prioritise my role as researcher during the duration of the case studies and circumnavigate the established relationships in the design industry.

It could be argued, by definition, this research role was outside of the community, therefore not true insider research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). However, insider research extends beyond the immediate community to those who understand and operate in similar groups (Hellawell, 2006). Therefore, the insider research for this PhD was a connection through a shared understanding of the practices of design and of the principles design agencies operative within; this provided the context of shared understanding. On reflection, neither my role as a researcher and a designer compromised the research process. Rather the dual role provided positive aspects, specifically around areas of understanding the design agency workplace and the practices that exist within them.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews

As identified in Research Methods: Case Studies, interviews were chosen to gather data in the case studies. In terms of applying the social constructivist framework to research, Creswell (2013) states that questions need to be general and broad, often open-ended questions, to allow participants to describe their interpretation of situations and how they experience this. Robson (2011) agrees regarding the methods used, stating that research associated with the framework does not prescribe a specific method of gathering data; however, interviews and observation are used frequently due to the researcher aiming to understand multiple perspectives.

Costley et al. (2010) examined different approaches to interviewing: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and discussed the variations of data that emerge from them. Structured interviews cannot respond to participants' responses, and often they are compared to questionnaires in verbal presentation (Costley et al., 2010). In contrast, unstructured interviews lack the structure needed to cover specific areas needed to respond to the aims and objectives of the PhD research. The data required from the participants in the research had to allow for open answers and to respond to questions in their own words; therefore, the benefits of the semi-structured interview method would enable them to expand on their answers. The semi-structured interview questions were formulated to align with the aims, objectives, and research questions, alongside key areas of interest in the literature review. The interview questions were specific to graduates and design agencies, covering aspects that were relevant to each stage of the research. The first interview for all participants was to understand their background, how the role came about, initial learning, and how learning may occur. The second interview was proposed to be an 'in-progress' catch up to discover how the learning was occurring and how the participants viewed the progress. Gray (2014) suggested notetaking for documentation, with the possibility of voice recording; however, Creswell (2013) viewed voice recording as necessary, and that care must be taken to ensure the interview is adequately recorded for data analysis. All interviews were voice recorded using pre-tested equipment to ensure that the audio could be heard clearly. Alongside the voice recording, written notes were taken at specific points of interest.

The advantage of interviews is to find out what people know, what they do, and how they think or feel (Robson, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of the semi-structured interviews in the case studies was directly informed by the aims, objectives, and research questions of this research. As such, the

questions were developed around a broad set of objectives related to these and allowed for the participants to respond based on their experiences. There were, however, some initial questions built into all interviews for specific information in response to topics such as 'how long have you been in this role', as these were required to understand the wider situation of the participants. The approach to the interview and question development are discussed in the next section.

4.4 INTERVIEW AND QUESTION DEVELOPMENT

4.4.1 INTERVIEW APPROACH

The approach for the interviews was flexible, what Robson (2011) described as a one-off design that is constructed to help answer the research questions put forward by the study. Flexible designs are particularly useful in case studies where there is variation between people, groups, settings, and organisations (Robson, 2011). In this research, the flexible design approach for the case studies allowed for variations in the interview schedule to accommodate specific situations, particularly with the timeframe and location of the interviews.

The first case study was considered the pilot case study to test the feasibility of the timeframe between interviews. Pilot studies are considered a try-out of what was proposed to test the feasibility of the case study design (Robson, 2011). This case study proceeded with a two-month gap between interviews one and two; however, the timeframe indicated that a longer gap between the interviews would provide a clearer differentiation of the interview questions. The following six case studies proceeded with a minimum of three months between interviews. Furthermore, a third interview was carried out with the pilot case study to provide the timeframe gap that appeared beneficial. As the research was focused on how early-career learning for graduates developed in design agencies, the element of time was an important aspect of the case studies. The longer time gap provided to allow both the graduates and the design agencies to discuss how the graduates had developed during the time and reflect on any changes during this time.

4.4.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The approach of the interviews with the participants was to use semi-structured interviews to align with the research objectives. As the semi-structured interviews aimed to understand what the participants' experiences and views are on graduate transition and early career learning, the responses to the interview questions required the development of open-ended questions. The construction of open-ended questions allows the interviewer to allow for further questioning and to clear up answers and can provide a truer understanding of the participants' responses (Cohen et al., 2011). The design of the questions followed the format of open-ended questions, but also considered question formats and response modes to allow for responses that correlated with the aims and objectives of the research, and also allowed for the data analysis to be more effective (Cohen et al., 2011). The use of questions that focused on the participants' experiences and required

descriptive responses was important in this research, and the question formats reflected this requirement.

The semi-structured interview questions were developed for the case studies according to participant type and interview stage. The design agencies and the graduates had questions based on the same themes; however, the questions were framed from their relevant perspectives. As the interview aims were to uncover how learning occurs during early career learning, the questions asked in the first interview and the second interview were different, to allow for the participants to reflect on their experiences during the intervening time.

At the interview, the semi-structured interview questions were used to frame the interviews; however, not all questions were asked of all participants, and conversely, further questions were asked in relation to many of the open-ended questions that provided more depth of knowledge or unanticipated answers. Overall, all case studies covered the core research areas through the interview process.

The interviews: question examples

Table 2: Semi-structured interview questions – interview one

GRADUATES	DESIGN AGENCIES
How did this role come about? Please describe the process.	How did you find (graduate) and how did this role come about?
How long have you been at (design agency)?	How is (graduate) going – is it how you imagined it to be and are your expectations being met?
Did you imagine this would be the path you would take after graduation and why?	How is the design agency helping support and develop (graduate) learning?
What were your expectations of this role when you started?	Is there anything you could do to facilitate this further? Any plans for the future?
What are the outcomes of taking an internship at a design agency?	How has (graduate) supported his own development in their role at (design agency)?
How is the role going – is it how you imagined it to be?	In terms of (graduate) skill set, what has been useful and what needs improvement?
How is the design agency helping to support and develop your learning?	Where has (graduate) learning taken place – e.g.: in the workplace, external courses, other, or a mixture?
How could your workplace learning be supported and developed further?	What has been a major positive so far in (graduate) role?
What skills have been most useful to you in the design agency? (e.g.: from university, personal, previous experience)	Has there been a low point in (graduate) role so far?
How have you supported your own development while at the design agency?	Do you think that the skills (graduate) learnt at university have been useful?
Where has your learning taken place – e.g.: in the workplace, external courses, other or, a mix?	Do you see this opportunity turning into a permanent role for (graduate) and how?
Could you tell me a major positive so far in your role?	What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates?
Has there been a low point in your role so far?	What do you think are the most important aspects of graduate transition for both the graduate and the design industry?
Do you see this opportunity turning into a permanent role and how?	
What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates?	
What are your fellow graduates doing now?	

Table 3: Semi-structured interview questions – interview two and three

GRADUATES	DESIGN AGENCIES
How is the role going since we last talked?	How has (graduate) been developing in their role since we last talked?
Are your expectations of this role still being met?	Are your expectations of (graduate) role still being met?
Is the role developing further, or what are your next plans?	What type of support is (graduate) getting in the workplace in regard to learning?
How did the design agency help to support and develop your learning in this time?	How has (graduate) supported their own learning and development?
How have you supported your own development in this time?	Could you tell me a positive experience of (graduate) at work since the last interview?
Could you tell me about a positive experience at work since the last interview?	Could you tell me about something you felt was a less positive experience at work since the last interview?
Could you tell me something you felt less positive about at work since the last interview?	How has (design agency) helped (graduate) learn and develop during these experiences?
How do you feel about the way that the design agency are helping you learn and develop skills on the job?	How do you see (design agency) develop the graduates role further?
What type of learning structure do you think would help you learn further at (design agency)?	Of (graduate) skills, which turned out to be the most useful to (design agency)?
How do you imagine you will develop your role further while you are at (design agency)?	If you reflect on when (graduate) started at (design agency) to now; could you tell me how you feel their learning and development has happened?
What skills turned out to be the most useful to you in the design agency?	What are your goals and aims for (graduate) in the future? Are these discussed with them?
If you reflect on when you started at (design agency) to now; could you tell me how you feel your learning and development has happened?	Do you feel that the design industry have a responsibility to graduates?
What are your goals and aims for the future?	How has taking part in this series of interviews made you think about learning, development and how this should happen at (design agency)?
How has taking part in this series of interviews made you think about your learning and how this should happen?	
Do you feel that the design industry have a responsibility to graduates?	
Do you have any advice for recent graduates or junior designers?	

4.4.3 CASE STUDY APPLICATION

In all, seven design agencies and 11 graduates participated. The different numbers were due to two agencies having more than one junior designer employed at the agency.

Introduction

To ensure that each case study was undertaken in a professional yet approachable way, communication was vital to create a relationship where the interviews were easy to conduct. Initial communication was done via email with the participants; however, these were followed up via a phone call to introduce myself and discuss the case studies further. This step ensured a clear understanding among all participants about what would happen at the first interview, as well as a degree of familiarity that allowed the first meeting to go smoothly. For all the first interviews in the case studies, I travelled to each design agency; this allowed me to introduce myself and meet the participants and other members of the design agency. The design agencies discussed the work they did, the ethos of their business, and often provided a tour around the agency.

When

The interviews all took place over an eight-month period between December 2017 and July 2018. The length of time between the first and second interviews in the case studies was between three and four months, except for the case study at DA/GRAD-BB. This case study was the first case study, and the time between interviews one and two was two months; however, on reflection, the timeframe appeared to close, and the research design was amended to provide a three-month period between the first and second interviews. Due to this, the case study involving DA/GRAD-BB had a third interview to take into consideration the timeframe amend. Table 4 shows the final interview schedule for all the case studies in the research.

Table 4: Case study interview timeframe

		2017	2018						
		December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Case Study 01 (ASH)	Design Agency				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(FT)*	
	Graduate				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(FT)*	
Case Study 02 (AW)	Design Agency				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*	
	Graduate 1				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*	
	Graduate 2				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*	
Case Study 03 (BB)	Design Agency	INT 1 *(PER)*	INT 2 *(FT)*		INT 3 *(FT)*				
	Graduate	INT 1 *(PER)*	INT 2 *(FT)*		INT 3 *(FT)*				
Case Study 04 (COM)	Design Agency				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*	
	Graduate				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*	
Case Study 05 (DR)	Design Agency				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*	
	Graduate				INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*	
Case Study 06 (MW)	Design Agency	INT 1 *(PER)*				INT 2 *(FT)*			
	Graduate	INT 1 *(PER)*				INT 2 *(FT)*			
Case Study 07 (TX)	Design Agency					INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*
	Graduate 1					INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*
	Graduate 2					INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*
	Graduate 3					INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*
	Graduate 4					INT 1 *(PER)*			INT 2 *(PER)*

KEY
INT 1 = INTERVIEW 1
INT 2 = INTERVIEW 2
INT 3 = INTERVEIW 3
PER = IN-PERSON INTERVIEW (CONDUCTED AT THE DESIGN AGENCY
FT = FACETIME VIDEO INTERVIEW

Where

In all instances, the first interview took place face-to-face with the participants at the design agency. The interviews were conducted in a private place in the agency, such as a meeting room or an office. The second interviews were conducted through two methods; most interviews (four agencies and eight graduates) took place face-to-face at the agency again. In the instances of three case studies, the second interviews took place via FaceTime/Skype due to the design agencies' time constraints.

Format

The format of the interviews was conducted between the participant and the researcher, with no one else listening in. The interview was conducted as a semi-structured interview, giving the opportunity to pursue alternative topics that were relevant. All interviews were voice recorded, with the participant giving verbal consent before recording commenced.

4.5 PARTICIPANTS

4.5.1 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Participant selection was driven by the research design and approach, which were defined by the aims and objectives of the PhD. The design of the research methods required both design agencies and graduates to be interviewed in case study groups – linking the design agency and the graduate together to enable data to emerge from their experiences of graduate transition in early career learning in a design agency. Therefore, the participants were required to be design agencies that had recently employed or offered an internship to a recent design graduate. The participant selection was driven by these principles alongside the geographical setting that required the research to take place within the UK.

The selection of participants needed to represent a broad cross-section of design agencies operating in the UK and align to the description of the stakeholders and setting described in '1.4 Stakeholders and Research Setting'. The typical definition of a design agency was one that worked within the commercial area of the design industry, and the output of their work was typically multidisciplinary design working across branding design, graphic design, packaging design, digital design, web design, and interaction design as their main outputs. The graduates in the research were defined as recent graduates who have studied design or a design-related degree and who will undertake their first early career role in a design agency within a year of their graduation.

4.5.2 SELECTION METHODS

Methods

The method used to recruit participants for the case studies was to approach design agencies as the first point of contact and determine if they had recently or were about to employ a recent design graduate. It was identified early in the selection process that the design agencies were the key to participating in the research, and if they were open to being involved, the conversation regarding participation led to a positive outcome. The advantage of having the design agency involved at the first point of contact initiated a discussion between the agency and the graduate, and together, they could decide to participate in the research.

The source of design agencies was obtained through the Design Week 'Top 100' (2016) a report that ranks the most successful design business in the UK. The report is published annually by Design Week and includes a comprehensive list of design agencies operating in the UK and

specifies what type of agency they are classified as. The first point of contact with the design agencies was by email, which outlined a brief description of the research and why they were being approached. Through this process, over 40 design agencies were contacted. The outcome of the emails provided a mixed response, with the replies falling into three categories:

- No reply

- Replied but declined for various reasons

- Replied, were interested, and wanted more information.

Most of the design agencies did not reply to the initial email, and when followed up with a phone call, there was either no reply to a message left. The agencies who did reply, but declined, gave various reasons. These predominantly fell into two categories: they did not employ junior designers or have interns, or they did not want the agency involved in the research. Seven agencies replied with an interest in being involved, and at this point more information was provided, and there were conversations regarding the research, methods, ethics and arranging to start the interviews. All seven agencies, along with the graduates, were happy to participate; however, further into the process, five agencies withdrew from the research without any interviews occurring. This occurred though communication ceasing to exist, and they did not reply to or return calls. The first two case studies, however, were underway, and the focus turned to secure further case studies.

Contact in the design industry led to a leading design recruitment agency using Twitter to call for interested graduates and design agencies. Furthermore, they provided contacts in design agencies that they felt would be useful for the research. This provided some interesting leads; however, no case studies emerged from this process, as the design agencies and graduates did not fit the criteria outlined for the research.

It was through attending various end-of-year design shows that provided a wide range of leads and contacts. Through conversations with tutors and graduates, a list of design agencies emerged that were involved with higher education through links such as offering internships and work experience for graduates. This process led to the next round of design agency emails, with 28 design agencies contacted. This resulted in a similar response to the first round of emails: a mixed result of agencies who were interested, or non-committal or who did not reply. Five agencies that fit the research criteria replied, indicating they were interested. After several emails and phone calls discussing the

research outline and finer detail, the five agencies and graduates confirmed they would take part in the research.

Participant numbers and variations

The methods of recruiting participants yielded seven design agencies and 11 graduates, and with a minimum of two interviews per participant, the data gathered needed to be appropriate to the size of the research project. The final participant numbers were reflective of the context of the research, and there are no defined rules on the size of the required sample in qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2011). The final case studies provided variations from several different perspectives that were important to the aims and objectives of the research. There was a need to reflect on different situations with both the design agencies and the graduates, and the final participants met the criteria. It was necessary for the graduates to all be recent design graduates from a UK university; however, it was also important for differences such as gender, background and the different universities attended to be reflected. In terms of design agencies, it was a requirement that they varied in terms of size, location, and design approach. The seven agencies and 11 graduates were all considered in these terms before proceeding, and the scope was deemed sufficient in terms of variation.

4.5.3 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Design agencies

Design agency discipline

The design agencies involved in the case studies describe their work as design, which focuses on the following areas: graphic design, brand and communication design, research and strategy design, digital design, and multidisciplinary design. They describe their businesses as either creative agencies or creative studios.

Design agency location

The case studies involved design agencies located across England, UK.

Design agency size

In terms of design agency size, the participating design agencies in this research will be aligned with the parameters of the Design Council's (2010) research findings on the size of design agencies in the UK. Over 60% of design consultancies employ four people or fewer, 27% have between five

and nine staff members, and the remaining 13% have over ten staff members (Design Council, 2010). For this research, the participating design agencies will be aligned with the findings from the Design Council (2010) and defined as:

- Small design agency = four or fewer staff members
- Medium Design Agency = between five and nine staff members
- Large design agency = over ten staff members

According to this, five of the design agencies in this research are defined as medium design agencies, and two agencies are defined as large design agencies, with both having substantially larger staff numbers than ten.

Design agency employees

The employment mix of the design agencies aligns with the size of the agency. Medium-sized agencies are predominantly designer-based, with staff to support accounts and administration tasks. The two large design agencies were fully integrated agencies involving designers, account managers, strategists and HR managers.

Design agency participants

Seven design agencies participated in the research.

DA-ASH

The design agency DA-ASH is a medium-sized brand and communications agency based in the southwest of England, consisting predominantly of designers alongside strategists and account managers. The agency has strong links with several universities and is involved with them through guest lecturing and student placements. They also regularly provide internships for recent graduates. Furthermore, they are associated with a local design foundation to promote the benefits of design. The contact during the case studies was the agency's design director, who works alongside the graduates.

DA-AW

The design agency DA-AW is a creative agency that focuses on digital design. They are a medium-sized agency based in Greater London, with designers making up the majority and

additional support employees. They are involved regularly with two universities (one in Greater London and the other in the southeast of England) through staff connections and have collaborated through industry briefs and workshops. The interviews were conducted with the creative director and the owner of the agency.

DA-BB

The design agency DA-BB is a medium-sized agency based in southeast England. It is relatively new (under five years old), with the agency cofounders both coming from previously established careers in large agencies. They are involved regularly with the design department of a university in the southeast of England and are involved with student portfolio workshops and guest lecturers. In the last year, the agency provided paid work experience placements to students from this university. The interviews were conducted with the strategy director and co-owner of the agency.

DA-COM

The design agency DA-COM is a medium-sized design and branding consultancy in Greater London, consisting of designers and account managers. The agency is not regularly involved or affiliated with any university. They do take on interns, but only as and when needed, as they do not offer internships if they do not have a long-term plan. The spokesperson during the case studies was the creative director and owner of the agency.

DA-DR

The design agency DA-DR is a well-established large, international creative agency, with the case study being based in their Greater London office. The agency has loose links to some universities; however, the agency is experienced in running internships, having done so for several years. The interviews were conducted with the creative director.

DA-MW

The design agency DA-MW is medium-sized and is based in the southwest of England. The design agency is well established, has a history of involvement with education, and has previously offered internships and work placements. The agency has strong links with a university in the southwest of England and further links with another university in the southwest of England. The ties with the universities involve lectures, portfolio reviews,

placements, and good relationships with lecturers. The agency is also involved with design industry-led schemes to assist students pre- and post-graduation. Over the years, they have regularly offered internships for graduates and offer junior designer roles. The interviews were conducted with the creative director and owner.

DA-TX

The design agency DA-TX is a large agency based in the southwest of England that specialises in brand design. The designers work alongside the wider team, consisting of directors, strategists, and account directors. The agency has strong links to the local design community and plays an active role in a design industry-led forum that provides advice, support, and education for designers at all career stages. The interview was conducted with a senior designer who oversees the placements at the design agency. They also worked closely with four of the graduates involved in the case studies.

Graduates

Graduate roles

At the first interview, the graduate participants in the case studies consisted of a mix of junior designers (nine) and interns (two). At the second interview, this had shifted to ten junior designers, as one of the interns accepted a junior designer role at the agency. The other intern had just been offered a short-term contract, with a view to this leading to employment at the agency they interned with.

Graduate education and graduation date

All graduates had a design degree from a university in the UK.

Nine of the 11 graduates graduated in 2017 and two graduated in 2016.

Graduate age

The graduates at the time of the first interviews were between 21 and 26 years old.

Graduate gender

The graduates in this case are almost evenly split, with five males and six females. The Design Council (2015) identified the gender balance in the design workforce as 78% male and 22% female; however, 63% of students studying creative arts and design at university are female. (Design

Council, 2018a). The graduate participants in this research are broadly reflective of the demographics at the points of graduation.

Graduate participants

Eleven graduates from seven design agencies participated.

GRAD-ASH

Aged 21 at the time of the first interview, GRAD-ASH had graduated in 2017 with a design degree from a university in the southwest of England. On graduation, they had lined up a couple of internships in London. While waiting for these, they were offered an internship at DA-ASH, which turned into a junior designer role after two months.

GRAD1–AW

The graduate was 23 years old at the time of the interviews. They graduated from a university in Greater London with a design degree. After graduation, it took them two months to find an internship; this was found via a tutor. They started the internship at DA-AW and was offered a junior designer role after one month.

GRAD2-AW

Graduating in 2016 from a university in the southeast of England with a design degree, GRAD2-AW was 23 years old at the time of the interviews. After graduation, they completed three internships before being offered an internship at DA-AW, which led to a job offer after a month or two.

GRAD-BB

The graduate was 26 years old at the time of the first interview. They studied graphic design at a university in the Midlands, England, and graduated in 2016. This is their first job post-graduation, and the length of time between graduation and their first junior designer role was 11 months. They completed five internships after graduation before they successfully applied for the junior designer role at DA-BB. The role was found advertised on a design industry-specific jobs board online, and they did not know anyone from the agency previously.

GRAD-COM

Graduating in 2017 with a design degree from a university in the southeast of England, GRAD-COM was 22 years old during the case study. At the first interview, they were in their first week at the internship at DA-COM. After graduating, GRAD-COM applied for internships and has previously completed one other internship, which lasted for three months. The internship at DA-COM came about through an individually designed piece of work that stood out. They did not know anyone at the agency before they started there.

GRAD-DR

The graduate was 22 years old in the first interview. Graduating in 2017 with a design degree from a university in the southwest of England, the graduate spent several months interning after graduation. They had completed three internships of varying lengths in London before finding an internship role at DA-DR. At the first interview, the graduate was still interning; subsequently, they were offered a junior designer role, and at the second interview, they had moved into this role.

GRAD-MW

The graduate was 22 years old at the time of the interviews. They studied graphic design at a university in the southwest of England, and this is their first role post-graduation. The graduate completed one other internship before starting at DA-MW. The role started as a short-term internship, which was then extended before turning into a full-time job as a junior designer. They had been at the design agency for three months (including an internship) when they were first interviewed.

GRAD1-TX

The graduate was 22 years old at the time of the interviews. They graduated in 2017 with a design degree from a university in the southwest of England. They had a few internships lined up after graduation in London. They were offered an internship at DA-TX before the others started, and after one month was offered a job as a junior designer and accepted this role in September.

GRAD2-TX

Graduating from a university in the southwest of England in 2017 with a design degree, GRAD2-TX was 23 years old when interviewed. After graduation, they enrolled in a design industry-led programme to help them get their portfolio up to industry standards. Through this, they were assigned a 'buddy' who worked at DA-TX. They applied for an internship at DA-TX approximately six months after graduating. They were offered a one-month internship, at which point they were offered a full-time role as a junior designer.

GRAD3–TX

The graduate was 22 years old at the interviews and had graduated in 2017 with a design degree from a university in the southwest of England. After graduation, they moved to London to do an internship at an agency there. They then found an internship at DA-TX, which led to a job offer after approximately six weeks.

GRAD4-TX

The graduate was 22 years old at the time of the interviews. They earned a design degree from a university in the east of England and graduated in 2017. After graduation, they had four internships lined up in London; however, they were offered an internship at DA-TX, which they took first. This was a two-week placement, which turned into a month-long internship, and they were subsequently offered a job.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Research analysis and approach

The core approach to the qualitative analysis for this PhD was content analysis. Silverman (2011) viewed content analysis as creating categories and assigning frequency numbers when the text was used. However, this reduces the analysis to the sum of its parts, using reliability over the rich texture of the data. Cohen et al. (2011) provide a richer and more in-depth look at content analysis and define it as follows:

> "the process of summarising and reporting written data – the main contents of data and their messages. More strictly speaking, it defines a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examinations and verification of the contents of written data." (p. 563)

Gray (2014) recognised content analysis as one of the most common approaches in qualitative research and described how the use of identifying categories within the data text works. Through a three-step process consisting of summarising content, explicating content, and structuring content, the data emerges from the large volume of text, providing patterns, regularities, and relationships between text. Cohen et al. (2011) highlight that content analysis allows for multiple meanings and is useful for studying groups of society. The greatest strength of content analysis is its ability to be nonreactive and unobtrusive; furthermore, the benefit for the research is that the emphasis is determined after the data is gathered (Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

Organisation, strategy, and interpretation

The data collected from the interviews were prepared and organised in two key methods for analysis. With the data consisting of voice recordings and handwritten notes, it was important to have all the data transcribed for analysis for consistency. The voice recordings from the interviews were transcribed using professional transcribers. The handwritten notes from the interviews were typed up after each interview. All transcriptions and written notes were formatted into Microsoft Word documents.

The software programme NVivo, a software programme designed as an advanced qualitative research tool, was used to input all the Microsoft Word documents containing the interviews and note transcriptions. The benefit of NVivo is that it is designed to assist with unstructured data, such as semi-structured interviews, and can accommodate audio files. Alongside the transcripts, it was possible to import the original audio files to link with each transcript, allowing for access to the

original audio data to cross-check and understand the tone of voice and inflexion of the voice. NVivo allowed for each case study, participant, and interview number to be filed and grouped into a structure, allowing for easy reference when analysing the data. Further to the research data running through NVivo, all transcripts were printed as hard copies, along with the participants' details. The hard copy facilitated reading, taking notes in the margins and identifying themes and patterns.

The starting point for the data analysis emerged from the handwritten notes, as during the interviews these notes provided insight into where key themes and points of interest emerged. It was when the participants talked about issues or experiences that they often provided insight that was important to the research. The handwritten notes indicated this and provided a direct link to themes or key issues that emerged from the interviews. As the number of interviews that had taken place increased, themes started to emerge into broad categories, giving insight at an early stage to build on for the main data analysis when all data was combined.

The strategy for the content data analysis was through the process of describing, classifying, and interpreting data (Cohen et al., 2011). By defining the sample to be analysed – the data from the interviews – it was then possible to use coding to construct categories to be analysed. Further work on coding and categorising enabled the detection of patterns and themes. The core tool used to identify codes and group emergent patterns was NVivo software, where it was possible to analyse the data through a variety of techniques. Each interview was filed with tags that allowed the data to be analysed through top-level structures such as:

- Case study group (the design agency and the graduate/s)
- Participant group (design agencies or graduates)
- Interview order (interview one or interview two)

Further to this, all questions from the semi-structured interview were coded and matched to each transcript. As with any software tool, there is a point at which researcher analysis will take over; however, NVivo can pull out key themes and clusters to analyse data, providing a vital tool to aid analysis. This allowed for data clusters to be examined by topic – from very broad topics, such as learning, right through to specific topics, such as learning software skills. The ability to work from large, broad themes provided classification that could be compared across all participants, providing insight on who and when themes were discussed. From this point, it was possible to

scrutinise the themes further to interpret finer details about what was said and described by participants and how this related across all the data.

When sufficient data emerged, it was grouped into themes that related to the aims, objectives, and research questions, along with the themes examined in the literature review, and recommendations from the exploratory research chapter. The final findings are explored in Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before any research and participant interviews commenced, approval was sought and gained from Goldsmiths, University of London regarding research ethics. It was a requirement to read and understand the UKRIO Code of Practice for Research outline and obtain approval from the PhD programme lead in the Department of Design using the Research Ethics Approval Form.

The research required human participants; however, it was determined that the participants did not fall into categories such as persons who are young, vulnerable or in legal custody. Furthermore, the research was deemed to be one of minimal risk to participants. The structure of the research, data collection and instrumentation indicated there was no probability of harm or discomfort to the participants (UK Research Integrity Office, 2009).

Permissions and consent

The design agencies were approached via a recruitment letter in an introductory email. This outlined the research aims and purpose, along with a detailed outline of how the research would involve them. As part of the initial email, information was provided regarding consent and ethics related to the research projects that applied to the agency and the graduates involved. When the design agencies and graduates agreed to participate in the research, there was further communication through emails and phone calls discussing the finer points of participation, including consent, anonymity, confidentiality, data collection and storage, and the right of withdrawal from the research.

Consent was obtained through emails outlining their right to take part; alongside this, ethics and confidentiality rights were raised. In further emails, participants consented to their involvement in the research and understood data would be collected through interviews. Participants were asked whether they would like to sign the ethics and consent form; however, all waived this and were happy to proceed.

Confidentiality and data protection

All participants were informed that their identities remained anonymous and that they would not be recognised as part of the research. Furthermore, they were free to withdraw from the case studies at any point. All participants were provided with this information, with all participants providing consent via email to participate in the research. The interviews were voice recorded for the purpose

of transcription and data analysis. Permission was obtained as part of consent and reiterated before each interview commenced. All data remains anonymous in line with the ethical considerations and consent given at the start of the data collection.

Data storage

The data will be stored for at least three years, subject to any legal, ethical, or other requirements, from the submission of this thesis. It is stored in a form that enables retrieval by a third party, subject to limitations imposed by legislation and the general principles of confidentiality.

CHAPTER FIVE – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The PhD research consisted of a series of case studies involving design agencies and graduates. Using the findings from the research, this chapter will examine the findings and inform the discussion of this chapter.

This chapter consists of three interrelated sections: Myths, Communities, and Transition. These sections draw on the literature review structure, and the outline of each section is expanded below.

Myths focuses on higher education in the UK and the myths that surround it. Drawing on the areas identified in the literature review, the research aimed to examine graduate and design agency perspectives on the current state of design education. Gaining an understanding of their involvement and experience aids the discussion on design education as it exists in the UK, particularly to examine how this relates to graduate learning, transition, and early career learning.

Communities turns to early-career roles for graduates in the design agency. The research focused on how learning is initiated in design agency communities, what methods were used, and how graduates responded to this. Alongside this, learning structures were examined and compared to existing learning models, specifically apprenticeships and professional development. This provided an understanding of the structure of learning that exists in the design agencies, and the implications for graduates in their early careers.

Transition explores the graduates' journey between higher education and their early career roles, particularly around strategies and opportunities that can be utilised to aid the transition. Focus areas include the personal situations graduates experience, the factors that contribute to navigation, and the emergence of internships as the code for transition.

Structure

The presentation of the findings from the research and discussion in relation to the aims, objectives and research questions will mirror the structure of Chapter 2: Literature Review. The research gathered qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with the participants, resulting in detailed transcripts across many topics. Due to this, the structure of Chapter 5 is outlined in Table 5 to aid the reader by providing a clear understanding of how the writing is presented.

Table 5: Chapter 5 writing structure

CHAPTER TITLE	CORE SECTIONS	KEY THEMES	KEY THEME STRUCTURE
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	MYTHS	REQUIREMENTS / REPUTATION / KNOWLEDGE	1. FINDINGS / 2. DISCUSSION
	COMMUNITIES	LEARNING IN COMMUNITIES / LEARNING MODELS AND DEVELOPMENT	1. FINDINGS / 2. DISCUSSION
	TRANSITION	THE PLACE IN-BETWEEN / NAVIGATION / INTERNSHIPS	1. FINDINGS / 2. DISCUSSION
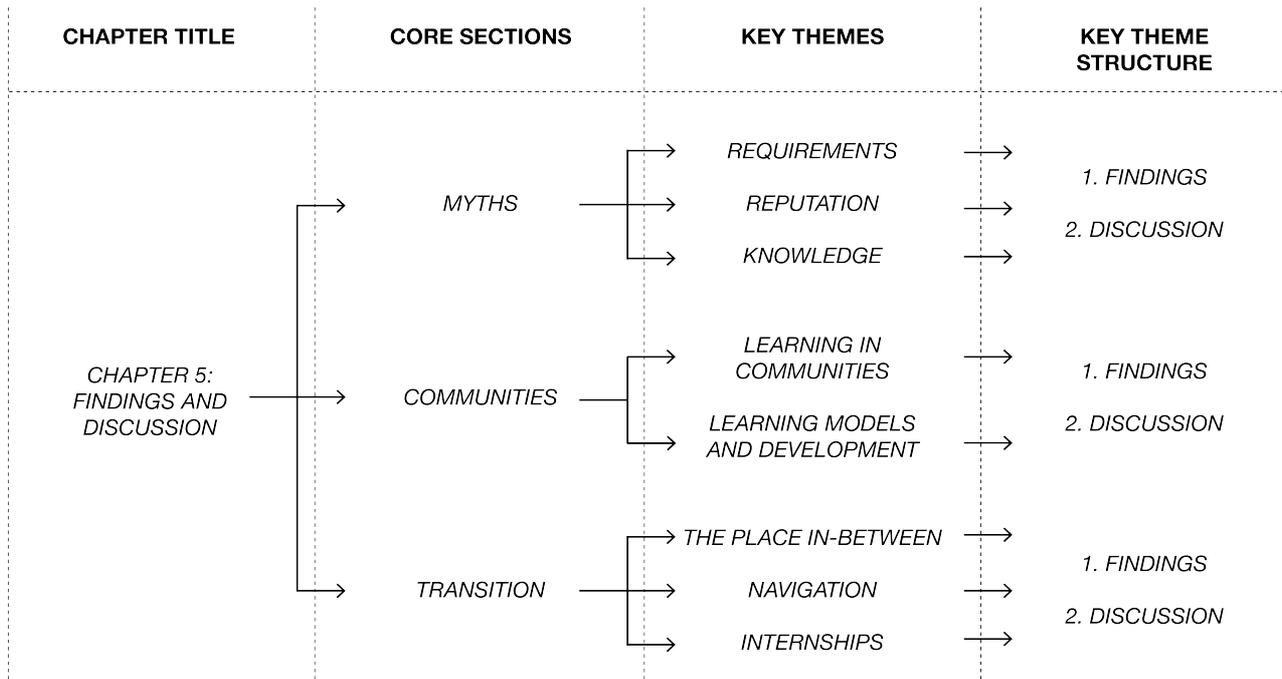
The first column, Chapter Title, references the entirety of Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion. There are three core sections within Chapter 5 – Myths, Communities, Transition—which mirror the structure of Chapter 2: Literature Review and provide a direct link to the theory, concepts, design industry context and historical context of this research. The organisation of data within each of the core sections will be presented within key themes that emerged in each of the three core sections. Finally, each key theme will be presented in two parts – *Findings* and *Discussion*. The *Findings* area covers the presentation of the qualitative data from the research outlined in Chapter 4: Methodology. The *Discussion* follows on from the *Findings,* and this area focuses on the critical analysis of the research data, alongside key areas of emerging information.

5.2 MYTHS

5.2.1 REQUIREMENTS

This section will examine the data from the case studies in relation to the myths surrounding requirements for entry into the design industry. More specifically, these myths are that to work in design you do not need a design degree, and there are too many undergraduates on design courses.

The myth that you do not need a design degree to enter the design industry is a common theme that has emerged from the wider design industry and mainstream media. It has been argued that design degrees are not a requirement for working in the design industry. It is correct that designers do not need to be chartered, like architects or surveyors, to be practising designers. However, many employers view a design degree as an entry-level qualification for the majority of their roles in the creative industries.

Throughout the design industry and beyond, a popular view has emerged that there are too many design graduates for the design industry. With the myth centring on the concept of an oversupply of graduates and not enough jobs in the industry, many individuals are calling for a reduction in design courses to solve the perceived issue.

Findings: To work in design, you do not need a design degree
The design agencies discussed the process of employing junior designers, specifically how they found graduates and the qualifications they looked for. The graduates also discussed how they found positions in design agencies, how this process occurred, and whether they felt their design degree helped them.

The graduates involved in the research all have design degrees and have used their degrees to secure roles in design agencies. Nine of the 11 graduates found the roles through direct links between their university and industry. The graduates did not directly discuss entering the design industry without a degree; however, their desire to work in the design industry informed their choice to study a design degree to enable this.

Two agencies (DA-BB and DA-COM) were the only agencies that did not turn to higher education to fill graduate roles. DA-BB advertised for the junior designer role that GRAD-BB filled. When

discussing what they required in a junior designer, they talked about the role being for a 'graduate designer', implying the agency expected the applicants to be university graduates. DA-COM found GRAD-COM when the graduate sent a self-initiated piece to the agency, which resonated with them, saying: "It does not take much, but if someone sends in something like that, it sort of grabs our attention and we look into it. Get them in and have a chat." (DA-COM). However, it was not specified whether there had been a requirement for GRAD-COM to have a design degree.

The remaining five agencies used their contacts and associations with higher education to find or select graduates for internships or junior designer roles. DA-ASH talked about how they fill junior designer roles and how this is linked with their long-standing relationship with a university, saying "We have traditionally, since I've started here about six years ago, we've always had a kind of study stream of [university] students coming for internships, and they do one or two weeks on average." (DA-ASH). When a vacancy has arisen, the agency looks back through these students and invites some back for interviews. This is how GRAD-ASH was selected to come back for a longer internship and then employed as a junior designer. GRAD-ASH confirmed that they had studied at the same university that DA-ASH has a long-standing relationship with. GRAD-ASH had previously had a work experience placement with the agency, and after graduation, the agency had "asked me to come in to do an internship with them. After about a month they asked me if I would stay a little bit longer, and stay a little bit longer, and then here I am." (GRAD-ASH).

Both graduates employed at DA-AW came through two different universities connected to a family member, with DA-AW saying, "Both actually came through [family member], who's a teacher." (DA-AW). The relationship between the design agency and the two universities where the family member is teaching has given the agency the opportunity to work with students and it has also found that "It's been a really good way to reconnect with that graduate level." (DA-AW). Over the past few years, the agency said they had encountered difficulties finding the right people at any level and has rethought their strategy for employing the right people. Through their relationship with the universities, they have developed a new approach, saying:

> "It seemed like a more logical thing to actually get people in early, and it's proved definitely a success. Both via connections with colleges. And they both came and did internships... [...] they would've both been four or six weeks, I think." (DA-AW)

The two graduates at DA-AW discussed their experiences finding their roles. Both are graduates of the two universities connected to a family member at DA-AW. GRAD1-AW was encouraged to approach the agency with their portfolio. After getting in touch, an interview was arranged and took place. At a later date, an internship was offered by the agency to the graduate. GRAD2-AW, although they did not go into detail about how the internship came about, was offered an internship at DA-AW and eventually was offered a full-time role.

DA-DR has an internship programme that is linked to two universities with which they have relationships. The second-year students at the university are offered agency tours, and a select few are offered placements. Through this programme, they have employed several graduates in junior designer roles. This includes GRAD-DR, who graduated from one of the universities with which DA-DR has a relationship.

When DA-MW had been contemplating taking on a junior designer, they were specific, saying: "I'd been thinking that we had enough work on that we thought of getting a junior designer in. When I say junior, I mean a graduate up to a couple of years, would be a good fit for our team." (DA-MW). The process of finding GRAD-MW came through two touchpoints. First, DA-MW met GRAD-MW at university during a portfolio review. DA-MW contributes regularly at a university by doing portfolio reviews, leading to previous employment opportunities, saying:

> "Yeah, so over the years we have taken on quite a few graduates, so those that have graduated in July we would have taken them on from there. We would have been their first full-time job. We've done that quite a few times over the years." (DA-MW)

When asked how often this occurs, DA-MW said this does not happen every year, and often the roles are internships, with only some leading to full-time employment. The second touchpoint came at a design industry-led training weekend for graduates, which GRAD-MW attended, and where the agency offered advice. When DA-MW needed to fill the junior designer role, they thought of GRAD-MW. However, while the agency has a strong track record of recruiting graduates, they stated that they would consider applicants who have not been through the university pathway, as long as they have a strong portfolio and 'good' personality.

When DA-TX needed to recruit, they focused on specific universities where they contributed by giving talks and workshops, and used these opportunities to scout students who would be

graduating at the end of the year. The agency targeted specific end-of-year shows, in particular 'D&AD's New Blood', to find graduate talent. Through this process, they identified graduates who impressed them and offered internships to them. This process resulted in the employment of four junior designers. GRAD1-TX was approached by the design agency, saying:

> "Our university put on a degree show in London every year called New Blood and [DA-TX] attended that and saw my work there. So, I got an email from one of those a couple of months afterwards asking if I'd like to come in and interview and sort of chat about things." (GRAD1-TX).

It was also at 'D&AD's New Blood' that the agency discovered GRAD4-TX, who was also emailed by the design agency with the offer of an interview with a view to an internship role. GRAD2-TX and GRAD3-TX individually attended workshops the design agency ran through university contacts, and this led to both being offered internships.

Discussion: To work in design, you do not need a design degree

It is not a legal requirement to have a design degree to be a practising designer; however, finding a junior designer role in a design agency is a complex process for anyone looking to secure an early career role.

When the design agencies discussed the process they followed in finding the graduate who is currently working for them and what their requirements were, there were comparable narratives between several of the case studies. One agency (DA-MW) specified a graduate to fill the role, while another (DA-BB) implied, through their use of language, that they were looking for a graduate. Out of the design agencies, five turned to universities to look for soon-to-be graduates or recent graduates when they required interns or a junior designer (DA-ASH, DA-AW, DA-DR, DA-MW, and DA-TX). There was one agency (DA-COM) that did not discuss specific requirements for their junior designer or intern positions.

The UK's creative economy has a highly skilled workforce (Clews & Mallinder, 2010; MillionPlus, 2015a), which is reflected in the high numbers of people educated to degree level. MillionPlus (2015a) found that 62.5% of people in creative occupations are educated to at least a degree level, compared to the overall UK economy, which has 31.8% of the workforce educated to the same level. The Design Council (2018b) found that designers are staying in formal education longer and

obtaining a degree, and this was due to the expectations of employers that designers need to be educated to this level. This was due to the requirements of the design economy and the demand for high skill levels. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI)/Pearson (2017) stated that employers value graduates' subject knowledge when recruiting, with 62% of businesses identifying it as one of the most important factors.

The case studies reveal that there is a high level of correlation between degrees and employment, with design graduates being favoured for entry-level roles in design agencies. There appears to be an unspoken understanding by the design agencies in the case studies that design graduates are their accepted choice to fill a role, whether it is an internship or a junior designer position. This is because of where the agencies turn to when finding people to fill these roles, with this data establishing a link to universities, specifically the design department. The agencies have used a variety of ways to connect to graduates, including approaching universities, building long-term relationships with specific universities, attending graduate design shows, using contacts within the university system, providing workshops at university, undertaking portfolio reviews at university, and offering work placements during design degrees or post-graduation.

However, it should be noted that one design agency, DA-MW, did discuss offering roles to non-degree holders. While they said that most of the time they have taken on people with design degrees, they are prioritising the degree. DA-MW has placed a higher emphasis on the person and the portfolio. There are various pathways into the design industry, such as further education, creative apprenticeships, and mentoring programmes, such as D&AD's 'New Blood Shift', an "intensive night school programme that places an emphasis on raw, untrained talent." (D&AD, 2019, p. 2). These pathways provide an alternative to university design degrees for many young people. In the case studies in this research, however, there was no discussion based on employing interns or junior designers via non-university pathways.

Kandiko-Howson and Mawer (2013) found that the primary purpose for students entering higher education across all subjects of study "was to improve their career prospects and as a pathway to career enhancement." (p. 36). The ONS (2017) found that graduates are more likely to be employed, less likely to be looking for work and less likely to be out of the labour force compared to people who have lower or no qualifications. The path taken by the graduates in the case studies also suggests that studying for and obtaining a design degree has helped them gain employment in the

design industry. The connection between university and employment, for graduates, can feel ambiguous due to their situation of graduating and the transition to finding jobs. However, nine out of the 11 graduates in the case studies found their internship or junior designer role through the university they attended in some capacity. In two cases (GRAD1-AW and GRAD2-AW), this was through their lecturer putting them in touch directly with a design agency, while for other graduates it was due to the design agency effectively 'scouting' for graduates at universities where they were running workshops or portfolio reviews.

While the design agencies were clear about where they found the graduates and the reasons they offered them roles, the graduates in many cases were less aware of the direct relationship between university and employer. Higher Education Career Services Unit (HECSU) (2018) research has found that graduates "do not see universities as brokers of graduate opportunities, with only 2.9% suggesting they found their job through a university source such as a lecturer" (p. 12). While this research was broad and covered graduates from multiple sectors, the findings do have similarities to the case studies.

MillionPlus (2015a) identified the link between industry and university to enhance graduate employability at post-1992/modern universities. They highlighted the development of undergraduate programmes alongside partnerships and close links with industry. The outcomes have provided a strong link to employability upon graduation. This parallel between post-1992/modern universities and the link to industry does not go unnoticed, with all the graduates in the case studies, bar one, having studied at a post-1992/modern university.

The case studies revealed that the majority of design agencies were recruited through university connections. In many cases, the connection has been long term; however, it has also been identified that when an agency is actively looking for junior designers, they turn to universities to identify potential graduates to fill these roles. One of the implications of this method is that those job roles are not readily advertised in the public domain. There was one exception, with agency DA-BB externally advertising in the interest of opening up the opportunity to find the best person for them. Regardless of the method of recruitment, the common theme was to specify a design graduate to fill the role.

It must also be noted that the individual design agencies in the case studies preferred specific universities when forging relationships with them. This finding highlights the need for further investigation into the link between specific university choices and graduate employability in the design industry.

In conclusion, it is not a legal requirement to have a design degree to work as a designer. It is evident through data on the creative economy and the design sector that the workforce is highly skilled and has one of the highest levels of degree-educated workforces. The case studies indicate that the path to entry-level employment in a design agency is through studying for a design or design-related degree. The findings suggest that the path to employment is linked to university through the relationships between industries in many instances. How the design agencies use university connections to fill entry-level jobs indicates that design degree holders are at a greater advantage over alternative pathways entering the design industry. This shows that there are alternative paths to working in the design industry without a design degree. Nevertheless, it would be important to understand specifically which roles within the design industry require degrees and which do not. Currently, data available on the proportion of jobs in the creative economy by the highest level of qualification broadly sweeps across the whole sector and does not account for specific sectors like design agencies. Despite the case studies covering a small group of design agencies and graduates, it strongly suggests that design graduates are the default mode of entry-level jobs in the design agencies.

Findings: There are too many undergraduates in design courses

The data provided no concrete reference to the idea that there are too many students studying design at the higher education level. Neither the design agencies nor the graduates explicitly stated an oversupply of design graduates. Graduates discussed how competitive it was to find roles in the design industry, but did not attribute it to a specific reason. Design agencies, in some instances, alluded to the number of graduates, such as high numbers of applicants or the purpose of design education. However, design agencies talked about the numbers of graduates by discussing how they can help graduates enter the design industry.

One design agency, DA-BB, highlighted the high application numbers for junior designer roles, compared to other roles saying, "the junior designer role would be the one where we've seen the

largest number of applications as opposed to say mid-weight or senior or project manager for example. The swell of interest would be in the younger design crowd." (DA-BB).

DA-MW stated that the role of design degrees was not specifically to feed the design industry; therefore, the correlation between students studying design and entering design is not a given. When discussing the pathway of graduates into industry, DA-MW explained that their experiences of working with students in higher education led them to believe it is important to recognise that not all graduates want to work in design, saying:

> "maybe to try and get a little bit of an understanding that some people might study graphic design but might not end up being a graphic designer for the rest of their career and understand that a degree or that learning can take you on different ways, different career paths. I think that's really good." (DA-MW)

Four design agencies (DA-TX, DA-MW, DA-DR, and DA-ASH) involved in the case studies discussed how they could help recent graduates, aware they could only play a small part in a larger situation. There is an acknowledgement that there are thousands of graduates who need jobs, but it is not their problem to solve. The four agencies discussed at length what they could do to help graduates and their desire to offer them opportunities. In all four instances, providing internships was the model for assisting graduates to enter the design industry. By offering internships to one or more graduates, they can replicate some of the assistance they were given at the beginning of their own careers. Drawing on their own experiences of the difficulties of entering the design industry appears to have motivated the agencies to *'give back'* to graduates and higher education by offering opportunities to gain experience. DA-TX discussed this, saying "You're giving something back to designers and people coming out of university. Giving them a chance to put what they've learnt into practice, which is always great." (DA-TX). DA-ASH echoed this, saying that although they do not often have job opportunities for graduates, they felt the work experience they offer has contributed to interns landing good job roles later. However, DA-MW said they are clear and upfront regarding internship expectations, saying they are explicit with graduates about the role of an internship, and they are not able to offer a role at the end of the process.

The graduates in the case studies appear to be aware of the competitive nature of securing roles in the design industry. Their experiences of applying and interviewing for job roles and internships have provided them with an understanding of how difficult it is to get a job. However, none of the

graduates explicitly stated that this was due to an oversupply of graduates. Graduates, like design agencies, identified internships as the potential route to successfully getting a job to circumnavigate the competitive nature of early-career roles in the design industry. All graduates in the case studies used internships to build their industry experience to secure job roles.

Several of the graduates discussed what their fellow graduates are doing now and whether they have found jobs within the design industry. GRAD-ASH, GRAD-COM, GRAD-BB, and GRAD-DR all had friends from their design degree course who had different experiences of entering the design industry. Interning seemed to be popular, and over time, GRAD-DR has noticed there has been a shift among his peers from internships to graduates being offered permanent roles. GRAD-ASH discussed location as a factor, with success being higher for graduates when they relocate to London, where there are more opportunities. GRAD-COM felt that graduate outcomes were varied and often down to the individual rather than the opportunities they could have taken.

Discussion: There are too many undergraduates in design courses

Defining the success of recent design graduate careers can be difficult due to the nature of job creation in creative industries. HECSU (2018) identified that graduates in this sector tend to operate in an environment where freelancing, developing ideas, creating contacts, and self-employment are common, especially in early careers. Therefore, it can be difficult to get an accurate picture using traditional post-graduation employability measures, such as HESA's annual 'Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE)' survey. Post-graduation figures taken six months after graduation show that 47.7% of creative arts and design graduates are in full-time employment (HESA, 2018). Using these figures in this context may indicate a poor outcome for creative arts and design graduates, particularly for the design industry and wider audiences who believe there are too many design graduates.

None of the participants directly stated their views about the number of undergraduates in design courses. The graduates focused on the relationship between their experiences (and their cohort's) of gaining employment, highlighting the complex relationship between job vacancies and graduates. The design agencies discussed the complications they face in relation to graduate numbers; none of the agencies said there were too many graduates, but they were aware of the competition graduates face with finding roles in the design industry. The agencies involved

acknowledge that they recruit employees infrequently, and competition for entry-level roles is particularly high.

After graduation, it appears difficult to find employment, and the graduates discussed the issues they experienced, particularly around job role competition, length of time to secure a role, and the need to take internships to find roles. These areas indicate either a lack of roles at the graduate level or too many graduates applying to the same roles. At the time of the research, four out of the 11 graduates were not in employment six months after graduation, and one graduate is still interning. The remaining six graduates obtained paid junior designer roles within six months of graduation. Anecdotally, the graduates discussed their classmates' experiences, highlighting the varying routes into design jobs. The most common path was interning in the hope of obtaining employment. Other routes showed a correlation to HECSU's (2018) findings, with graduates freelancing and creating contacts.

Therefore, it is important to recognise the long-term outcomes for design graduates if their careers take longer to establish. The Department for Education (2019) research shows the percentage of graduates in sustained employment, further study, or both, one year after graduation; for graduates in the creative arts and design, this figure was 83.4%. These numbers remain steady over the next three and five years after graduation. There is considerable overlap with Comunian et al. (2014) regarding graduate employment, finding there "is a relatively good match between the 'design' sector and graduates in creative arts and design (79.86%), although this is also the group of students with the highest level of self-employment" (p. 442).

The design agencies who participated in the research did not indicate there was an *'oversupply of graduates'*; rather, they focused on how to provide opportunities for graduates to enter the design industry. Specifically, this was done by offering internships to provide a '*foot in the door'* to working in an agency, even though they could not employ them. The juxtaposition of employing only a junior designer infrequently yet offering regular internships could imply there are too many graduates for the roles available. However, not all design agencies offer internships or assist recent graduates. This implication needs further research to discover whether internships are due to the oversupply of graduates or the nature of the design industry.

It was highlighted by DA-MW that not all design graduates use their degrees to work in the design industry. The Design Council (2018b) evidence shows increasing use of designers and their design skills in other sectors of the economy. HECSU (2018) found that although design graduates worked in a variety of sectors in the economy, by far the largest proportion did work in the arts, design and media. These findings are consistent with the findings by Comunian et al. (2014) and the Department for Education (2019).

Although some in the design industry express the opinion that there is an oversupply of graduates, the Design Council (2018a) identified a skills gap in the design sector, with an increased demand for design skills in the design industry and the wider economy. Their concern is highlighted by the decrease in students studying design and technology at the school level, which will erode the pathway into design at the higher education level over the long term. HESA (2021) data showed that students enrolled in Creative Arts and Design courses in the UK rose from 166,930 in 2014/15 to 187,025 in 2019/20. It is clear there has been a rise in creative arts and design students; however, other subjects have seen larger areas of growth, in particular the sciences, engineering and technology. The analysis of these figures shows that while the number of students studying creative arts has risen, they have also followed wider trends of growth across higher education numbers.

The long-term growth of graduates from the creative arts and design subjects correlates with the large increase in jobs within the sector. There has been an increase of 55% in jobs associated with the creative economy since 1997, accounting for 8.8% of all UK jobs (MillionPlus, 2015a). The growth of the UK's creative economy is growing, and at a faster rate than the rest of the economy. DCMS (2018) research identified that the creative industries are growing at a rapid rate with "a 2.5% rise on the 2016 total and a 28.6% rise on the 2011 total. This compares with 1.5% and 9.3% growth, respectively, in the number of jobs across the UK as a whole." (p. 9). The myth of too many graduates is questioned in relation to the growth of the design sector, particularly as it provides a substantial level of employment and contributes significant value to the UK economy.

Due to the growth of the creative industries, there is evidence to suggest there will be an even further increase in demand for graduates with design skills. The data from Bakhshi et al. (2017) and the World Economic Forum (2016) using the Occupational Information Network [O*NET] database suggest that skills rated as most important to designers are all expected to increase in demand by 2030.

In summary, the myth that there are too many undergraduates in design degree courses in the UK is complex. While students studying for design degrees have risen, it also correlates with growth in the creative sector, providing a large increase in jobs. When looking at graduate employment figures not long after graduation, it is easy to correlate poor employment figures with the Creative Art and Design subjects, and draw the conclusion of too many graduates and not enough jobs. However, when taking a long-term view, the evidence indicates this is not entirely accurate; rather, it highlights the complicated path for graduates to enter the design industry and the difficulty measuring graduate success in employability. This was reflected somewhat in the case studies, with just under half of the graduates taking over six months to find employment. Finally, what are the wider implications of design agencies offering internships due to graduates seeking them out as they cannot find employment? Overall, these findings suggest that internships and the reasons they are used are more complex than providing work experience.

5.2.2 REPUTATION

Reputation focuses on the myths surrounding the reputation of design education, specifically, that design education is unfit for purpose or not very good, and design education in the UK is getting progressively worse.

The literature review highlighted that design education is often blamed for producing graduates who are unfit for the design industry. The UK has been identified as a world leader in design education; however, in the UK there is often discontentment expressed within the design industries at the appropriateness of the curriculum taught, particularly regarding the skill set they require of graduates.

With the design industry focused on their requirements concerning workplace skills, this viewpoint is reflected further, with the industry perceiving design education as getting worse over time. Myths have emerged around the state of design education that reinforce this idea, particularly around topics such as academic and theory-driven courses over practical skills and the lack of industry interaction.

Findings: Design education is unfit for purpose or not very good

Four design agencies (DA-AW, DA-ASH, DA-TX, and DA-BB) discussed design education and their perceptions of its functions and purpose. There were two main discussion areas: first, how

education has impacted the graduates, and second, the impact of university choice on the graduates' career. Out of the 11 graduates, none contributed any data on this topic during the interviews.

Two agencies, DA-AW and DA-ASH, provided positive discussion points about design education and the graduates working with them. Both agencies believed their graduates were well prepared for the design industry, which was attributed to how well they had been taught at university. Particularly important areas highlighted were skills in presenting, collaborating, discussing and articulating ideas.

DA-AW attributed the skills sets of the two graduates at the agency to the respective universities they attended. DA-AW identified specific instances where these skills have provided a positive effect in the workplace, saying:

> "Collaborating, as well, they both did collaborate at college, which is a really important skill if you're commissioning an illustrator. [GRAD1-AW]'s project is a collaboration with an illustrator, for example. That kind of thing is really important, actually, and probably quite undervalued." (DA-AW)

DA-ASH attributed GRAD-ASH's ability to adapt to the workplace quickly and efficiently to their university education, saying:

> "I think she's learnt a lot at [university name], I would say. Because she came here, ready to rock n' roll, she was straight out of the traps on jobs. There wasn't a spell where we were giving her something less than we were working on, just to get her skills up or her … I mean, even on her internship, it was just straight in the mix with it all and able to just work as part of the team." (DA-ASH)

The second area of data emergence focused on the relationship between design education quality across different higher education providers. Three design agencies (DA-AW, DA-BB, and DA-TX) discussed university choice in relation to this point.

DA-AW discussed the significance of design education on graduates, placing a high level of importance on university choice in connection to their prospects in the design industry – both in terms of finding roles, and for future relationships and connections that can be utilised. DA-AW explained their viewpoint, saying:

"It's whom you were at college with, it was whom you were taught by, industry links, what projects you took on. [...] You've got to take opportunities at college. Pretty much all my business connections stretching back 20 years I can relate to, I can probably draw a line back to people I've met in college. It's really important that you value those relationships you make at college." (DA-AW)

The agency DA-BB is involved in design education through guest lecturing and providing work placements for students; however, they only offer this opportunity to specific universities, saying they need to be the *'best colleges'.* There was no further clarification about the meaning of what would constitute 'best' in this example.

DA-TX highlighted their previous experiences with higher education and graduates and discussed how this has shaped their opinions on university preferences. The agency preferred universities that have direct links with industry, a curriculum focused on branding and/or packaging, and the use of work placements built into degree courses. Due to this, the agency has three preferred universities where they scout graduates.

DA-TX recently employed four graduates at approximately the same time. This provided an opportunity for DA-TX to reflect on the graduates in relation to the university they attended, saying: "I think what is clear is that universities are very different from each other. And I do not necessarily think that's a bad thing. It's just some of them [graduates] aren't prepared to go into our industry." (DA-TX).

However, DA-TX was keen to point out that, once in the workplace, all four graduates did well regardless of the university they attended. In summary, DA-TX stated their beliefs that the main function of university education, in relationship to design, should focus on "the thinking side of it and building concepts and rationale behind things. Reasons for doing it. That's what the best unis, for us anyway, do." (DA-TX)

Discussion: Design education is unfit for purpose or not very good

Two design agencies, DA-ASH and DA-AW, discussed how the university had contributed to the development of the three graduates working for them, specifically, in terms of the breadth of skills taught and how these skills have been translated into the workplace. The agencies provided positive feedback on how design education has impacted the graduates in the research, using

specific examples to demonstrate their points. DA-ASH was explicit about the correlation between what was taught at university and the graduates' skill acquisition.

In these instances, both DA-TX and DA-ASH are positive about the skills match; design education has provided them with a match between expectations and requirements when looking for graduate designers. For DA-TX and DA-ASH, design education has provided them with a graduate who possesses a higher-than-expected skill set level attributed to the education received during the degree course. Both agencies have expressed delight with the graduate's ability to transition seamlessly into a workplace role.

The friction between what the university teaches and the requirements of the design industry has highlighted a potential skills gap by the Design Council (2018a) and Universities UK (2018). The Design Council (2018a) discussed at length the interrelated points on the design skills gap and dissatisfaction with design education at the degree level; however, their recommendations focus on design education at the secondary school level, rather than at the higher education level. Universities UK (2018) describes the challenges faced by education providers to balance the development of subject knowledge alongside the professional knowledge required by the design industry. This task is viewed as almost impossible without close collaboration between industry and education (Universities UK, 2018).

The requirements of the design industry, particularly the skills required in a design agency, are brought into focus when design agencies discuss preferences for graduates from specific universities. Three agencies discussed variations in teaching and curriculum at different universities and how this influences their decisions when it comes to hiring graduates. Overall, the agencies indicated that they believe specific universities produce graduates who are better suited for working in design agencies. Discussing why indicated a preference for degree courses that focus on branding, packaging, digital, and graphic design to be used in a commercial context. The three design agencies were not known to each other, yet the universities mentioned were consistent across all three agencies, highlighting the five universities that are preferred in this context.

The reputation of a university in the design industry is based on a mixture of experience (through involvement, such as teaching or providing regular work placements) and opinion. As such, anecdotal evidence suggests that design agencies prefer graduates from specific universities to fill

entry-level positions, but there appears to be little research to support this. The three design agencies in this research indicated they preferred specific university graduates, but due to this very small sample of design agencies, it cannot be taken as an accurate view of the design industry. However, this drew attention to the perceived inconsistencies in design education across university courses in the UK.

There are broad indicators of university preference using university rankings and league tables in the UK; these provide a guide to a wide audience including the design industry. Typically, universities are assessed through criteria made up of satisfaction with teaching, course content, career prospects, and student spending; however, subject areas are broad rather than specific. Comparing the universities preferred in this research to *The Guardian's* (2021) university league table for 'Design and Crafts', the preferred universities specified in the case studies all fall within the top 20 universities in the UK.

MillionPlus (2015a) stated that "Universities have often been ahead of the field in anticipating new and emerging creative markets." (p. 10) and have responded by creating innovative courses to respond to these needs. However, the Design Council (2018a) also reports that businesses within the design industries find it more difficult to fill vacancies due to a shortage of people with the right skills and qualifications. There do appear to be conflicting views on the roles of design education at university in relation to the specific requirements of the design industry.

Design organisations have discussed university inconsistency with curriculum, with Bakhshi et al. (2013) report for Nesta stating "the evidence suggests that most universities have not been producing the kind of talent that the creative industries demand" (p. 103), and although they believe the industry is partly to blame for not being specific regarding their requirements, it is apparent that UK universities must share the blame. Bakhshi et al. (2013) believes that universities have been "insufficiently responsive towards the needs of their students or to industries, partly because they have lacked the incentives to do so." (p. 103). Bakhshi et al. (2013) concludes that there is a correlation between universities that are not transparent on course content and graduate outcomes. Furthermore, the Design Council (2018a) highlighted that creative industries regularly report dissatisfaction amongst employers with graduates, especially regarding the perceived standard of education they have received.

It is apparent that there are inconsistencies in design high education and dissatisfaction in the design industry with graduate education. Over the course of the case study interviews, three design agencies indicated they recruit from specific universities due to the perceived track record of producing graduates who are suitable for working in design agencies. This indicates that some universities are tapping into the specific needs for design agencies. The focus on branding, packaging, digital, and graphic design to be used in a commercial context is highly valued. DA-TX discussed this point and how it is helpful to them to have graduates who understand the context of the work they will be doing. When developing relationships with universities, one agency indicated support is aligned with the 'best' universities whose curriculum is focused on industry-standard brief and content. In this instance, DA-BB indicated they would only work with specific universities in terms of building relationships to offer work experience to graduates.

An interesting aspect of DA-TX regarding university choice came through the employment of four graduates at a similar time. All four graduates attended different universities, with three attending universities highlighted in the previous paragraph as preferred choices. The fourth graduate was from a university with a very different approach, more conceptual than commercial. DA-TX had reservations about how the graduates would adapt to the work in their agency; however, after several months, all four of the graduates had performed well regardless of the university they had attended.

With only two of the seven agencies and no graduates discussing design education and its purpose, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the case studies. Both design agencies were positive in their view of design education, especially in relation to how well the graduates were prepared for their roles in the design agency. Three design agencies discussed their views on inconsistencies in design education across higher education providers. There appears to be some discontent from within the industry and design organisations regarding the state of design education; however, the topic appears to be heavily debated and requires closer collaboration between higher education and the design industry.

Findings: Design education in the UK is getting worse

The data from the case studies in relation to this myth only emerged in one example from a design agency. Graduates discussed other factors regarding university but did not comment on design education getting worse in the UK.

Agency DA-AW discussed two areas related to design education in the UK and how this could impact the wider design sector. DA-AW concerns focused on the pathways to the design industry and how successive policy changes have impacted design education.

DA-AW discussed the design education path in the UK, from the school level through to the industry. The agency felt it was important to give school students an experience within the industry before A-Levels or choosing a degree course. Therefore, DA-AW has provided work experience for students at secondary school; at the time of the second interview, a school student was on a placement for a week's experience.

The agency discussed the wider implications of policy changes at the government level, in particular the funding cuts to art and design subjects, as well as the future implications of how this could impact the creative economy in the UK.

> "I think we have a responsibility to bring people into the industry from school. That's quite a scratch on the surface with that question because it's not a particularly inclusive industry. That's extremely apparent, actually, in terms of the people you meet and the people that come in. We're doing work with the Design Council at the moment. The Arts Council around the cuts in funding... for art and design, and schools. The difficulty, or perhaps not the acknowledgement of the importance of design in the wider, to quote, 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'. [...] And design's role in innovation and technology. It's a huge question, so it's more our responsibility to that than it is a graduate coming to the industry." (DA-AW)

In summary, DA-AW expressed their opinion on the current policy on design education at all levels of the UK Government, saying: "It's undervalued. No question about it." (DA-AW)

Discussion: Design education in the UK is getting worse

Due to only one agency discussing the current performance of design education in the UK, it is challenging to analyse in relation to this myth. It is possible, however, to look at the data from external sources to compare with the findings from DA-AW.

DA-AW discussed the narrowing of opportunity at the school level to study design and the impact this has on the design industry. Their main concern stems from policy changes that have seen STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects being prioritised over art and design subjects, particularly at the secondary school level. This view is supported by design organisations

(Design Council, 2020a) and think tanks (Policy Connect, 2018), who are concerned that design is undervalued in education, and the impact this has on the creative industries. The numbers show a substantial decline in students studying design and technology at the GCSE level – 437,000 in 2002 to just 99,000 in 2019 (Design Council, 2020a). This level of concern has led DA-AW to offer ad hoc work placements for school students doing GCSEs and A-Levels. They see the opportunity to be exposed to the design industry as important, as the experience may inspire a student to explore a career path that may not have been considered. The foresight to understand the wider implications of policy and pathways has led the agency to think beyond its own practice within the design industry. While work experience placements are invaluable for school students to provide a greater understanding of job opportunities, what the role entails, and the expectations of work life, it is less than ideal for students to have to engage in this path due to the lack of opportunity to study design and technology at school. Work experience should be seen as complementary to the skills learnt at school, rather than in place of it.

There is concern that the long-term impact of the policy will affect the quality of design education and the projected need for design skills in the future. With the design economy growing, both in terms of economic contribution and job creation, the need for a highly educated workforce with the right skills is growing (Design Council, 2018a). Research by the World Economic Forum (2016) on the emergence of the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' and the requirements of education systems to facilitate this showed that the learning focus should be on developing individuals' skills in areas such as collaboration, innovation and problem solving to meet future employment needs. Furthermore, the Design Council (2018b) found that the demand for design skills has grown, and "UK firms acknowledge that design will become a greater requirement in order to stay competitive in the changing economy." (p. 31). The realisation that the changing nature of work in the future will rely on design skills and creativity indicates that the creative economy should be marked out for more investment rather than cuts, in particular the education system that feeds it (Design Council, 2020b).

UK's design industry is seen as a success story (MillionPlus, 2015b); however, it appears there are some valid causes for concern for its future. There are worries, predominantly from design organisations, think tanks and education (school and higher), that there have been fundamental shifts in the priorities of design education. Policy Connect (2018) made several recommendations to the government to ensure that the design sector can grow and support new businesses and ways of

working; these include incorporating design thinking into other subjects and reversing the exclusion of creative subjects from the English Baccalaureate. The response from DA-AW showed an awareness of what is being discussed in the wider design community and the impact that policy has on the future of the design industry. Organisations like the Design Council (2020a), MillionPlus (2015b) and Policy Connect (2018) have identified the need for design education and skills as part of the development of the global economy, yet there appears to be a lack of foresight at the policy level regarding the future skills needed for the UK's creative economy to flourish. The myth that design education is getting worse is impossible to quantify from one response in the case studies. However, it is apparent there is concern from those involved in the design industry that there is a fundamental issue at the government level regarding the value placed on design education and the impact this will have in the long term.

5.2.3 KNOWLEDGE

This section focuses on *Knowledge* and the myths surrounding the design education curriculum at the higher education level, particularly what is taught and its relevance to the design industry. There are three areas covered in this section: design lecturers do not engage with the design industry, design education does not provide employability skills, and design education does not teach the right skills for the design industry.

The literature review highlighted the myths that design lecturers do not engage with the wider design industry, prompting concerns that graduates lack industry context and their experiences are dissociated from the reality of the design industry. Furthermore, it was identified that there are concerns that design education does not provide the employability skills required by the design industry, leading to a sense of frustration with recent graduates regarding their lack of readiness for work. Finally, there was criticism regarding the suitability of the skills taught in relation to the skills required by the design industry. These three areas are discussed with the findings from the case study research in the following section.

Findings: Design lecturers do not engage with the design industry

Six of the seven design agencies involved in the case studies discussed engagement between higher education and the design industry, while only one graduate covered this point. The design agencies did not identify design lecturers specifically, but rather, their engagement with the design

department at the university level, indicating engagement is not necessarily driven through individuals, but rather collectively and built on over time to form long-standing relationships.

Although it was unclear who instigated the initial relationship, the six design agencies are engaged with universities in a variety of ways, and these relationships have been formed for different reasons. DA-ASH, DA-DR, and DA-AW developed ties with specific universities because they have contacts through studying there or knowing lecturers within the design department, while DA-BB and DA-TX have relationships that have evolved over time through various touchpoints. The design agencies were involved with the design departments in broadly five ways: guest lecturers, talks/workshops, portfolio reviews, mentoring, and providing placements for students.

At DA-ASH, they have a close connection with a university nearby where the creative director studied. Their involvement includes guest lecturing and talks, as well as offering students work placements during their studies. DA-MW has a long-term relationship with a local university, providing portfolio reviews and workshops. This has led to further work with final year and recent graduates through an industry-led workshop where agencies provide mentorship, industry briefs, and context to the design industry.

DA-DR also has a long-standing relationship with a university, which has resulted in DA-DR providing work placements for its students. This has resulted in many graduates who have gone on to intern at the agency, leading to employment in several instances. DA-TX has forged relationships with several universities through guest lectures, workshops, and portfolio reviews. The agency acknowledged that there are positives for them in engaging with universities, as their team learns from presenting and reviewing student work. However, they also acknowledged that their involvement increases when they need to recruit graduate designers, as they can scout for interns when needed. Through a family connection, DA-AW is involved with a university through guest lecturing, talks, mentoring and offering internships to recent graduates. This has been a revelation for the agency, acknowledging that it has been rewarding to regularly work with students and has provided an opportunity to reconnect with graduate-level designers.

Only one graduate (GRAD1-AW) discussed design lecturers engaging with the design industry, as their lecturer was a lecturer/ practitioner and the course programme involved guest lecturers from design agencies to provide context to working in the design industry.

Discussion: Design lecturers do not engage with the design industry

With six of the seven design agencies' activities involved with universities, specifically the design department, it is apparent in this research that engagement exists between higher education and the design industry. Collaborations are unlikely to develop spontaneously between universities and the design industry (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), 2015). Universities UK (2018) described this as emerging from pre-existing relationships, and new partnerships can be challenging in terms of time and resources, competing interests, and different perspectives. In the instances of the design agencies in this research, the collaborations were aligned to this finding. What was not clear, however, was who initiated the collaborations – university or industry.

Universities UK (2018) identified a long-established tradition of higher education institutions collaborating with employers, with the key drivers being economic (to address skills gaps), social (civic responsibility and supporting social mobility) and policy (education and skills policy development). During the interviews, the design agencies talked about their involvement with universities; this predominantly focused on aspects that would provide students with an understanding of the design industry. This was due to the specific type of activities the design agencies were engaged with, for example, talks and workshops, portfolio reviews, mentoring, guest lecturers, and industry placements for students. Engagement between design departments and design agencies provides students with the skills to adapt to the world of work (Universities UK, 2018).

Policy Connect (2018) understands the benefit of collaboration between the design industry and education, and greater opportunities should be created to provide skills for working life. The findings from the research indicated that the agencies are engaged and interested in the design curriculum, alongside altruistic and social reasons such as giving back to a new generation. The design agencies' involvement extends to providing placements to embed skills and develop design skills and build knowledge in the industry. However, one agency did discuss an increase in engagement when they needed to recruit. This finding aligns with research by BIS (2015), which found that employers often increase engagement with higher education when they need to recruit applicants.

The design agencies in the research highlighted the link between local universities and industry to facilitate engagement and involvement. Engagement between universities and the design industry

provides positive, long-term benefits, particularly in developing creative hubs and tailoring the graduate skills required by local design agencies. The formation of strong education and industry connections can contribute to local economies and the growth of a business. The use of universities as anchor institutions can drive community growth and shape local economic activity (Centre for Local Economic Strategies [CLES], 2020). The role of anchor universities provides collaboration within local industries, providing students with opportunities in mentoring and entrepreneurship and ensuring curricula match the expectations of employees (MillionPlus, 2015a).

The case studies highlighted positive examples of engagement between design departments and the design industry. The design agencies involved are aware of the benefits – both to them and students/graduates – of engagement with the university and do not see design lecturers and departments not engaging with the design industry.

Findings: Design education does not provide employability skills

The discussion areas around employability skills and the right skills required for the design industry were interconnected in the case studies. Many of the topics discussed covered both touchpoints, particularly by design agencies. Four of the seven design agencies and all the graduates talked about the relationship between design education and employability skills.

DA-ASH, DA-AW, DA-MW and DA-COM broadly all felt university provided employability skills; however, all four indicated to varying degrees that the point of university is not to produce fully formed working designers.

DA-ASH is happy with the skills GRAD-ASH has, particularly the ability to slot into the wider team, saying "I mean, even on her internship it was just straight in the mix with it all and able to just work as part of the team." (DA-ASH). GRAD-ASH confirmed that their experience at university helped prepare them for employment through projects that had built-in time management, projects that varied in length to challenge the organisation and working in collaboration. They have found that this experience has helped in the workplace by understanding how to work within various timeframes, plan their time effectively on jobs, and work in a team.

The design agency DA-AW discussed how the university had prepared the graduates for their employment, highlighting the positive aspects, saying: "So, they've got a good grounding in actually

presenting, discussing ideas, articulating an idea." (DA-AW). DA-AW discussed their views on education, stating university is not training for the industry; rather, a graduate should have a design education at university and then learn new skills in the workplace, saying:

> "I don't think you do need all the skill sets. I think, if you're a graduate, you can learn them. [...] Right attributes, I think, because that's worth, they need to able to learn those skills, even if they haven't got them." (DA-AW)

The DA-COM agency's views on university education aligned with DA-AW, with the view that university is about education rather than training. They feel universities cannot fully prepare students for the reality of the design industry, and this is left to the agencies that do employ them. However, they see this in a broadly positive way, saying graduate skills, particularly around employability and industry-specific skills, are the responsibility of the design industry to nurture and develop once graduates are in the workplace.

DA-MW viewed university, employability, and graduates as mixed and touched on areas they feel universities could have helped more or graduates who did not have the level of skills they expected. Specifically, the areas of frustration are focused on the lack of work-ready skills they believe should have been taught at university. The agency is involved with an external programme for graduates to develop skills required by industry – both employability and industry-specific – saying:

> "So, we were running that again, from the perspective of being slightly frustrated with some of the students and graduates who perhaps did not have all the skills. All those skills we would be hoping that would come from the university." (DA-MW)

All 11 graduates discussed how their universities incorporated employability skills into the curriculum. The graduates identified specific areas such as providing real-world briefs, setting up time-based projects, and collaboration. Often, these were in conjunction with the design industry to give contexts, such as live briefs, industry talks, and placements.

Both GRAD-BB and GRAD-ASH identified that the university had given them the opportunity to develop their personal skills, which helped once they started working. The areas focused on timekeeping and organisation, with GRAD-BB saying: "Organisational skills and timekeeping is something that I really had to learn in university. [...] And I guess the attitude of learning. I've always,

always been open to learning something, and just making use of the resources around you."
(GRAD-BB)

GRAD-MW was positive about the skills developed at university, highlighting they went beyond design skills and broadened out to incorporate skills required in the workplace, particularly around communication, saying:

> "Communication, got to be able to communicate the brand or the concept to be able to communicate with the audience or whom you are working with in the studio. You've got to kind of be able to tell people your ideas and show them in a way that's true to how you think they are." (GRAD-MW)

Placements can provide the opportunity to develop employability skills for graduates. GRAD-DR identified that their second-year placement helped them develop an understanding beyond the university curriculum, such as client relations, the pace of work and working in teams.

Only one graduate felt that the university had not prepared them for employment. GRAD2-TX talked about their course and felt that the focus on conceptual design development was to the detriment of developing skills that were needed to work in the design industry. However, expanding on this, now that they are working they appreciate the conceptual development, as this has provided a strong platform for the design industry.

Discussion: Design education does not provide employability skills

Participant viewpoints on graduate employability existed; however, these were touched on lightly by the design agencies and the graduates. Overall, the views were generally positive without providing a deep amount of insight, and there was considerable overlap in the discussion on employability and design-specific skills.

Employability is about a broad set of skills and attributes that will enable a graduate to be successful in their working life (Higher Education Academy (HEA), 2013). Key aspects of employability include, but are not limited to, adaptability, capabilities, knowledge, articulation, social and self-awareness, and specialist and transferable skills (HEA, 2017). The research indicated that the participants were all broadly happy with their employability skills. This was design agencies finding that graduates

possessed them, and graduates identifying design education that embedded this learning in the degree course.

The design agencies in two instances were clear that they believe education is not training, and it is important to differentiate between employability being built into education and training for work. Overall, the design agencies' opinions on employability were muted, in part due to satisfaction levels with the skills of the graduates. Design Council (2018a) found that the design industry preferred degree-educated graduates over recruiting young people from further education (FE) as their employability skills are more developed. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (2015) found that employers appeared to be more concerned with generic skills (team working, communication, and teamwork) than specific industry skills, as these can be developed and taught in the workplace.

Some of the most effective approaches to employability in education include a combination of different elements sequenced together in a coherent institutional narrative around employability (HEA, 2017). This was broadly discussed by the graduates in terms of techniques used in the curriculum that embedded training, such as building in skills required for the working life, including timekeeping, organisation, teamwork, and communication. Graduates also discussed that universities would provide industry-specific events and talks to provide context on industry pathways, a view identified by Universities UK (2018) who highlighted that graduate employability can be enhanced through work placements, workshops on employability skills and career pathways in the industry.

Most of the graduate participants had completed work experience at university. DA-TX highlighted this as an example of providing employability skills. HEA (2017) acknowledged the role of work experience during their studies as an effective tool to enhance graduate skills. Furthermore, evidence shows that graduates who had participated in work placements as students were more likely to find employment and faster (HEA, 2017).

Overall employability skills were viewed by the design agencies as important but developed to an acceptable standard in the graduates. Graduates generally understood that going to university had contributed to developing many of the skills required for entering the world of work.

Findings: Design education does not teach the right skills for the design industry

In line with the previous findings, the discussion areas around design education teaching the right skills for the design industry and employability skills were interconnected. Four of the seven design agencies and all the graduates talked about their experiences with design education in preparing graduates for the design industry.

DA-ASH, DA-AW, DA-MW, and DA-COM all discussed the skills they require from graduates to work in their agencies. All four agencies understood and highlighted that graduates are not fully formed designers, and the workplace contributes greatly to their early-career learning. Overall, the agencies felt the graduates had been taught well at university, with skills sets such as conceptual thinking, design skills, software skills, and new ways of working that challenged the agencies' current skill sets. DA-AW discussed this area, saying:

> "There are definitely skills that they come with which are software-based skills, but they've also been well taught, I'd like to say, by [family member], and they come from colleges, so they've got a good grounding in actually presenting, discussing ideas, articulating an idea." (DA-AW)

This experience has changed DA-AW's perception about taking on graduates – their design skills and ability have proved to be preferable to their experience with more senior designers, and this has been ascribed to the graduates' skills and exceeding expectations in the workplace.

DA-ASH praised the attributes of GRAD-ASH, who fit right into the workplace without a problem. The agency acknowledges that there is a continuous path of learning, such as software skills; however, they are aware that this will develop with time and experience. DA-COM felt agencies should be prepared to pick up the teaching, mentoring, and guiding graduates once in the workplace, saying:

> "To be honest, college doesn't really prepare them for the real world and the responsibility gets passed on to the places where they first work or do internships. I think it needs to be a two-way street. Studios need to give graduates more time and graduates need to be more willing to learn and understand that the real education begins when they start working." (DA-COM)

Overall, the four agencies could specify areas graduates need to develop their skills; however, the general understanding is that this is part of early career learning and will now happen in the workplace.

All graduates discussed how the university has prepared them for working in the design industry, and indicated they felt the university provides the right design skills to work in the design industry. On the whole, they talked about the 'obvious' benefits of studying design: 'design thinking' and 'creative thinking'.

For GRAD1-AW, the biggest advantage the university provided was design thinking. Creative thinking and conceptual development were the main skills developed at the university for GRAD-MW. GRAD4-TX also found that the university prepared them with skills that gave them a good base in design, through learning design ideas and software. The university GRAD1-TX attended was idea-based, making the transition into the design industry smoother, where these skills were valued. GRAD1-TX said:

> "Everything was idea generation. More so than the craft of the final thing, and idea generation generally is very fast-paced here. You do not have long at all. Just having the ability to find ideas quickly and in different forms probably helps the most." (GRAD1-TX)

This view was shared by GRAD-COM, who said their university had prepared them well for working in the design agency:

> "Probably the whole concepts and ideas thing. I think that really helps, to think more out of the box. [University name] did that really well, and probably just work ethic as well. It's just the process I go through. Yeah, the processes." (GRAD-COM)

GRAD2-AW also found that design thinking and problem-solving were the biggest ways that the university had prepared them for the design industry, saying:

> "problem-solving as a start, I suppose. There's quite a lot of work that we do here that's quite complex, so just the sort of process of how you approach a project from the start [...] I suppose it's just that sort of design thinking mindset, in a way, that's most applicable." (GRAD2-AW)

Four graduates (GRAD-BB, GRAD-DR, GRAD-ASH, and GRAD1-AW) also talked about how their universities had helped them develop the right skills for industry through the inclusion of real-world briefs to give context to the curriculum. GRAD-BB felt their university provided them with insight beyond coursework, saying: "our university did have a lot of talks, live briefs and the chance to visit studios, a few of those things. [...] Yeah, we definitely had the opportunity to gain that knowledge." (GRAD-BB). GRAD-DR felt their success after graduation was in part due to the university preparing them for the design industry, saying:

> "Obviously, the course set me up, I think going to [university name], I think the course really gears you up for going into industry. Talking to other people who did my course elsewhere, they did not have the sort of opportunities that we got through, that uni pushed for us to get. So, I think there's a lot of ... in terms of setting up your portfolio. How to go and apply for internships, interviews, that sort of thing. They really, really geared you up for that." (GRAD-DR)

Only one graduate (GRAD2-TX) indicated that their degree course did not provide the skills they would have liked, to enter the design industry. As the course was more conceptual and lacked real-world projects, after graduation, they had a difficult time understanding what design agencies would be looking for. However, now working, they can see the definite advantage of a more conceptual course when developing client projects.

Discussion: Design education does not teach the right skills for the design industry

Again, this area was touched on lightly by all participants. There do not appear to be any controversial views or opinions regarding design education and skill development for the design industry. It is worth noting that all the design agencies in the case studies have experience recruiting graduates and were largely satisfied with the quality of the people they had taken on over the years. Through this process, the expectations of graduates in relation to design-specific and workplace skills unique to the design agency are realistic. The design agencies indicated that the graduates, on the whole, are work-ready, yet the real learning will happen on the job. They seem to be relaxed about this and see it as part of the process of graduates entering the design industry.

As all the design agencies recruited design graduates, the knowledge and skills are subject-specific, providing specialist knowledge before entering the workplace. This is reflected in the design agencies' responses, which are positive about the graduates' skills level. Alongside this, graduate recruitment provides the opportunity for employers to shape and mould graduates in their

preferred ways of working that are unique to the business (BIS, 2015). DA-COM indicated that learning after university was now the responsibility of the design industry. The Design Council (2018a) found that "The proportion of both designers and those in other design-skilled occupations undertaking training is lower than average. Design firms provide training to a lower proportion of all their employees than average." (p. 62). Therefore, learning in the workplace for graduates will more likely be experiential-based over any formal training.

Beyond the case studies, the design industry appears to have problems with skills gaps, though this is not specifically aimed at design education or graduate level. Rather, it is associated with an evolving and adaptive industry. The skills mismatch articulated by employers in the design industry is often discussed (BIS, 2015; Design Council, 2018a). The Design Council (2018a) identified a skills gap in the design industry, with one in eight design employers finding it difficult to recruit people with the right skills and experience. Conversely, the development of design skills is under-resourced in the workplace, with the identification that "designers are less likely to receive the additional training they require after leaving formal education. Training costs are also more likely to be met by the employees themselves rather than their employers." (Design Council, 2018a, p. 10). One agency felt that their expectations had been exceeded through the new skills that graduates brought to the workplace. This view is supported by BIS (2015), who found that employers sought to recruit graduates for specific knowledge and fresh ideas. Design skills are constantly evolving as technology advances, and graduates are often early adopters of emerging design practices (Design Council, 2020a).

The graduates from the case studies were positive about the design skills they had learnt at university, seeing them as vital to securing roles in the design industry. They are aware of the need to develop their skills further but feel their education has provided them with the right skills, specifically, design thinking, creative thinking, and conceptual development. Four graduates acknowledged that the university had developed their skills through the inclusion of real-world briefs and interaction with the design industry. This prepared them as they transitioned into their first roles in the design industry.

Without a deeper insight into the participants' views on design education providing the right skills for industry, it is difficult to elaborate further. As all the participants who discussed this point were

generally positive about design skill development at the university level, there appears to be no deep dissatisfaction.

5.2.4 CONCLUSION: MYTHS

The section of *'Myths'* covered three areas – *'Requirements'*, *'Reputation'* and *'Knowledge'*, providing insight into how design agencies and graduates view design education in the UK specifically at the higher education level. Responses varied across the topics, with some areas being talked about at great length, while other areas had little or no responses. Design agencies and graduates responded differently on certain topics, with design agencies usually displaying more developed views.

Requirements highlighted the strongest finding in *Myths:* '*to work in design, you do not need a design degree'.* With all participants responding, the data gathered on this myth was the most extensive. Design degrees were highlighted as invaluable for both design agencies and graduates, highlighting the mutual benefits a university education provides. The overwhelming outcome of this section was that design degrees were the most talked-about aspect of myths. With all participants involved in the discussion and all agreeing, design degrees are the pathway to entering the design industry. Without a doubt, design degrees are seen as the natural pathway to working in design agencies.

Participants in the case studies did not directly discuss graduate numbers, or whether there is an oversupply. However, the agencies did discuss the issue of competitiveness at graduate-level roles in the design industry, alluding to the difficulties graduates have in finding employment in the design industry. The emergence of internships appears connected to this point and requires further study.

Reputation highlighted the change and concerns within the design industry about the future of design education in the UK. This section of *Myths* provided the least amount of discussion, and data only emerged from design agencies. Design education was viewed in a positive light and it was recognised that the graduates had been taught well. The emergence of preferred or trusted universities was the strongest finding in this area, with the agencies showing clear preferences for graduates from those universities where the curriculum aligned with their design practices.

Knowledge confirmed a high level of engagement between the design agencies involved and the design departments. These relationships provided design agencies with an insight into design education and graduate development; as such, this perspective provides a realistic view of the capabilities of design graduates. Therefore, the design agencies were broadly happy with the skills the graduates have – both design-specific and employability skills – and they are aware that design industry-specific learning continues in the workplace. Graduates view their education as a positive experience that has given them opportunities to work in the design industry.

In conclusion, the findings and discussion around *'Myths'* provided insight into several areas. The design agencies have definite opinions on design education; however, it appears they do not tend to overthink these; rather, they are interested in touchpoints that are relevant to them. Having a graduate in the workplace brings into focus how education has shaped and developed their skills. The graduates were positive about their experiences, having just left the higher education system. Their current situation – in their first roles in the design industry – means they are generally appreciative of the impact of their education to get them to this point, as they draw parallels with their design skills and gaining employment.

5.3 COMMUNITIES

The section 'Communities' examines the findings from the case studies in two key areas of interest concerning workplace learning for graduates. First, 'Learning in Communities' focuses on the community the graduate enters and how they are learning in the design agency environment. Second, 'Learning Models and Development' compares learning between existing learning models and how graduate learning is supported by the design agencies. The two sections will begin with an overview of the content and structure before moving into the findings and discussion of the research data.

5.3.1 LEARNING IN COMMUNITIES

This section focuses on the findings and discussion of the design agency as a learning community, the graduate who enters it and the learning that takes place within it. As a newcomer, the graduate into an existing community must navigate the new surroundings they have entered. Parallel to this, the graduate is experiencing the transition from university into the workplace, generating an increase in the learning process. Finally, their learning is dependent on the support they receive from the community. The findings and discussion are broken down into five areas:

Experiential learning

Graduate learning in the design agency emerged largely as experience-based. Using everyday activities, graduates developed their skills and adapted to workplace rituals. However, graduates talked about barriers to learning, such as a lack of confidence and being unable to ask for help. The design agencies appeared happy with the graduate's skill level when arriving at the agency and viewed graduate learning as holistic in the workplace. Overall, the agencies viewed learning as something that occurred day-to-day for the graduate through involvement in the workplace community.

Reflection

Reflection was used by graduates to understand and make sense of their experiences in the workplace. The graduates talked about how they used reflection to build on knowledge, learn from their mistakes, and set future goals.

Feedback

Feedback focuses on the support graduates receive through feedback. These sessions tended to be informal and often spontaneous, although some design agencies had formal channels for graduate feedback. Feedback varied from agency to agency regarding the level of support required by graduates.

Seating arrangements

Predominantly, the design agencies supported graduate learning through seating arrangements, and the expectation graduates should ask questions when they needed support or assistance. Graduates confirmed these methods as the core way of learning in the workplace and were positive about the support they received.

Software skills

Design agencies placed great emphasis on the graduate's software skills and the importance of developing these further. Graduates implicitly understood the importance of learning and getting up to speed in this area too – as they saw the relationship between the execution of their design skills and honing their software skills.

Findings: Experiential learning

The design agencies talked about how the graduates learnt in the workplace, with all of them describing situations that occur in day-to-day situations and developing new knowledge through working on projects. The agencies are aware they need to help the graduates, indicating they learn through experience, and explaining how and when they can assist graduate learning.

The agencies DA-ASH, DA-AW, DA-BB, and DA-COM all talked about how learning occurs through day-to-day experiences for the graduate. DA-BB placed great value on day-to-day learning in the studio, alongside the agency culture through team building, socialising, and weekly design catch-ups. DA-BB saw the graduates' learning and knowledge being created through a combination of time, experience, confidence, and the ability to take a leap and not to worry about how you're going to land. In terms of a learning timeline for the graduate, the agency is relaxed about this, highlighting individuals develop differently, saying:

> "I think that the most important thing is to feel fulfilled by the work that actually means something to you as an individual and contributes to the team and business, to feel like

you're valued at that. As long as there's talent, support, that development can happen in a structured way, but also with a little bit of a push in the right way." (DA-BB)

DA-TX thought day-to-day agency life has provided an opportunity for knowledge development through exposure to clients and gaining an understanding of projects. DA-TX explained university wouldn't have provided this exposure and was aware the graduate would be learning through this experience, saying: "I think the main thing they've learnt is understanding how brands work, and understanding how to tackle a brief that's got a lot more behind it than a university brief would." (DA-TX). Daily DA-ASH is aware of the need to look out, give guidance and build on knowledge to expand the graduates' skills; often implemented by more experienced designers. And DA-AW felt learning happens in the studio organically, through everyday practice, and guiding the graduates was necessary, saying:

> "You've got to try and make sure, I suppose, as a creative director, trying to make sure you're not telling them what to do, you're giving them advice and the skills to do it themselves. But occasionally, obviously, you need to say, how about we do this. But they have not needed too much of that. I think it's been good." (DA-AW)

DA-COM and DA-DR both described working through client projects as a learning process. DA-COM identified the graduate learning through the experience of working through a client project, saying "She'll be in from the start of the process, like with the brief, presenting ideas to the client, taking on feedback, developing it further, and then I guess, delivering it at the end." (DA-COM). DA-DR also believed the graduates' learning occurred through working on client projects, saying: "The reality, doing jobs. Just actually being given something you've never done before and working through it." (DA-DR).

All 11 graduates equated learning with working on the job, and generally, they felt comfortable about learning in this way. The graduates talked about how day-to-day experiences while working on client projects have increased their knowledge. By learning through experience, the graduates were able to highlight how they have improved their knowledge, such as observation, working on new tasks, teamwork, repetition, and being open to new experiences.

GRAD2-AW recognised that their learning had predominantly occurred by working on projects. They stated that the agency trusted them and their ability to do the job, making them feel positive about working on new projects. Summing up how their learning experience occurs, they said:

"through being given jobs, and getting on with things. Learning by doing, really. [...] To always be given the trust to go for things, and to get on with it." (GRAD2-AW)

GRAD-MW felt their learning occurs as they work on projects at the agency by picking up ideas and knowledge along the way, saying: "A lot of it is just taking in new things. Sometimes you see things you really like, and you sort of absorb that rather than being sat down and told what to do." (GRAD-MW)

GRAD4-TX explained that their learning has been through doing while on the job, with additional help given by more senior team members. GRAD4-TX has worked on one client project since starting at the design agency, and has found this experience useful for their learning development because the job covered a large variety of skills they needed to learn.

GRAD-BB understood the effect of learning and working on specific jobs to help them develop their knowledge. They were proactive in identifying areas in which they wanted to develop new skills and understood working on a broad range of projects would be beneficial to developing new skills, saying:

> "I've asked to be on particular jobs because I knew they would help me to develop, so I guess that's one thing that's happening already. So, one aspect of forming these projects is producing guidelines, and that's something I've never done as an intern. [...] that's something that's really going to help me a lot." (GRAD-BB)

GRAD2-TX found their development occurred through working with team members on projects, saying: "It's definitely developed by me in work the most. Just, like, learning from other people and just picking everything up from everywhere and everyone." (GRAD2-TX). Their knowledge has been developed through various points in projects, such as joining client calls to gain an understanding of decisions made on projects.

GRAD1-AW felt their learning happened when working on projects with other people, saying: "I think being here teaches me more about design thinking, and creative direction, art direction, those kinds of things that you cannot teach yourself. You have to learn from someone." (GRAD1-AW) When asked how this happens, they identified observation of more senior team members as important; specific examples included learning how to interact with clients and asking questions.

GRAD-ASH was unsure of their own development in the agency; however, they recognised that their learning occurred day-to-day working on projects and with the team. They felt it often happened without realising it, and they were happy with their progress.

Discussion: Experiential learning

Defining experiential learning and learning from experience has provided a wide range of thoughts, and it has been argued that there are differences between experiential learning and learning from experience. Boud et al. (1993) use the terms experience-based learning and experiential learning interchangeably; however, they prefer the former term as they believe it covers a more diverse domain of learning than most educators can conceive of. Usher (1993) argues that learning from experience happens every day, while experiential learning is part of the discourse where the body of knowledge based on experience forms the experiential. Kolb (2015) defined experiential learning as the whole process, abet with the major component consisting of experience as the transformative process in learning. Eraut (2002) combines both Usher's (1993) and Kolb's (2015) definitions, stating broadly that all learning is experiential; however, experiential learning is restricted to situations where it is assumed that further reflection will occur, yet this is dependent on the learner, and thus will dictate the extent of learning. However, there appears to be a broad consensus that while experience leads to learning, there are other factors involved that will influence the effectiveness of learning for the learner.

Boud et al. (1993) outlined five areas in which learning from experience is most significant in the workplace. These are: experience as the foundation and stimulus for learning; learners actively construct their experience; learning is a holistic process; learning is socially and culturally constructed; and learning is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs (Boud et al., 1993, pp. 8–15). These areas are particularly relevant to the data from the case studies, where both the graduates and design agencies discussed how learning occurs in the workplace, broadly around these areas.

Predominantly, the design agencies use day-to-day situations as learning experiences for the graduates to develop their skills further. The agencies used words such as 'holistic' or 'organic' to describe the learning, and expressed the need to give advice rather than prescriptive instructions to allow graduates to learn. Billet (2000) claimed that participation in everyday workplace activities is valued; however, they found that in certain situations additional guided learning was required. Billet

(2000) described guided learning as interventions that develop conceptual knowledge, specifically given by a key contact, such as a mentor. In the interviews, the agencies did not talk about how learning through experience could be enhanced at specific points through guided learning. Several agencies discussed how learning through experience provided opportunities for graduates to build their confidence. One agency provided specific examples of the anticipated areas of learning for the graduates once they had gained more confidence. Two more agencies also highlighted how the graduates' confidence needed to increase before further learning development could occur.

All the graduates in the case studies described learning and developing knowledge in the design agency, as occurring through learning on the job. Although they did not use terms like 'experiential learning', they described learning in the workplace as "learning through doing", "observing", "learning without realising", "getting on with it", and "picking up ideas and knowledge along the way". Kolb (2015) defined learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation experience." (p. 38), implying that the emphasis is on adaptation, continuous creation, and a transformative experience for the learner. In the agency, the graduate is experiencing learning through a continuous cycle of grasping and transforming ideas and concepts into the knowledge required to be a designer. The graduates acknowledged that opportunities to learn are frequent, but found their confidence was lacking when they asked for help; for example, one graduate admitted that there was a barrier when exposing weakness to develop further learning. However, the graduates acknowledged that the design agencies encouraged them to learn through experience and had understood they needed to develop their learning further.

Boud et al. (1993) defined experience as the foundation of learning, but not all experience leads to learning. The acts of reflection, feedback, and analysis all provide part of experiential learning. Both the design agencies and the graduates discussed and placed a high value on learning through the experience of everyday work activities. Learning through experience appeared to be the method accepted by the design agencies to provide learning for the graduates. However, it was not clear if they recognised how graduate learning can be enhanced beyond day-to-day experiences. The graduates acknowledged that experiential learning methods had been beneficial to their development; however, they required further support to build confidence in the workplace.

Findings: Reflection

In the case studies, the graduates described the use of reflection when learning, while only one design agency talked about reflection. Seven of 11 graduates identified the use of reflection in developing their knowledge in the design agency. Three themes emerged around how reflection was used –working outside their comfort zone, learning from mistakes and setting goals.

GRAD2-AW, GRAD1-TX and GRAD4-TX found, upon reflection, that they were pushed outside their comfort zone at work, and they identified these experiences as being beneficial to their learning. GRAD2-AW experienced a situation outside their comfort zone when they had to use unfamiliar software, and upon reflection at the end of the project realising, they had learnt a lot, saying: "And then to get to a point where you look back on ways that you have influenced something, that you can see the benefits of, I suppose." (GRAD2-AW) They understood that as they gained experience at the agency, they could reflect on how they reacted to particular aspects of design and areas that could be improved, saying: "I suppose it forces you into doing both things. What you do like, and you do not like. So, you learn through that. What your preferences are, and then aspirations, learning more of what you do like." (GRAD2-AW) Upon reflection, learning outside of their comfort zone proved to be beneficial for GRAD1-TX. Describing a project that needed to be turned around quickly, the graduate felt they were unable to work on it, saying: "Because I'm quite a methodical person so I do feel like I have to sit down and plan, and I wasn't given that at all, and it was just thrown all in. That was definitely positive." (GRAD1-TX). Moving onto a new project, GRAD4-TX could reflect on and draw on their experience on previous projects. The move to a different client took GRAD4-TX out of their comfort zone; however, they were aware that the skills they had already learnt could be utilised and transferred to the new project. Reflecting on this, they could understand their strengths, and this had given them the confidence to get to work on the project.

Both GRAD2-TX and GRAD3-TX highlighted that reflecting on their mistakes was a valuable tool for learning. GRAD2-TX understood learning from mistakes as a useful tool for developing knowledge, citing situations that had occurred when their work was not right for the client, saying:

> "I suppose that happens quite often, to be honest. But then I suppose that's all part of the process in a way. I think, yeah, it's quite useful to have those things along a project or anything that you're doing, to sort of look at that and know why it's not good, I suppose, and then use that to help improve." (GRAD2-TX)

GRAD3-TX talked about how they wanted to appear professional and knowledgeable to the agency, often bluffing about their skills. Over time, they realised that it is acceptable to not know everything – that being straightforward about his skillset and when they need help is important, saying:

> "I think you kinda realise that over time, and you take it with a pinch of salt. Quite often you'll open something, and my attitude now is, "Oh. I don't know how this works." [...] So, it's not my responsibility to know everything, but I've just gotta make sure I'm brave enough to ask for help really." (GRAD3-TX)

Two graduates (DA-BB and DA-DR) used reflection to set personal learning goals at work. Both graduates used their own experiences to initiate situations that would enable insight or development into learning targets. Reflecting on a recent training session on presentation, GRAD-BB approached the creative director to set a goal of presenting to clients in the future. GRAD-BB also used previous projects to set goals for upcoming projects, saying: "So, and at some point, I think because that would be a great thing to have to take the lead on it and run something on my own and that would really help my development." (GRAD-BB). GRAD-DR discussed taking the initiative to gain specific feedback on his performance, saying they had approached the creative directors at certain points for feedback on how they had done.

Only one design agency talked about reflection as a tool to help graduates learn. DA-TX acknowledged that reflection was useful for graduates, particularly where mistakes occur. The agency understands that it is easy for graduates to make mistakes when they first start, and accepts them as normal. What is important to DA-TX is that the graduates use these moments to reflect on what happened, and use making a mistake as an opportunity to learn.

Discussion: Reflection

Reflection, when used in the workplace, is a valuable tool for turning experience into learning. Boud et al. (1993) define reflection as "an active process of exploration and discovery which often leads to very unexpected outcomes." (p. 7). Furthermore, reflection as an activity is often overlooked in learning situations as it is so familiar (Boud et al., 1993). Eraut (2002) believed this might be due to the use of reflection in learning as a deliberate action to create knowledge. Kolb (2015) places reflection within wider learning models, using the term 'reflective observation', defined as learners who can "reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives." (Kolb, 2015, p. 30).

Schön (1983) developed the concept of reflection for the learner in two distinct but interrelated areas: *in-action* and *on-action*. By defining each action of reflection, Schön (1983) outlines two areas of reflection – the notion that reflection *in-action* occurs while the situation is happening, whereas reflection *on-action* occurs after the event and involves making sense of what happened. This specific notion of reflection is particularly useful in relation to the graduates in the case studies, as they navigate new experiences where they develop the specific knowledge required by the design agency.

Seven graduates in the case studies provided specific examples of reflection in relation to their knowledge development. Graduates gave examples of learning from mistakes or working outside of their comfort zones. Using Schön's (1983) concept of *in-action* and *on-action,* the graduates have discussed reflection in both notions. The graduates acknowledged that learning occurred when they experienced a situation that is unique or uncharted by using behaviour that can be described as *in-action*—drawing on experience, previous feedback, developing new understanding, and thinking on their feet. When the graduates talked about their learning, they applied reflection *on-action*, either through personal introspection or through feedback sessions with the agency. In these instances, the graduates often described reflection *on-action* as learning through mistakes. Using reflection, the graduates also identified areas in which they required new skills and further development. Examples were used to describe when the graduates had identified moments *in-action*—the need for assistance from senior team members—while reflection *on-action* provided two graduates with opportunities to look at development opportunities, such as presenting to clients and identifying how to gain more responsibility within the agency.

The graduates acknowledged that they had made mistakes, such as setting up artwork incorrectly, interpreting instructions incorrectly, or developing conceptual work that was not aligned with the brief. However, these allowed the graduates to reflect on what went wrong, and through the process, they worked out how to do the task correctly, and would be unlikely to make the mistake again. Boud et al. (1993) discussed examples where students have been taken out of their comfort zone and have experienced discomfort with the situation; however, reflection has viewed the situation positively as they have recognised their personal capacity to get through. In the case studies, three graduates described being put in similar situations, and all three have reflected on this and viewed it positively in hindsight due to achieving something they have been challenged by.

For reflection to be used in the workplace, this must be embraced by the design agency as a whole, providing all team members with the opportunity to be involved in the process. Cressey et al. (2006), drawing on Schön's concept of the reflective practitioner, have developed this to consider that reflection should be incorporated as an organisational rather than individual activity. This places the significance of reflection as the responsibility of the community, rather than individual members. However, in the case studies, six of the seven design agencies did not mention the use of reflection as a tool for graduate learning. One agency gave an example of reflection for graduate learning, acknowledging the importance of reflection to aid graduate learning, especially when things do not go as planned. Reflection was incorporated within feedback sessions with the graduates, providing opportunities to discuss performance and the next steps. Boud et al. (1985) recognised reflection as an experience, stating that the objective of reflection is to make people ready for new experiences, saying: "The outcomes of reflection may include a new way of doing something, the clarification of an issue, the 180evelopmentt of a skill or the resolution of a problem." (p. 34).

Seven graduates discussed their individual experiences of learning from reflection, but there appeared to be a mismatch from an organisational perspective. It has been acknowledged that reflection is hard to pinpoint. Cressey et al. (2006) state "reflection has hitherto been neglected in the context of making sense of work experience for those in work." (p. 4). Boud et al. (1985) consider that reflection in the workplace is achieved through everyday working activities by reflection in-and-on the work being carried out. However, it is vital that workplaces value the use of reflection as a tool; this implies a commitment to dialogue and feedback to unlock the use of reflection. For reflection to play an important role in learning, design agencies can help graduates by providing opportunities for discussion and feedback. The graduates who used reflection appeared to have a wider support system within the agency to initiate this, such as the use of buddies, mentors, and informal catch-ups. Timing is critical too, as regular, less formal situations appeared to have enabled better joined-up conversations rather than infrequent formal appraisals.

It appears that reflection has been a valuable tool for graduates to understand their own learning journey and what they have achieved. Through reflection, they can give examples of areas they need help with and skills they need to work on, while giving a sense of accomplishment for what they had already learnt. However, for reflection to be optimised in the design agencies, it is clear that reflection needs to be addressed beyond the individual and involve the whole agency.

Findings: Feedback

The case studies found that six graduates and four design agencies described the use of feedback to support learning in the workplace. The findings showed feedback was a feature in three case studies, with both graduates and agencies showing a positive correlation with the use of feedback.

Six graduates gave examples of feedback they received, with four of these graduates from the same agency (DA-TX). Feedback was provided through a range of touchpoints and predominantly focused on job performance, and in several instances provided further support for the graduates, especially in terms of confidence.

GRAD-COM and GRAD-BB experienced feedback by being assigned to a senior designer who provided feedback through day-to-day activities, such as working on projects. GRAD-COM had been assigned to a senior designer who is overseeing their work; this has been a positive experience, and the feedback they have received has been helpful to develop their skills through critiquing their work. GRAD-COM found the feedback supportive, felt their skills had improved and provided a steadying influence on their approach to their design process, saying: "they kinda appointed a senior designer to act like my mentor, which has been fantastic, because it means I can actually go to him, or any problems, he's the one who's briefing me, and explaining, and critiquing my work." (GRAD-COM). GRAD-BB also had the day-to-day support of a senior designer who provided feedback, who they felt acted as a mentor for them. The senior designer provided steady support and was the person they turned to when running into problems in the workplace; GRAD-BB placed a high value on this relationship. GRAD-BB also talked about the attitude of the design agency, highlighting the positive attitude to learning, support, and guidance, and how this has helped their development. Feedback was incorporated into a review with the creative director, saying: "they talked a lot about what sort of points I could work on and provided help with those as well and support and guidance, which is really good." (GRAD-BB)

The four graduates at DA-TX all talked about feedback in the workplace and how it was used to support their learning. GRAD1-TX, GRAD2-TX, GRAD3-TX, and GRAD4-TX found the support from the agency to be fantastic and described feedback being provided through multiple channels to offer frequent opportunities to discuss anything that had come up. The four graduates identified the combination of regular catch-ups, alongside formal but less frequent HR reviews, as beneficial to their development. The four graduates were all assigned a line manager whom they met daily in an informal way; these were designed to deal with smaller issues, so they did not get bigger. During a

line manager chat, GRAD4-TX talked about a request to the project they had worked on; this feedback was taken on board and initiated. GRAD4-TX talked about how they were nervous about bringing this up, but discovered the line manager listened, offered constructive advice, and actioned it to make the changes. At the second interview, the graduates had recently had their three-month reviews, and these were positive, with GRAD3-TX saying:

> "they properly take the time to give you the, not what you're doing wrong, but what you do well, and areas of improvement, which obviously when you start that list can be as long as your arm. You're always trying to improve." (GRAD3-TX)

Beyond informal chats and dedicated reviews, the graduates felt that the agency provided a good support network for them. GRAD1-TX and GRAD3-TX both talked about a new team structure and how this impacted their learning and support at work. They both found a mixture of designers at different levels useful for providing feedback, and they felt the agency was "experimenting with different ways of how to solve ... improve that process, and sort of throw the book at it a little bit as well, which is really lovely." (GRAD3-TX)

Four design agencies (DA-COM, DA-BB, DA-TX, and DA-ASH) used feedback as a tool in day-to-day tasks to implement learning for the graduate. In addition, DA-TX described further methods the agency has implemented to provide feedback for the four graduates in the agency.

At DA-BB, feedback is built into day-to-day activities through partnering the graduate with a senior designer, saying: "Each person has, because we're so small, the ability to come to [creative director] or myself and we would, we split that responsibility depending on the person." (DA-BB). Beyond feedback occurring in this manner, the agency has a formal platform for feedback and development in the format of annual reviews; however, this had not happened at the time of the interviews. DA-COM supports the graduate through discussion and involvement at all stages of a project. By breaking down each process step-by-step, the agency can provide feedback at each stage, so the graduates can understand what was expected. DA-ASH used regular catch-ups to provide feedback and discuss how the graduates' work was progressing, saying:

> "We just take care to make sure she's happy with the work, like that she's got the stuff she's been given to do and those regular checkpoints and points where she can have a view, have a say, and get feedback on both sides." (DA-ASH)

DA-TX also used day-to-day incidents to provide feedback, such as the 'buddy system' where each graduate is paired with a more senior team member whom they can talk to informally. However, DA-TX also provided feedback through several other touchpoints to give graduates the opportunity to develop their learning by analysing their performance and setting goals. The use of line managers, personal development plans and reviews are incorporated to provide feedback in a structured way. The agency highlighted in the three-month informal reviews that feedback indicated the graduates needed extra support with their technical skills, and as a result, the agency has implemented further tutorials for learning.

Discussion: Feedback

Feedback forms a major component of experiential learning (Kolb, 2015). The foundations of experiential learning are attributed to Dewey (1938), who defined experiential learning as a process loop between personal development, education, and work. Lewin and Cartwright (1951), and Kolb (2015) both expanded on experiential learning and developed models based on the experiential learning loop. However, Argyris and Schön (1978) developed 'double-loop learning', defining learning through a feedback loop of experience, learning and practice. Argyris and Schön (1978) defined single-loop learning as an error and correction process; however, double-loop learning provides an additional dimension, being more creative and reflexive, with the reflection being fundamental to the process. Feedback occurs in both single- and double-loop learning, yet in single-loop learning, this is used more simplistically, to correct errors and realign. In contrast, feedback with double-loop learning involves critical reflection and the ability to analyse and readjust throughout the process of learning. The implications for organisations are how to provide feedback effectively so learners can not only learn from their mistakes but also develop the ability to reflect on and use this experience to build on their knowledge in the future. Feedback can be given in a variety of formats, such as written, face-to-face, self-assessment and peer assessment (Race, 2005). However, to maximise feedback, it is important to use tools such as keeping records to track discussions; responding to the feedback of learners' work; getting learners to make an action plan of feedback; and enabling learners to build on feedback for the future (Race, 2005).

Race's (2005) research indicated that people learn positively through feedback formats such as reactions, praise, compliments, and results; crucially, however, feedback is required shortly after the event; otherwise, its value diminishes. Design agencies need to understand the importance of feedback timing, especially in terms of the rapid learning trajectory of graduates. In the instances of

the graduates at DA-BB, DA-COM, and DA-TX, the appointment of a senior designer or 'buddy' has provided them with contact points to provide discussion points and implement feedback quickly. Regular feedback sessions would appear to be beneficial to the graduate, as opposed to only using annual reviews. The DA-TX system of providing a line manager to each graduate has been successful, as the graduates can use this system on an ad hoc basis to discuss work. Building regular feedback systems could help graduates reflect on their learning and identify areas of potential development.

The four design agencies used senior team members to implement day-to-day feedback for the graduates; however, to provide effective feedback, the senior team members need the skills and expertise to deliver this effectively. Marsick and Watkins (2015) observed that the person who has been tasked with the responsibility to pass on information may lack the skills, both personally and professionally, leading to conflict in learning situations for the graduate. Boud et al. (1985) stated that facilitators within the learning environment must be aware of their own ability to develop learning in others. Therefore, facilitators of learning within the workplace must be experienced and confident in guiding the learner through the process of feedback tools, such as development plans. The implication for the design agency is to develop a human resources mindset, since the skills to successfully provide feedback, goal setting and signposting require a specific set of skills, which might not be present within the design agency.

In three design agencies (DA-BB, DA-COM, and DA-TX), there was alignment between the agency and the graduate when using feedback as a support for learning. In these instances, the use of feedback was used at multiple levels and points, providing the graduates with the ability to develop their learning in a critical and analytical manner, aligned with Argyris and Schön's (1978) double-loop learning. The graduates understood feedback was an important factor in their development in the design agency, contributing to their learning goals. They also received support on projects from senior team members who gave them support, guidance, and feedback. Three design agencies did not talk about the use of feedback as a tool for graduate development, and in these instances, the agencies could develop an approach in the workplace to facilitate opportunities to deliver feedback to the graduate.

Findings: Work-based learning and seating arrangements

The graduates and design agencies both identified that the fundamental method of developing graduate learning in the workplace is through seating a more senior designer alongside a graduate. Ten of the 11 graduates and six of the seven agencies highlighted this method; the implied benefit for learning was for graduates to ask questions when they needed assistance, and learning was viewed through processes such as "getting on with it" and "trying it out".

Ten of the 11 graduates discussed seating arrangements as the primary method of learning in the workplace. The graduates were seated next to an experienced designer; the purpose of this was to provide an accessible way for graduates to ask questions and turn to for help, and general discussion. Broadly, the graduates appeared happy with this situation, as it provided them with a quick-to-access contact point rather than searching for someone to ask.

GRAD-BB was seated next to senior designers on the team who were on hand to provide help when needed. They felt that they were responsible for asking questions, creating discussions, and taking advice in the agency. The graduate expressed how appreciative they were to have this, even though they admitted they had to build up the courage to ask questions. In the second interview, GRAD-BB admitted that asking questions had become easier, saying:

> "when I first started it was a bit hard to do because you're scared that your idea is going to be rubbish, or it's not really important, but I'm now seven months into my role, it's a lot easier doing this." (GRAD-BB)

GRAD-MW was also seated next to more experienced designers, and if they needed help, they would ask, saying "I feel relatively confident. I think it was like when I need to ask something, I just ask it. I don't really feel afraid." (GRAD-MW)

GRAD-COM was aware that the agency placed a senior designer next to them to provide day-to-day support, and saw them as a mentor-type figure. They found this useful to ask questions, especially when they did not know what they were expected to do.

GRAD1-AW and GRAD2-AW both sat in integrated teams with experienced designers. They felt that this provided an environment that allowed them to ask for help by prioritising collaboration. GRAD1-AW felt that they could ask for help from anyone in the agency and said they felt this was very useful. GRAD2-AW found the small size and collaborative nature of the design agency to be helpful

in supporting them. Because of this, they could ask for help when needed and did not see this as a problem. GRAD2-AW admitted that day-to-day support from senior team members helped them to work on client projects.

GRAD-ASH sat between two senior designers, giving them the opportunity to ask questions and show their work for review and feedback. The graduate expressed they were not very confident in their role; however, the seating arrangement helped them to feel like they were making progress, saying: "So it's good, I'm sort of as well as learning stuff that I already knew, I'm sort of building almost different ways of doing things as well, and they'll take time out to talk me through that even if I don't ask as well." (GRAD-ASH)

The four graduates at DA-TX were all placed in seating arrangements with a senior designer to support them. GRAD1-TX enjoyed this arrangement and took advantage of the situation to ask questions when needed. However, at the second interview, DA-TX had developed a new team structure, and seating arrangements had been changed. GRAD1-TX admitted this experience had been difficult for them, saying: "I was very unsettled about it, because I was like I do not want to be in the team I have. I want to be in the old team." (GRAD1-TX). While they understood the reasoning behind the change, it knocked their confidence. GRAD3-TX found sitting next to a senior designer useful to ask questions but was also aware they did not want to interrupt too much, saying "so I'm constantly bugging him for questions, but obviously you try and be aware of when people are busier than usual. Try and pick your moments." (GRAD3-TX). GRAD4-TX found that although often the senior designer next to them was busy, they would help as soon as they could, and they had never been refused help from the wider team.

Six of the seven design agencies confirmed that they used seating arrangements between senior team members and graduates to facilitate learning in the workplace. At DA-TX, they supported the four graduates by seating each of them next to a senior designer. This is to encourage dialogue when the graduate needs assistance, and the senior designer can help on a day-to-day basis. DA-TX had gone through some restructuring in terms of team allocation so the graduates could sit in 'support teams', explaining:

> "So, any quick questions where you're struggling or anything, you can turn to the person next to you and get help that way. So, I think that's really going to improve that support

network, almost, just being in the vicinity of people so that you're in a little team, almost." (DA-TX)

At DA-COM, the graduate sits next to the senior designer running the project, and they are on hand to answer questions and review the graduate's work. The agency is mindful that the graduate is new to the industry and is giving them plenty of time to complete tasks, saying:

"Most of the work we have to do is at breakneck speed, and you can't expect someone straight out of college to keep up. Hopefully what she learns on those projects with more time will help her when it comes to helping out on something a bit more hectic." (DA-COM)

DA-BB is a small agency, and the desks are all within close proximity to each other, giving the graduate the opportunity to ask multiple senior team members when needed. However, the agency still has assigned a specific person to be the main contact point for help and support, and the seating arrangements reflect this.

In the workplace, DA-AW felt they supported the graduates through seating arrangements to ensure they have assistance when required, saying they make "sure that they're getting the support they need, giving them ownership of things when the time's appropriate for it." (DA-AW)

DA-ASH supported the graduate through seating arrangements; this provided the opportunity to support the graduate as they works. Working this way, the agency feels the graduate can have small areas of responsibility and have ownership of the project while getting input from senior team members.

By the second interview, DA-DR had rearranged the seating arrangements so the graduate was seated next to a senior designer for support. The agency indicated that the progress of the graduate was not what they hoped and admitted that the graduate did need more support in the workplace, saying: "We lack support and we're just working through that together. Hopefully I'm giving him enough, we're working together on stuff really and more like a kind of mentor." (DA-DR)

Discussion: Work-based learning and seating arrangements

With all but one design agency employing seating arrangements as the basis for day-to-day work-based learning, this method of learning can have shortcomings in the overall effectiveness of learning for the graduates. The agencies relied on graduates learning to be developed through

seating them next to more experienced members of the team. This method is highlighted as being convenient, provides support, accessible, and draws on existing knowledge.

Ten of the 11 graduates in the case studies described how the support they receive comes from the person they are seated next to; this is actioned through self-initiation, by the graduate asking questions, and through observation. Interactions with experienced team members enable learning opportunities (Billet, 2004) and in the agencies this was utilised for the work-based learning though seating arrangements. The function of this was to draw on the knowledge of senior designers to provide answers and guidance for graduates when needed. Using self-initiated questions by the graduate this highlighted the ability to draw on reflection-in-action, as described by Schön (1983). The ability to learn during the stage of reflection-in-action is a useful tool within the agencies; with the findings indicating it has helped the graduate's day-to-day learning in the workplace. However, drawing on Schön's (1983) reflection-inaction and reflection-on-action model, raising concerns that work-based learning opportunities in the agency are limited, as the reflection-on-action component is missing from the learning loop. The use of resolving queries as they arise determines the requirement to learn but places the responsibility on the graduate to understand what is needed to be learnt (Olteanu, 2017). The area of reflection-on action appear to be missing from the process such as follow up sessions, opportunities for reflection, and drawing on past experiences. To allow for reflection-on-action design agencies must be aware that graduates need further time to develop knowledge with the senior designers beyond ad-hoc questions. However, it has been highlighted for learners providing opportunities to explore and develop more in-depth conversations on subjects can be challenging (Lucas & Unwin, 2009).

The lack of reflection-on-action indicates that design agencies lean on work-place learning strategies that can be described as incidental, rather than expansive. Incidental learning can be defined as "a by-product of some other activity, such as a task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organisational culture, or trial-and-error experimentation." (Marsick & Watkins, 2015, p. 6–7). As the incidental learning through seating arrangements was not reinforced through reflection in follow up sessions, it could be argued the agencies focus is driven by the technical capabilities of the role, that can be made explicit through their practice (Iredale et al., 2013). However, the graduates found the seating arrangements helpful; by the second interview, they were feeling more confident in their day-to-day performance. This was reflected in their responses, with the admission that it has become easier to ask questions and deal with difficult

situations the longer they have been in their role. Incidental learning often leads to unintended consequences, as there is a gap between what Marsick and Watkins (2015) describe as "what we believe we should do and what we actually do." (p. 222). This brings into question the over-reliance on incidental learning in the design agency. While it appears to be a valuable tool for the graduates in the case studies, it appears the agencies could apply further support through reflection to develop deeper learning.

Further questions could be raised around the duality of the graduate as an employee and a learner. Using work as the basis of learning is not new (Billet, 2014), however, the effectiveness of learning in the workplace beyond having a senior designer for occasional help can be problematic. It has been identified the shortcoming of this method is the lack of balance between work demands to balance learning (Orr, & Simmons, 2011).

The case studies indicated that not all learning is incidental; however, it appears to define how day-to-day learning occurs for graduates. It appears there is a need to provide further support to graduates beyond this method, such as more explicit instruction, planned informal learning, and feedback methods for learning to be embedded. Agencies could develop an approach for graduates that allows further support through follow up sessions, as outlined by James and Nightingale (2005). For design agencies, work-based learning utilising seating arrangements, appears to be a convenient tool to help graduates learn. It provides an opportunity for graduates to build on their knowledge using reflection-in-action to think on their feet as they work through unfamiliar topics through drawing on more experienced designers. However, there was a lack of activity that could be described as reflection-on-action to enable the graduates to develop deeper and more expansive learning. It was also identified that many of the learning opportunities could be defined as incidental learning, indicating graduate learning is occurring through a lack on intention. Furthermore, learning is dependent on the senior designer with whom the graduate is placed. The design agency needs to consider further how they develop work-based learning through seating graduates with a senior designer to be an effective tool within the workplace.

Findings: Software skills

Software skills were discussed at considerable length in the case study interviews. Design agencies highlighted the need for graduates to have a certain degree of technical proficiency and to quickly

build upon this once in the agency. Graduates are implicitly aware of this and understand that they need to develop their software skills as a matter of importance in the workplace.

All seven design agencies talked about the graduate's software skills, and this appeared to be the focus of graduate learning in most instances. The agencies are realistic about the graduate's level of software skills and competency. They understood that learning and development were still occurring, yet also highlighted that this was often a priority.

The agency DA-MW would broadly expect graduates to have reasonable knowledge of the main software packages, and in turn, would develop their skills further in the workplace. DA-MW conveyed that the graduate (GRAD-MW) had good software skills, and this had a positive impact in the workplace as there was a minimal level of overseeing required. DA-ASH explained the relationship between software skills and working in a design agency; it is a requirement of the job, and graduates would need a certain level of proficiency to be able to work:

> "they wouldn't be able to be part of the team without a certain level of proficiency and that's the key software so, Adobe CC is obviously the stuff we use InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, you need some more of a working knowledge of that, otherwise you pretty much quickly get bumped down." (DA-ASH)

At DA-AW, they were pleased that both graduates had good design skills and basic software skills. The agency felt they were competent in the required software programs, and were learning and enhancing their software skills on a day-to-day basis. DA-TX pointed out that the four graduates' software skills needed improvement. The agency understood that on-the-job experience was identified as vital to learning, alongside assistance from more senior team members to assist. However, the agency explained that further learning was required to get to the level required. In this instance, the agency is paying for online tutorial programmes for the graduate to develop deeper software skills in their own time.

All 11 graduates admitted that they needed to develop their software skills further to join up their creative ideas with execution. They were also aware that the agency expected them to develop this as part of their job role.

Often graduates talked about their skills in relation to being unable to complete a job or identifying gaps in their software skills, and how this has affected them at work. GRAD-COM talked about a job

that they could not complete due to their lack of software skills. This made the graduate think about how they needed to further develop their software skills, saying: "I think I will try and continue maybe learning more tutorials. Especially about Photoshop, which I haven't yet done much on. But it's also finding the time." (GRAD-COM). GRAD1-TX felt the need to develop their software skills, as they identified a gap between their design ideas and the process of using software to bring them to life:

> "That's been happening a lot when I'm really trying to sell the idea. Like I know this would work, but visually they can't see it yet. If I gain more skill in that, then I feel like more ideas would go through the development stages." (GRAD1-TX)

GRAD3-TX gave an example of when they had to get a more senior designer to help them bring a concept to life using software, explaining: "I couldn't effectively communicate it technically. He helped me with it, and he just did exactly what I wanted for it, and really bought it to life." (GRAD3-TX)

Learning software skills through work appeared to be preferable for the graduates. GRAD3-TX was aware they needed to catch up on the technical side of the job but felt this could be learnt on the job. They realised that at university, they had concentrated on developing their creative thinking, and as a result, they did not focus on software skills. Currently, they are taking software tutorials outside of the workplace to get up to speed and reinforce what they have learnt at work. Recently, GRAD2-AW experienced being in a situation outside of their comfort zone and how this led to new knowledge creation. This was through using software that was unfamiliar to them and upon reflection at the end of the project realised they had learnt a lot, saying: "And then to get to a point where you look back on ways that you've influenced something, that you can see the benefits of, I suppose." (GRAD2-AW). When discussing their software skills, GRAD2-AW talked about software programme courses they had attended, which they did not enjoy. GRAD-DR preferred to learn software skills at work, rather than on external courses. They enjoyed the interaction with experienced team members who knew how to use the software and found the back-and-forth exchange of information was more beneficial than sitting through a course. GRAD-DR had been on a software course, yet during the course they had not taken in the information, and found they retained more knowledge on the job. GRAD4-TX is aware that they have gaps in their software skills and are about to start online tutorials to boost their learning, saying:

> "They let us know of programs, like I don't know if you've heard of linda.com, which is like the video website. I've not used it myself, but they kind of were making us aware of it for when we need it." (GRAD4-TX)

Only one graduate talked about attending a software training course. GRAD-MW would like to learn a specific design software programme, and this would need to be done externally as no one in the agency has this knowledge, saying: "Sometimes I think no one in the studio can really help with some things, and I would need to go somewhere else to learn that. It would need to be outsourced that, like a different route of learning." (GRAD-MW)

Discussion: Software skills

In the design agency and for the designer, software skills are considered essential to performing and executing their job role. The main software skills are the Adobe Creative Suite, tools created specifically for designers and the design industry. The case studies highlighted the importance of software skills, particularly getting graduates' skills developed quickly to be able to carry out their job on a day-to-day basis.

Developing in-depth knowledge and skills in design software programmes is required and can be described as 'signature pedagogies' of being a designer in a design agency. Shulman (2005b) describes specific professional practices as 'signature pedagogies', defined as "forms of instruction that leap to mind when we first think about the preparation of members of particular professions" (p. 52). Signature pedagogies are unique to individual professions in terms of how and what learning occurs within the workplace. Shulman (2005b) views the importance of signature pedagogies as they "implicitly define what counts as knowledge in the field" (p. 54). The requirement for graduates to possess working knowledge of industry-standard software is fundamental. During the case study interviews, every design agency and graduate who took part discussed software skills as an important aspect of learning to work as a designer.

Shulman (2005a) believes learning has evolved this way, as it emerged as the preferred approach to teaching and learning in each specific profession. Having a specific approach allows the routine between learner and teacher to focus on the task at hand. Once learnt, these skills become routine and second nature. This is acquired through what Shulman (2005a) calls 'apprenticeship of observation'. However, this approach inevitably raises issues about what is accepted and defined as signature pedagogy within the profession, and whether this is the right approach. The case studies

showed a consistent approach to how software skills were imparted to graduates in the design agencies. It appears that graduates are learning software skills in the workplace through a combination of incidental learning, informal learning, tacit learning, and implicit learning.

Incidental and informal learning are similar in the sense they both occur within the course of everyday activities, without too much structure for learning. Yet they differ, with the messages conveyed in incidental learning often buried (Marsick & Watkins, 2015), while informal learning is "learning is experienced-based, non-routine, and often tacit" (Marsick & Watkins, 2015, p. 15). Allix (2011) prefers the term 'implicit learning' to describe learning that occurs through the acquisition of skills learnt through a reflexive practice and a sense of ignition when responding to a particular situation. It has parallels with informal learning, as it covers similar areas such as skills that are performed without the need for conscious control; and the outcomes are similar, with Kandel and Hawkins (1992) finding "an improved performance on certain tasks with the subject being able to describe just what has been learnt" (p. 54).

Design agencies place importance on developing the graduate's software skills when they start in the workplace. Expectations by the agencies highlight the importance for graduates to have decent technical proficiency with the required software packages, with the next stage being to prioritise learning in this area. Learning appears to be carried out through 'getting on with it', and essentially occurs day-to-day during the application of work. The agencies expect and are happy for the graduates to ask for help and, in most instances, facilitate this through seating arrangements. There is a level of unspoken agreement that graduates are responsible for developing their knowledge in this area through self-directed learning, such as using online tutorials and learning outside of the workplace.

There are some issues, however, with learning via this method. The reliance on asking for help and having a senior designer to assist when knowledge gaps arise means graduates are at liberty to ask others to help. The case studies show this does happen, and the graduates have utilised this. However, the graduates' workload means they tend to work as efficiently as their knowledge allows, and in some instances, they are unable to fully realise or push boundaries when using the software to develop concepts. When time allows, graduates do use the time to try new software or skills; however, this mostly takes place out of work hours. One agency has provided online tutorials for graduates; however, this needs to take place outside of work hours.

Overall, a high level of proficiency is needed by designers to undertake the core competencies of the job role. The design agencies appear to be confident in the graduates' ability in design thinking; this is reflected in their preference for employing graduates with a design degree. However, what was apparent in the case studies was the emphasis on software skills when talking about learning by the design agencies and graduates. The interview questions were designed to be broad when talking about learning and did not specify software skills. Yet, in all instances, software skills were discussed as a focal point for learning. The implication that software skills are at the top of the agenda for graduates when starting in the design agency aligns with Shulman's (2005b) signature pedagogies. It appears that knowledge and skills with software programs are taken for granted in design agencies, and graduates are aware of the importance placed on this and focus their learning development in this area. The central concept for learning software skills in the case studies appears to be learning through experience, yet a critical factor in learning this way is the design agency's ability to understand the variation between incidental learning and informal learning. The case studies emphasised a focus on graduates' learning through self-directed study, using their own time and incidental learning in the workplace. However, to increase the effectiveness of informal learning, the agencies could focus on the alignment of the skills they require of the graduate by providing more explicit messages in everyday situations.

5.3.2 LEARNING MODELS AND DEVELOPMENT

This section, *Learning Models and Development*, draws comparisons between the learning models used in design agencies and by graduates and the learning models that occur in apprenticeships and professional development. The case studies in this research are not based on apprenticeship models, nor is professional development compulsory in the design industry; however, there are parallels that could enhance graduate learning in the design agency. The data will be examined in three specific areas: reviews and appraisals, professional development and training budgets and self-directed learning. Following this, an analysis of the three areas will be done with the learning models of apprenticeships and compulsory post-degree accredited learning.

The findings from *Learning Models and Development* highlighted how graduate learning appears to occur 'on the job'; however, there are parallels in specific areas with how learning develops in apprenticeship and professional development. Five of seven design agencies used or planned on using reviews to support graduates' development, along with the agencies recognising graduates initiated self-directed learning to enhance development. However, there did appear to be a lack of

design agencies using professional development and training budgets to build upon graduates' skills and learning. Graduates who had reviews and appraisals appreciated this process as it helped them gauge their performance and development on the job. Four graduates would like to have had the opportunity to undertake further training outside of the workplace, while five graduates have experienced this. Finally, all graduates had identified areas where they had embedded their learning through additional self-directed learning, through learning beyond the workplace, and additional study.

Findings: Learning models and development

Reviews and appraisals

In the case studies, five of the seven design agencies (DA-AW, DA-BB, DA-TX, DA-DR and DA-MW) have a review and appraisals programme in place for employees. When interviewed, three of the design agencies had initiated at least one review with the graduate. The other two agencies have plans for the future to carry out a review with the graduate. See Table 6 that refers to the design agencies' review proposals, compared to Table 7 that shows the actioned reviews.

The type and frequency of review varied among the design agencies, with three-month probation reviews, six-month reviews, annual reviews, and informal reviews. The most predominant type of review was the annual review, with five agencies using this type of review. The three-month probation reviews appear to be linked with employment contracts and are carried out to ensure that the initial employment process has been successful for both parties. Two agencies used six-month reviews to break up the long gap between annual reviews. DA-AW explained the need for a mini-review to link up the objectives of the annual review, and DA-DR used the six-month review to "check in, just to see, and more of an objective thing as well." (DA-DR). Two agencies use informal reviews to break up the annual reviews, with one agency carrying out two to three informal reviews between annual reviews and the other agency carrying out monthly informal catch-ups to give feedback to graduates. DA-MW said it used informal reviews between annual reviews as it found "Over the last few years I've tried to implement this review process, so rather than doing it once a year, I try and do it about three times a year." (DA-MW). DA-TX describes why they use regular informal reviews, saying: "That's an ongoing process. So, you catch up with your line manager every month." (DA-TX)

Table 6: Design Agency Review Structure

DESIGN AGENCY	NO REVIEW PROCEDURE	3 MONTH REVIEW	6 MONTH REVIEW	12 MONTH REVIEW	INFORMAL REVIEW
DA-ASH	✓				
DA--AW			✓	✓	
DA--BB		✓		✓	
DA--COM	✓				
DA--DR		✓	✓	✓	
DA--MW				✓	✓ (X3 PER YEAR)
DA--TX		✓	✓	✓	✓ (MONTHLY)

Table 7: Design agency actioned reviews

DESIGN AGENCY	NO REVIEW YET	3 MONTH REVIEW	6 MONTH REVIEW	12 MONTH REVIEW	INFORMAL REVIEW
DA-ASH	✓				
DA--AW			✓		
DA--BB		✓			
DA--COM	✓				
DA--DR	✓				
DA--MW	✓				
DA--TX		✓			✓ (MONTHLY)

The design agencies that had carried out reviews discussed the purpose of reviews, which in all instances focused on the graduates' objectives, training, and goal setting. DA-BB discusses the importance of reviews, especially in the first year of the job, saying:

> "Well, it could be a range of things that kind of need to happen, or stretched goals that are kind of things that we definitely should aspire to conquer or seek to conquer, and we're at a point where [GRAD-BB] is still within the first year of her time here. So that's the kind of ongoing process, but at that first annual year review, we'll be reviewing the kind of goals that we set and setting some new ones as well." (DA-BB)

DA-TX also highlighted the use of goal setting, saying: "You'll set goals for yourself, and you'll be asked to analyse your own performance as well as getting your line manager to do so as well. Then every six months, you review that again." (DA-TX)

Further areas the design agency used reviews for included areas of improvement, strengths and weakness, salary reviews, creative development, and general help. DA-AW focused on the graduates' career objectives to align any training that may be needed. DA-MW discussed the importance of asking how the graduate feels about their training and areas that need further focus in the future. DA-TX stressed the importance of reviews being an ongoing process and conversation: "So right from the offset, they're already getting an idea of what their strengths and weaknesses are, and what they can improve. That's an ongoing process. So, you catch up with your line manager every month." (DA-TX)

In the case studies, six of the 11 graduates had a review by the completion of the interviews; however, four of these graduates came from one agency (DA-TX). The graduates in the case studies who had reviews appreciated them, as this provided them with feedback that was direct, purposeful and clear. This was viewed as extremely helpful and as a positive experience concerning how they are doing in their roles. GRAD-BB talked about their experience, saying: "I had my probation, we sat with [creative director], and talked a lot about what sort of points I could work on and help with, as well and support and guidance, which is really good." (GRAD-BB). GRAD4-TX found that the feedback and goal setting provided a clear path for future development, saying:

> "Again, the PDR goals reflect what I want to do, what I think I should do, and you end up merging the both of them. We have had reviews in the past couple of months, so hopefully coming out of that, I'll have some solid goals and things that combine what I'd like to develop, which can for me be like visualising things better, trying out different categories, stuff like that." (GRAD4-TX)

Explicit feedback and discussion were beneficial for the graduates to affirm their own performance in the design agency. This informed them of how others felt about their work and contributions, and how they were performing in their role. This was important to the graduates, as several indicated that they were not aware before the review. GRAD1-AW was nervous about how their work performance was judged by the agency, but after the review, said, "But it was quite a good thing to know that you're not being shit, and you're doing the right job." (GRAD1-AW). GRAD1-TX had also found that people do pay attention, and the review process highlighted this, saying: "That has made me think a bit more, and people have started to notice the things I'm enjoying more and that I'm not enjoying." (GRAD1-TX)

The four graduates at DA-TX appreciated the regular informal reviews, as they could flag up any issues at the time rather than wait. GRAD3-TX said:

> "I think it's good to have that opportunity. Quite often we meet up and we chat. I'm happy, he's happy and if there's anything to flag up, he'll flag it up but it's nice to have it so regularly because if something did go wrong, I wouldn't want to feel as though I'd have to wait three months to flag it." (GRAD3-TX)

Professional development and training budgets

Out of the seven agencies, one had a training budget, one had funds set aside for ad hoc training needs, and the remaining five had no budget set aside for professional development and training. See Table 8 for an overview of the design agencies' professional development and training budgets.

Table 8 – Professional development and training budgets
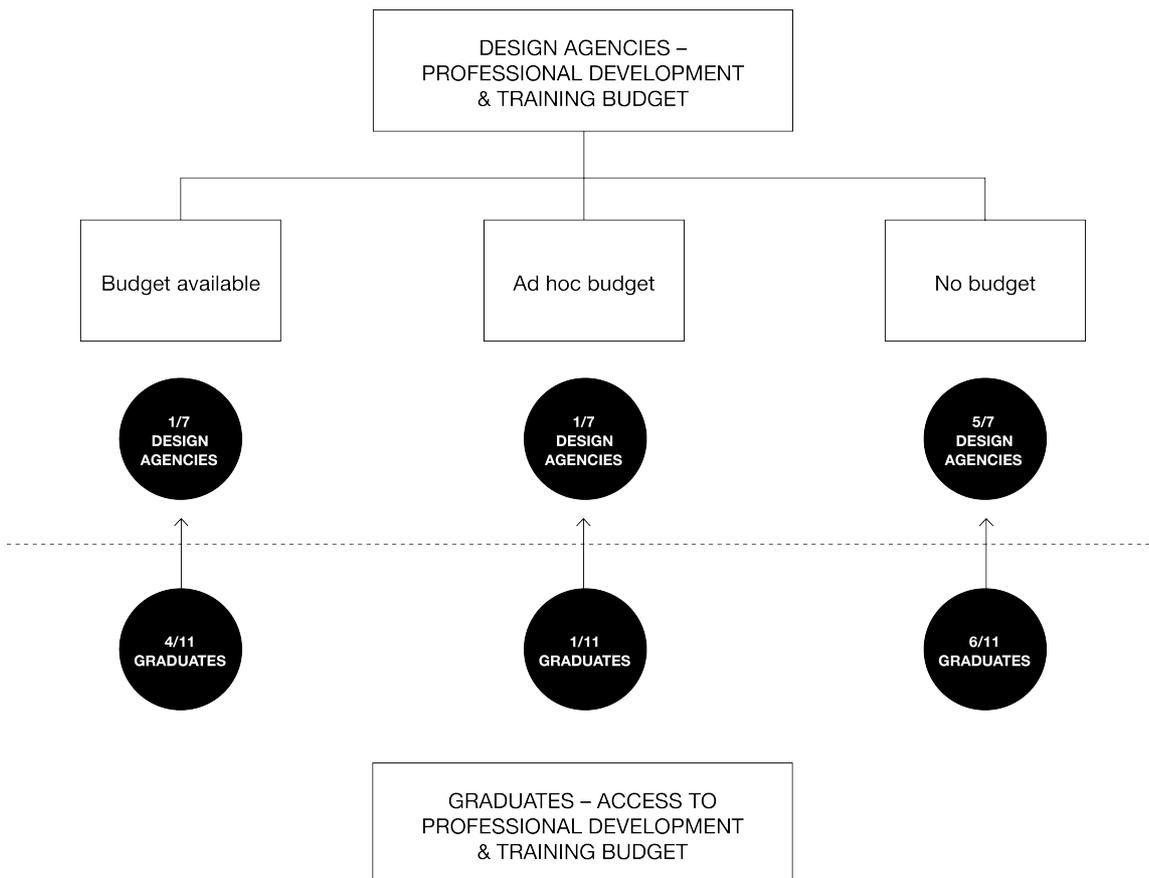
DA-TX was the only agency that had a dedicated training budget. DA-TX provides all employees with an annual budget each year, called an 'Inspiration Budget'. This can be used to develop interests and learning around design-related areas; it does not need to be directly related to their job role, but is used to inspire, influence, and provoke the imagination of the employee beyond the

workplace. The four graduates at DA-TX discussed how this has influenced their interests and inspired them beyond the workplace, alongside their perception of the agency providing this opportunity for them. The graduates all discussed aspects of the training budget, saying they valued that it was tailored to individual requirements. GRAD1-TX appreciated this in terms of their relationship to work, saying:

> "[DA-TX] in general is family run so it is very nurturing, and they want you to grow as a person as well. We have all sorts of things in place, like inspiration budgets, which you can use for whatever you would find inspiring, rather than a company assuming that every single person wants to do the exact same event or the exact same thing. It's very tailored to you in those terms." (GRAD1-TX)

One agency, DA-BB, discussed the lack of a formal programme for training and development but invested in some training, such as the presenting workshop. The agency did say:

> "There are other areas where we've identified the needs for individual support and improvement where we've invested in that. That's something that we're developing at the moment, actually a more formalised programme of training and development." (DA-BB)

However, they did discuss barriers to providing training budgets and external courses, citing financial constraints, especially in a smaller agency like theirs. GRAD-BB talked about the presenting workshop the agency organised, designed to help the employees' presentation skills, saying: "I've done that presentation training. That was an interesting and fun experience. [...] That was as a team, a LAMDA-trained actor came, and we had to do a workshop with us, which was different." (GRAD-BB)

Four graduates (GRAD-MW, GRAD-BB, GRAD-COM, and GRAD1-AW) talked about learning outside of the agency or training courses. They all expressed interest, saying they would 'think about it', or they 'would like to' attend or enrol in a course to enhance their learning. There appeared to be two reasons holding them back at that point in time – either having to personally cover the expense or waiting for the agency to approve funds. GRAD-COM wanted to attend a printing course but could not afford it, saying: "I'm thinking about doing maybe some printing courses in the summer, things like Story Imprint, which I've never really done before. [...] They're all expensive. It's a shame." (GRAD-COM). GRAD-BB had been accepted in a course but had to decline due to the expense.

Two graduates had approached their workplace to talk about external courses. GRAD-MW wished to attend a motion graphics course and had been in discussion with the agency about it. DA-MW said they were open to sending the graduate on a course if it was important for their role, saying: "Then we might say, "Okay, well maybe we'll send you on a one-day course to learn the basics and you get up to speed." (DA-MW). GRAD1-AW wanted to do a coding course and had discussed this with the agency. DA-AW said:

> "They're beginning to look at courses and things that they'd like to take. [...] We could probably be doing more, but I think the intention is to do more, but it's very much what do you need, and giving them the reins." (DA-AW)

While the agencies were open to the graduates attending the courses, at the second interview, this had not progressed beyond talking about it.

Two graduates, GRAD-DR and GRAD2-TX, both felt at this stage it would be too soon to be looking at external courses and professional development, because learning in the workplace was enough to cope with at that stage. Both talked about how their current learning curve is steep, and they wanted to concentrate on their new role at that point.

Self-directed learning
All the graduates and design agencies in the case studies acknowledged that the graduates undertook an element of self-directed learning to develop their skills. The graduates all discussed activities outside of the workplace to develop deeper knowledge to help their careers, as well as talking about attributes that helped them in their learning. The design agencies tended to describe the graduates' personal traits that enabled their self-directed learning, rather than concrete examples of activities initiated. However, three design agencies also highlighted external events that the graduates attended to develop their learning.

All seven design agencies talked about how the graduates enabled their self-directed learning, generally focusing on the graduates' approach to learning. Broadly, these could be described as personal traits the graduate possesses, which are being utilised for learning independently. DA-AW, DA-BB, DA-DR, DA-COM, DA-ASH, DA-TX, and DA-MX all discussed how the graduates' personalities were key to their self-directed learning. By using descriptions such as proactive, pragmatic, level-headed, confident, open-minded, enthusiastic and inquisitive, the agencies felt the

graduates used these traits to help themselves become better designers. The agencies considered the graduate outlooks as an asset to their desire to learn.

DA-MW discussed this, saying: "Think the fact that he just comes in, he's conscientious, he wants to do a good job. If something needs to be finished in the evening, he'll stay and finish it, those sorts of things." (DA-MW). At DA-DR, they highlighted the graduate's positive attitude and drive was the key to enabling learning, saying: "I mean, he joins in and everything. [...] And he's always kind of willing to stay, which is kind of putting in the hours." (DA-DR). DA-BB appreciated that the graduate had the confidence to ask questions, be open-minded, and have a well-balanced outlook on life, saying:

> "I think we've got a sense that there was more to life and a broader outlook, and one of our values is open-mindedness. To have a single-track focus on the world revolving around design is, I think, the wrong approach." (DA-BB)

Three design agencies noticed graduates broadening their design knowledge through design shows or talks and reading design books or blogs. DA-BB discussed how GRAD-BB had undertaken several areas of activity that helped their learning in design, saying:

> "One was to ask about a reading list within the first month of being here, which I thought was good. A healthy interest in industry events, specifically typography, which is an area of passion for [GRAD-BB], but she's been to a number of events in Brighton or London. I know that she has an extracurricular interest in signwriting and painting, which is also really great to see." (DA-BB)

The design agencies DA-AW and DA-TX were pleased that the graduates have been attending design talks and events, which have increased the graduates' design knowledge, with DA-AW saying: "So they bought tickets to a few events and went along." (DA-AW)

All the graduates could give examples of activities they had participated in outside of the design agency that could be described as self-directed learning. Eight out of the 11 graduates talked about attributes that make their approach to self-direct learning successful.

The core area graduates identified as having the most impact on their self-direct learning were activities they initiated to fulfil their own learning advancement. The activities centred on three areas: first, attending design talks and reading books on design; second, focusing on software skills; and finally, through the design agency's 'Inspiration Budget'.

Eight out of 11 graduates stated that their self-directed learning occurred through attending design talks or lectures and reading about design through books and blogs. GRAD-MW found they focused on researching design, saying:

> "I've always read quite a bit and studied quite a bit of graphics still outside in my own personal time. Just because I'm interested in it, I'm normally pretty clued up about what's happening around me and what's going on." (GRAD-MW)

GRAD2-AW found that design talks provided a link to the wider industry, not only through relevant content, but also to keep in touch with fellow designers. GRAD-BB said they "go to a lot of, like, design talks and that kind of thing, kinda keeps me inspired." (GRAD-BB). GRAD1-TX discussed how attending design talks helped their design industry awareness: "I think maybe also just making myself a lot more aware of current design and what is actually happening in the studios." (GRAD1-TX)

Four of the graduates had focused their self-directed learning on software skills. Realising the need to develop stronger software skills, they used their own time to focus on this area. GRAD3-TX, GRAD-COM, GRAD1-TX, and GRAD1-AW all accessed online tutorials to gain knowledge. GRAD-COM used online tutorials to assist them with the work they were doing in the agency, while GRAD1-TX found doing online tutorials more useful than asking someone repeatedly at work, saying: "Being able to do that in my own time as well would be just a nice thing." (GRAD1-TX). GRAD1-AW appreciated the clear explanations provided by online tutorials in aiding their understanding of software, compared to asking in the workplace.

The four graduates at DA-TX have access to a budget set aside to spend on their own self-directed learning. The graduates could choose what they would like to focus on or develop, leading to a diverse choice of activities, such as a sign painting course, attending a design festival, and access to software at home. GRAD1-TX was inspired by the festival: "Four days of talks, which was just amazing, and definitely opened my eyes more to what I want to do." (GRAD1-TX), while GRAD4-TX appreciated being able to develop a particular interest, saying:

> "I've always loved typography and it's kind of been something that I don't necessarily do all the time, but I'm really interested in it, so I did a sign painting course. […] Yeah, four days in London trying out loads of different methods in that, and I'm really hoping that can then translate a lot into it." (GRAD4-TX)

Eight of the graduates talked about attributes that enable their approach to self-direct learning. The language used was comparable to how design agencies talked about graduates' self-directed learning; however, these approaches were not confined to personality attributes like the design agencies, but rather a combination of approaches they used to tackle new situations they were learning from. GRAD-ASH, GRAD-BB, GRAD-COM, GRAD-DR, GRAD1-AW, GRAD1-TX, GRAD3-TX, and GRAD4-TX all cited areas where they have identified self-directed learning has occurred through their approach, and these were described as being proactive, friendly, helpful, self-critical, looking for opportunities, confident, making conversations, making tea, and putting more in than needed.

GRAD-COM found being critical of themselves and their work has helped enable their own learning, saying: "I think probably the biggest change is suddenly becoming self-critical." (GRAD-COM). GRAD-DR highlighted the need to make an impact in the agency, saying: "I've always tried to make sure I'm proactive and everything. And I try to be very friendly with everyone and try and make sure I'm not like just another intern." (GRAD-DR). GRAD-BB highlighted the need to commit their time to something, which helps their development, saying: "When it's needed, stay a bit later sometimes, and really working on something, that's definitely been helpful." (GRAD-BB). GRAD4-TX felt that taking a proactive role in the workplace meant that they could create opportunities for themselves, saying: "using the opportunities to voice what I'd like to do, change, develop skills in." (GRAD4-TX)

Discussion: Learning models and development

Apprenticeships and professional development and training are both characterised by specific modes of learning. Apprenticeships are viewed as a model of learning for occupational expertise that crosses the vocational and academic divide and is not limited to specific professions (Fuller et al., 2017). By highlighting the role apprenticeships play, Fuller et al. (2017) state: "Contemporary apprenticeship straddles the worlds of employment and education." (p. 13). This is of particular importance when considering the transition of graduates between higher education and the workplace. Billet (2016) understands apprenticeships are often viewed as educational models; however, he advocates the importance of viewing them as "a mode of learning to be engaged with by those wishing to develop occupational capacities and sustain them across lengthening working lives." (p. 614). Professional development and training encompass a variety of learning that occurs in industry sectors. These are often characterised by industry requirements to continue practising or

complete training (Reich et al., 2015). Learning modules are provided in a variety of models from workshops, courses, online activities, and so on (Reich et al., 2015).

Apprenticeships are defined by on-the-job learning through interactions with experienced members of the community, and often through a defined mentor as a key contact (Billet, 2016). Learning is gauged through a framework for progression and embedded through external learning and additional study (Reich et al., 2015). The case studies in this research show parallels with how learning occurs for graduates in the design agencies, particularly through on-the-job learning; however, here learning is less structured than apprenticeship learning and often lacks a defined framework for progression. McConnell (2015) discusses the value of learning through apprenticeships, saying:

> "Apprenticeships may offer us a slower start, but that slower start comes with a promise of true understanding, an expectation of lifelong learning and teaching. An internship is an apprenticeship without that which makes it great: the learning and the promise of a journey." (para. 14)

This indicates that providing a structured element to learning progression is helpful for learners. The use of reviews and appraisals can be used in the workplace as a tool to present graduates with an indication of their progress and to set future learning goals. Billet (2016) identifies the use of 'parallel practice' in apprenticeship learning, where the "novice engages in the occupational practice adjacent to the more experienced worker who checks their work before critical decisions are made" (p. 620-621). The majority of design agencies use this method to support graduate learning, and as discussed in the earlier section 'Learning in Communities', this is often the preferred way of learning engagement. However, in the case studies, there is no specific or defined learning route in this mode of learning; rather, it is defined by what work is being undertaken at that time.

There are two main approaches to professional development and training: first, quantitative-based schemes, which focus on hours, modules, and verifiable events; and second, the importance of process and results through identifying areas of needs and goals, which are often self-managed (Lester, 1999). However, the employer and professional body, rather than the individual, often drive the area of compulsory accredited learning (Madden & Mitchell, 1993). The use of compulsory training in the design industry is currently not a requirement in any form to continue practising as a designer (CCS, 2019). However, in the case studies, all the graduates expressed a desire to

participate, or have participated, in external learning courses that can be described as professional development learning. The parallels between compulsory accredited learning and professional development learning allow participants to extend their knowledge beyond the workplace in an area related to or which supports their workplace role. With the lack of professional development and training budgets in six of the seven agencies, the onus was on the graduates to apply themselves through their self-directed learning.

Eraut (2011) identified workplace learning as frequently embedded in normal work rather than formally taught, and in the case studies, the graduates' learning predominantly took place in the workplace through on-the-job learning and daily interactions. However, there are three areas where learning was embedded through learning models at work, or that occurred externally from the workplace: reviews and appraisals, personal development and training, and graduate self-directed learning. These are discussed below.

Reviews and appraisals

Reviews and appraisals are used as part of the feedback loop to support the goals and objectives of employees (Fletcher, 2008). Fuller et al. (2017) highlight the importance of continuous feedback and review, stating it is the vital principle underpinning the framework in apprenticeships: "It generates the information that both the learner and their trainers and teachers need to progress and is, therefore, a key indicator of the quality of a learning programme, whether in a workplace or educational setting." (p. 22). For design agencies to provide effective reviews, it is important to have a recognised approach in place that provides graduates with transparency. Fletcher (2008) outlines three main aspects of this: frequency, documentation, and timing. Appraisals are often undertaken annually, posing issues for progress, goal setting, and circumstantial change for recipients. For effective reviews, it is suggested to hold quarterly and half-yearly reviews; in the case of younger employees, who are new to the industry, even more frequently. Documenting reviews is vital to record the aims and objectives, so they can be referred to in the future; otherwise, issues may arise as to what was agreed. The documentation can be brief, covering the main points and providing participants with the outcome of the process. Finally, the timing of when reviews are held is important, to align the objectives linked to the employee, and will determine the effectiveness of measuring outcomes.

Reviews and appraisals were implemented in three of the seven design agencies by the end of the interviews. Five out of the 11 graduates were positive about the use of reviews, citing the reassurance of their performance at a time when there was a high level of anxiety about how they were adapting to the job. Furthermore, the graduates indicated that the review process gave them a structured platform for feedback and a framework for progress and future goals. However, while five of the seven design agencies indicated that they would use reviews, the implementation had been haphazard or overridden when busy. In these instances, there appears to be a missed opportunity for the design agencies to provide the graduates with the benefits of reviews, particularly as in early career learning, more frequent reviews and perhaps more informal reviews would be better suited to convey performance highs and lows to graduates and give them the opportunity to understand the next steps in their workplace development. When this has occurred (at DA-BB and DA-TX) there is a good understanding of workplace expectations, and this can support day-to-day learning for the graduate.

Professional development and training budgets

Solbrekke and Sugrue (2012) discussed the importance of workplaces to "create learning spaces where the dilemmas of professional responsibility can be revisited on a regular basis" (p. 210), and they argue it is important for both individuals and the workplace to maintain professional integrity and to take responsibility for this. Therefore, the importance of professional learning, especially for graduates transitioning into the design industry, highlights the need for professional development, which must be developed to ensure stability and continuity for the community (Solbrekke & Sugrue, 2012). There is a tendency for professional development to focus on practitioner learning, rather than at a high level within organisations (Eraut, 2011). In early career learning, employers often take for granted that learning that occurred in higher education is ready for use; however, the problem for graduates is the identification of what is relevant for the workplace they enter. Therefore, there is a need for experienced members of the community to identify areas of knowledge that need further attention, and to interpret how this will be dealt with (Eraut, 2011). However, research for the Institute of Employment Studies (Hirsh & Tamkin, 2005) found that many organisations lack a formal training plan, highlighting a potential issue for graduates.

Eraut (2011) identified the cost of training, along with limited awareness of the benefits of training, as a barrier for employers to promote professional development. There are benefits to professional development through training budgets, and Reich et al. (2015) highlight that employers need to

understand that effective learning is emergent and cannot be predetermined. The framework of external learning should not be measured under a strict set of standards, but rather through the recognition that learning through experience is beneficial to professional work practices (Reich et al., 2015).

With only one design agency with a professional development and training budget in place, it was difficult to compare how these might be applied. The four graduates at this agency appreciated that the budget was tailored to suit their own individual goals. The graduates used the budget to cover anything from practical-based learning (such as software skills) to inspiration-led learning (such as design festivals), and due to this, the graduates could fulfil subjects they had identified for learning. The benefits of learning, although unmeasurable, showed the graduates' desire to translate this into their job role. The approach of the design agency allowed the graduates to focus on their own direction of learning rather than dictating what learning model was to be applied, showcasing an innovative approach allowing for individualised professional learning.

Four other graduates showed an interest in external learning and development but were unable to do so due to barriers, such as financial implications and time constraints. This highlights an area for design agencies to explore as a learning model for early career learning in graduates. The graduates appeared to want to learn externally at this stage of their careers, especially around topics that would enhance their workplace skills (such as software skills) with the view to making daily working life run more smoothly. This was highlighted as they felt they asked a lot of questions during the day and understood that if they could work faster and more efficiently on projects, this would make their job easier.

Self-directed learning

Learning in the workplace mostly arises from the individual's pursuit of developing their own learning through active and self-directed preparation for their occupation (Billet, 2016). Learning beyond the workplace is valuable for people who have recognised the need to develop knowledge or skills to improve their role at work; this is often achieved by self-directed learning but also through learning opportunities beyond the workplace. (Eraut, 2011). Apprenticeship learning traditionally depends on learners to be actively engaged with their work and learning; they should also be able to identify what needs to be developed to advance their knowledge (Billet, 2016). However, Billet (2016) concludes that for learning to be effective, the individual needs to be

supported in this process; therefore, workplaces must be aware and willing to augment how the learning can be achieved. If employers can identify employee self-development, they can provide the opportunity for this to be further develop (Fletcher & Williams, 2007). While the graduates in the case studies can take control of their own self-directed learning, it would be beneficial for the design agencies to recognise and offer support to help the graduates achieve this goal.

Bell (2017) stated that self-directed learners need to develop strategies for learning to create effective learning practices. Without these, Bell (2017) found that self-directed learning can result in uncertainty, disruption and being overwhelmed. To overcome this, the graduate must be an active participant in self-learning, using traits such as goal setting, engagement, and a proactive, level-headed approach (Bell, 2017). These attributes align with those described by the design agencies and graduates regarding the approach taken by the graduates in the case studies.

Self-directed learning was important to the graduates, who all identified with pursuing learning to further their development. All the graduates understood the purpose of learning this way and could identify areas they could develop for their job roles. Self-directed learning identifies graduates as active learners who are willing to contribute and expand their professional knowledge. The design agencies are broadly aware of this; however, due to the nature of self-directed learning, it is not always apparent it is occurring. However, the agencies acknowledged the graduates' personal traits contributed to their learning. Likewise, the graduates were aware they used personal attributes to ensure their self-directed learning was successful.

Design talks, books and blogs were used as the most common way to develop graduates' learning beyond the workplace; this appeared to be the most accessible way of finding information related to their job role, as it was easily available and often free. However, following this, six out of 11 graduates have focused their self-directed learning on developing software skills. Through a combination of online tutorials and practice outside of work, the graduates' desire to increase their knowledge has been directly driven by the expectation at work to become proficient in this area. The design agencies, however, do not appear to recognise the additional time and learning required. This area could be developed to assist graduates in early career learning, as it is a major competency in workplace requirements.

5.3.3 CONCLUSION: COMMUNITIES

Graduate learning in the design agency is complex, involves multiple factors, and is unique to every situation. Design agencies tended to have realistic expectations of the graduates as they entered the community, which could be attributed to their previous experience with graduates.

The design agencies' core learning strategy for graduates is to learn through day-to-day activity. By hitting the ground running, they start work and are expected by the design agency to learn as they go. The graduates are generally happy with this and are positive about 'getting going'. Graduates acknowledge that learning from mistakes has been useful (even if they are bashful about admitting this), and reflection has been a valuable tool. There appeared to be areas where experiential learning is ad hoc and the design agency could benefit from a deeper understanding of how learning occurs in this manner. If they did, learning could be more efficient and deeper, especially in areas where graduates identified barriers to learning. The focus on software skills, although not unexpected, was insightful as it showed the emphasis on getting graduates work-ready before being able to be moved on to other specific skills within the agency. This appeared to be the major focus for design agencies in early graduates' entry into the workplace.

Graduates viewed the support offered by the design agencies in a positive way; however, it was the agencies who were often unable to articulate how they were supporting the graduates. Support was available and given freely; however, it appeared at times to be limited to seating arrangement and question-asking. This led to the graduates' learning often becoming incidental, when messages are hidden and not explicit, indicating the support for graduates is often haphazard. Feedback as a support mechanism was used frequently; however, this varied from agency to agency. The more it was used, the more it appeared to help the graduate. In the case of two agencies, the benefits of graduate-to-graduate peer support were hugely advantageous to these graduates.

Overall, the graduates and design agencies were positive and happy about how learning was occurring in the agency, indicating that the graduates were settling in and developing well. There were several areas that could be developed further, particularly for the design agency, and the assumptions of how graduates adapt and learn could be improved. The design agencies could benefit from greater knowledge of how learning occurs, especially in terms of the experiential learning loop, as relying on daily experience does not always equal learning. Experiential learning incorporates feedback, reflection, observation, and action for improved results. It appears that many

of the agencies were happy for the graduates' learning to take place as it happens; however, learning in the community is not as simple or linear as this. Further information and assistance on early career learning would be beneficial for design agencies, even for experienced and diligent agencies.

Design agencies can draw from the apprenticeship model of learning, particularly for early-career designers; alongside this, there is merit in professional development beyond the design agency. For design graduates, the transition between higher education and their first roles in the design industry is a steep learning curve that requires multiple and complex learning mechanisms. McConnell (2015) identifies the benefits of apprenticeship learning when applied to the design industry, saying: "It's the kind of foundational education that's ideal for our industry: hands-on, but supervised when necessary. It's meaningful, on-the-job attention from an experienced mentor, not over weeks or months, but years. It is commitment." (2015, para. 4).

The case studies highlighted the benefits of reviews to discuss learning trajectories, goals and aims, and the performance of the graduates who had these. It appeared that reviews are useful when utilised frequently, especially for the graduates, as they can be unsure of their performance at this stage in their career. Furthermore, the graduates who had access to professional development and training budgets found this feature one of the real benefits of their employment at the agency. Self-directed learning was a prominent way of learning beyond the workplace, highlighting graduates' desire to develop their skills. Overall, it showed that most design agencies are aware of these processes, but often neglected to implement them successfully or frequently enough to be effective.

It must be mentioned that while five out of 11 of the graduates had access to personal development and training budgets and had benefited from reviews, four of these five graduates were from the same design agency. DA-TX was the only agency out of the seven in the case studies that had a comprehensive framework in place for reviews and appraisals, and a dedicated budget for training that is tailored to the individual and appears aware of how the graduates are supporting their own self-directed learning. The four graduates at this agency appreciated the efforts the agency applied to their development and future goal setting.

The design agencies value the graduates' design skills; this had been identified through this section on reviews and appraisals, professional development and training and self-directed learning. However, there are areas where graduates require and desire to learn further; often these areas need support through giving feedback, training and assisting graduates' development by the design agency, which is often overlooked. A design degree is the start of the graduates' learning trajectory; this continues in the workplace and requires learning on the job. McConnell (2015) stated that: "An apprenticeship requires an investment from both the learner and the teacher but provides a far greater long-term reward." (2015, para. 25). If design agencies could draw parallels from apprenticeships and view the graduate as a young learner who requires guidance and support to develop their craft, there could be a greater understanding of the responsibility of graduates' development at this stage of their career. The responsibility to develop and support graduate learning is instrumental and cannot be ignored by design agencies.

5.4 TRANSITION

The findings and discussion of *Transitions* focus on the graduates' journey from the university through to their early career learning in the design agencies. This section draws on the literature review section *Transitions* and explores the three areas examined: *The Place In-Between*, *Navigation*, and *Internships*.

The Place In-Between draws on Augé's work on non-places in relation to graduates' experience of transition. Non-places are characterised by temporary, transient, and fleeting situations – affecting people's identity, relationships, and history. For graduate transition, the place in-between is characterised by finding themselves between the university and the world of work. The findings and discussion on the place in-between focus on graduates' perspectives of their experiences in the place in-between.

Navigation focuses on the process of transition and the graduates' ability to develop strategies to deal with this. The graduates experience multiple factors in navigating the path to employment, and this section focuses on the findings and discussion on these topics. Graduates spoke about situations that they had to navigate to access opportunities allowing them to enter the design industry. Discussions covered areas such as location, money, and living situations; however, the biggest insight emerged in the use of internships as a navigation tool.

Internships builds further on the concept as the code for transition. The literature review highlighted a lack of in-depth knowledge on internships specifically in the design agency; therefore, this section was an important area of enquiry to uncover relationships between graduate transition, internships, and entering the design agency. Internships emerged from the case studies as the core navigation tool used by graduates, with this section focusing on the findings from the case studies regarding the benefits and disadvantages highlighted by graduates and design agencies.

5.4.1 THE PLACE IN-BETWEEN

Findings: The Place In-Between

All the 11 graduates in the research discussed aspects of their transition journey. Many of the responses focused on how this affected them personally when leaving university and securing a job in the design industry. The areas talked about regarding the transition between university and

working were specific to each graduate; however, the answers broadly covered four areas: uncertainty, time, identity, and complexity.

Uncertainty

Three graduates discussed how their transition left them with feelings of uncertainty about the future. GRAD-BB found the time between graduation and finding their first full-time role very unsettling. They were living away from home and in unstable accommodation, saying:

> "So, there I was in London for nine months, I didn't really ever live there. I was like sofa surfing, and living in Airbnbs, and had not really moved, had not moved my stuff there. Just like living out of a suitcase. So, it's kind of just a bit unsettling." (GRAD-BB)

GRAD-BB felt during the transition their life was on hold until they could obtain a junior designer role and gain a sense of permanency, while GRAD-ASH experienced uncertainty through self-doubts about becoming a designer, often second-guessing their choice of career. GRAD-ASH gained work experience through internships, and during this time they felt on some days their progress was poor and they were unsuited for the job. GRAD-COM talked about how they felt out of control of their destiny, leading to a time of heightened anxiety. During GRAD-COM's transition period, the amount of reaching out and networking to obtain an internship or job role was exhausting. This was compacted by a lack of replies, leading to further anxiety about how to move forward. GRAD-COM secured an internship, but when this finished, they found it difficult to cope with the next move, saying: "Yeah, because sometimes you just kind of crash. It feels like the holidays, after working for two months, and then suddenly not doing anything, it's hard actually." (GRAD-COM)

Identity

Three graduates talked about how they noticed that their identity was affected during the transition. GRAD1-TX undertook multiple internships during their transition period. Although this provided valuable experience, the experience took its toll on them, saying: "it's hard being a new person every two weeks and it's just reestablishing yourself again. The confidence knock is quite regular." (GRAD1-TX). GRAD-COM found that transition took its toll psychologically on them during this time. In particular, GRAD-COM found moving home difficult as they felt isolated from their life at university, saying: "A lot of my friends are still at uni. I think, yeah, a lot of the down points since graduating were not design-related, but did affect my work ethic and design, really." (GRAD-COM). GRAD-MW spoke about leaving university and how this affected their approach to work. At

university, GRAD-MW developed their own style of working through creative ideas; however, during the transition and in work experience, they found it difficult to adjust to different ways of working. This had taken some time to get used to, and it had been stressful:

> "I've worked before to varying degrees of success. [...] But nothing is guaranteed. So, you're trying to prove yourself. There's also all these different factors of not knowing what you're doing fully, having to change yourself and learn all these new things, so there's several levels of pressure." (GRAD-MW)

Timeframe

The timeframe of the graduate transition was a surprise to the graduates, as they expected the process to be faster than experienced. GRAD-BB did not expect to undertake as many internships before getting a junior designer role, making the transition longer than expected: "I think you are always hoping for it to happen a little bit quicker than that. It's obviously not the case, just a lot about timing." (GRAD-BB). GRAD-DR also found the transition between university and working to be different than expected. When they were at university, their perception of entering the design industry was that they would do a brief internship before being offered a full-time job. Upon graduation, GRAD-DR discussed the first few months of transition, saying: "But as I started interning after graduating, I realised that I never knew if that's going to happen, it could happen next week, or it could happen in a year's time." (GRAD-DR). GRAD-COM found the university 'bubble' did not prepare them for the time it would take to transition into a role. They found it difficult to cope with the slow process and the difficulty of gaining experience in the design industry, which could lead to a junior designer role.

Complexity

When discussing graduate transition, it was apparent that it was a complex matter for the graduates. GRAD-COM and GRAD-DR talked about how the process of their transition highlighted the difficulties they faced when they left university. Before graduating, GRAD-DR had a broad set of ideas regarding how they would find a job in the design industry. However, their experience challenged this, specifically the type of design agency they wanted to work in, the requirement to intern, and how long the process would be. During the transition period, their views were challenged, particularly regarding the amount of time it has taken to find a job, saying upon reflection they would recommend a year to find a job after graduation. GRAD-COM acknowledges that since graduating they have seen how complicated entering the design industry is, but also says

that they have learnt a lot through the process too. They have come to understand that there are a multitude of factors that influence transition, saying: "it's a lot more complicated than just doing an internship and getting a job. You've got to have the right amount of work to make it worth it, the money, and everything like that." (GRAD-COM)

Discussion: The Place In-Between

The reference point for the concept of the place in-between was developed in the literature review (see Section 2.4.2). Drawing on the work of Augé (1995) on 'non-places', it was proposed that graduates in transition experience a similar phenomenon described by Augé, as they navigate the place in-between university and their first roles in the design industry. This was defined as the place that exists where their identity, relationships, and history are redefined as they navigate into the design industry.

Hays and Clements (2012) observed graduate transition as a gap created in a two-stage process. Universities prepare students for transition, but graduates lose this support when they graduate. Employers pick up where the university left off and use inductions and early career learning to help the transition into employment. Importantly, Hays and Clements (2012) identify the implications of the 'between' as: "the gap between the learning habits and skills acquired in university study versus those needed to navigate the transition gap and, even more importantly, those specifically needed and valued in the workplace and required for lifelong learning" (pp. 4–5).

In contrast to the use of 'the place in-between', Hays and Clements (2012) find the word 'between' misleading when used to describe the transitions between the university and full-time work. Their conceptualisation of transition overlaps with the boundaries between studying and induction into work. Nonetheless, describing the situations as 'in-between' acknowledges the complex situation graduates find themselves in before gaining employment, especially in the design industry, where internships feature heavily. This is often longer than anticipated, and rather than dealing with the transition of skills into the workplace, the graduates have to grapple with understanding how to move between the university and the design industry. This research highlights the specific themes that were brought into focus after leaving university, which affected graduates' ability to cope with an anticipated event yet presented unexpected results.

It has been observed that virtually all graduates experience some transitional issues, including stress, inflated expectations, and uncertainty (Perrone & Vickers, 2003). The case studies demonstrated areas of correlation between the concept of the place in-between and the graduates' experiences. All 11 graduates who provided insight into their experiences of how they experienced the transition between university and entering the design industry indicated that even when their experiences went well, they still encountered moments when they hit barriers or unexpected events occurred.

Uncertainty

Graduate uncertainty about job prospects and their future is compounded when they have difficulty finding employment. Job rejections—both for internships and junior designer roles—hit graduates hard, with the impact often correlated with mood (Khandwala, 2019; Perrone & Vickers, 2003). Similarly, Cassidy and Wright (2008) stated that the longer a graduate was unable to find work, the more the perceived support for them decreased. Caska (1998) found that those graduates who take longer to find a position in the industry can experience issues with mental health, self-image, and relationships. These findings are consistent with the graduates in the case studies who took longer to find internships and move into junior designer roles. They expressed anxiety and uncertainty about their situation and spoke of feeling like their "life was on hold".

The feeling of uncertainty about the future for graduates is compounded when there is no clear path into employment (Hays & Clements, 2012). Due to the messy state of transition, graduates often find it difficult to navigate due to the lack of structure in their life (Khandwala, 2019). The situations the graduates described reflect this finding, with examples of difficulties in moving forward and feelings of being out of control. Perrone and Vickers (2003) identified an important and overlooked factor in transition, namely the significance of the event and how it will affect their quality of life. Often students do not anticipate the feelings that arise with transition, such as shock, uncertainty, stress, and feelings of low confidence. Perrone and Vickers (2003) also considered the industry's lack of understanding of the graduates' experience with the uncertainly around transition. This was highlighted by the sense of self-doubt and feelings of being out of control, especially regarding work experience placement, when graduates felt they were performing badly. Although not all graduates described similar situations, it was apparent that most expressed an element of uncertainty about how they would deal with entering the design industry. Variation in behavioural attributes is one explanation for how different graduates cope with uncertainty. Schlossberg (1981)

found that individuals who can cope better with adaptation, such as realistic goal setting, a sense of personal worth, and optimism, deal with transition better.

Identity

Freeman-Powell (2018) found that graduates often struggle with their new identity post-university and find themselves worrying about money, finding employment, battling loneliness, and generally feeling like they did not know what was in store for them. *Hello Grads* (2020) acknowledges that life after graduation is about adapting to new situations, which can cause anxiety.

For graduates, it appears life after university is difficult due to its unfamiliarity, especially in comparison to the previously familiar and comfortable life as a student (Perrone & Vickers, 2003). The change in support from friendship groups at university leaves graduates without familiar peer groups. The findings showed that the graduates struggled with the loss of their old university identity and the life they had created. Building up a new community to replace the loss of the experience at university can be challenging (Khandwala, 2019; Perrone & Vickers, 2003). This can be particularly challenging when graduates face situations where they are having to re-establish themselves as they move from internship to internship, resulting in frequent new temporary situations lacking in permanency, and unable to settle.

Timeframe

According to the Office of National Statistics [ONS] (2017), finding a job does not happen immediately for most graduates, leading to a protracted length of time when they are job-searching with varying success. The graduates in the case studies experienced different timeframes, between three and 12 months, to achieve permanent employment, with one graduate still interning at the end of the research. This could be attributed to the large numbers of graduates carrying out internships, with the creative industries being the largest industry to expect graduates to intern (Montacute, 2018). There is overlap with Bridgstock (2011), who identified the creative industries often make employment decisions based on informal contacts, based on 'whom you know', leading graduates to an elongated transition from university to work, with multiple attempts at entry. The graduates talked about their expectations regarding finding employment, with a high proportion taking much longer than anticipated (with multiple internships), adding to their anxiety and self-doubt in the process.

Complexity

The case studies revealed that the graduates found transition difficult and often did not realise the complexity of the situation until they were navigating it. This emerged as a common theme in the case studies, with Schlossberg (1981) stating transition is difficult and complicated for the person experiencing it; however, it is important to recognise that it often has both positive and negative outcomes for the individual who is going through it. Hays and Clements (2012) agree, saying:

> "However experienced, it is doubtful that recent graduates recognise or appreciate the learning challenges posed by transition or have sufficient strategies for taking them on." (p. 10)

The transition between university and working in a design agency is a complex and challenging experience for graduates, with implications for graduates, universities and the design industry. Transition for graduates appeared to focus on their feelings of instability, anxiety, and uncertainty between the university and obtaining a junior designer role. Several of the graduates felt prepared to enter the design industry before graduation through university-led events, talks, and work experiences, but they conceded nothing could prepare them for the transition and the steep learning curve they experienced.

5.4.2 NAVIGATION

Findings: Navigation

During the interviews, all the graduates gave examples of how they navigated transition and the implications this had on them. Graduates had to adjust and make changes to their personal situations to enable them to get their first roles in design agencies. They spoke about these changes, how they coped, and the implications for their career paths.

Geographic location

When talking about transition, all the graduates experienced changes in their geographic locations. GRAD-MW felt that because their family lived in a rural location, it would be difficult to secure a job, as it would be difficult to attend interviews or find an internship or junior designer role. Therefore, they prioritised staying in the place where they had attended university, as it was a well-known hub for creative industries, and the likelihood of finding an internship was higher. GRAD1-TX moved to London to undertake an internship; however, they didn't enjoy the experience outside of the studio, saying: "I didn't enjoy London, the one before [DA-TX] and I enjoyed the studio culture but then as

soon as I left the studio I was just like—this isn't for me." (GRAD1-TX). GRAD-ASH also found the prospect of moving to London intimidating. While they applied successfully for several internships in London, they turned them down, saying:

> "I had a couple of placements planned in London, although I don't really want to go to London, initially. I come from quite locally to [town name] so I've always been countryside based. Then I went to [town name] to uni, so the idea of going to London was pretty intimidating." (GRAD-ASH)

Living situations

Living situations proved challenging for seven graduates, who discussed how this impacted them. The graduates spoke about their experiences of using Airbnb or temporary accommodation when they searched for internships or junior designer roles. The use of temporary accommodation left the graduates feeling unsettled, and this impacted their ability to work. Common themes emerged with temporary accommodation, such as sharing bedrooms, sleeping in communal living spaces, and a regular turnover of people staying at the properties. GRAD1-TX found the transition hard, saying "I always personally need a base, I need to go home, and Airbnb-ing for six months is not ideal. […] Yeah, I couldn't go home, it was quite unsettling." (GRAD1-TX). GRAD-DR was living in a temporary flat with other design graduates, all looking for work. The situation was fluid, with people coming and going depending on the status of their internships, people leaving once they finished and new graduates arriving if they secured an internship.

Family and friends

Two graduates mentioned that family was used as support, both emotionally and financially. GRAD-BB acknowledged they were lucky to have a supportive family, saying they would not have been able to move to London to look for jobs: "Absolutely. I had to rely on a lot of help from my family, and I wouldn't have been able to do that without them." (GRAD-BB). GRAD1-AW found they drew on emotional support offered by family during their transition; however, they had to move away from home to get an internship, as their parents do not live in London, which they saw as a financial risk.

Financial implications

With a high proportion of graduates having to relocate or pay for accommodation during navigation, the financial implications for the graduates were a major factor to be considered. GRAD1-AW was concerned about the prospect of interning due to the costs it would involve and whether they could

afford to take this on. However, they realised that they needed to intern to find a job, saying: "I was quite worried actually. I didn't do any interning during uni, which quite a few I knew did, but I couldn't really afford to do it." (GRAD1-AW). GRAD-BB talked about financial pressures during the transition, as they had to support themselves in a new city while taking on low-paid internships. They felt the transition would have been easier if the pay was better, as living in London was extremely expensive. The overall experience was difficult:

> "It took a lot of guts just being here, and having to live in other people's houses, having to set yourself down here, which is also a choice. I guess you could live out of the city. A lot of opportunities were offered in London. And, with interns not being paid very much, it's quite hard sloughing it sometimes." (GRAD-BB)

GRAD-COM had previous experience in underpaid internships. They also lived outside of London and had to travel for several hours to get to the design agency, resulting in travel costs that exceeded the pay. However, GRAD-COM's current internship pays better, and this has allowed them to find basic accommodation in London:

> "This internship does pay really, really amazingly, which I'm so grateful for. I do not think I would have been able to move to London if I did not get the pay I did. It just makes the whole thing, the whole experience a lot more fun, not having to commute." (GRAD-COM)

GRAD3-TX found money an issue, especially in London, where they interned. Even when staying with friends and using Airbnb, the costs of living were very high, and they used their savings to supplement the pay from the internship. Acknowledging they felt lucky as they could cover costs, they did wonder how others with fewer resources could cope. GRAD3-TX discussed where they thought the responsibility lay in terms of pay and affordability: "That doesn't really reflect the studio or work or anything like that but it's just a logistical thing that you need, the reality of it is that needs to be considered." (GRAD3-TX)

None of the graduates in the case studies had to leave an internship due to money, but GRAD-COM discussed a friend from their university course who had to quit an internship as they could not afford the train travel, as the role was unpaid and offered no benefits such as travel or lunch reimbursement.

Internships as navigation tools

During the transition, the graduates identified their experiences as providing insight into how the design industry works; specifically, they talked about how internships provided them with tools to develop knowledge and understanding of being a designer at a design agency. The graduates gained an understanding of how agencies operate and the variety of agencies in terms of size, location, work, people, and various other aspects of agency life. The graduates cited this as insightful in developing their ideas on career direction, shaping their next steps, and providing clarity on job roles.

GRAD3-TX described how their first few internships at design agencies provided reference points for what they wanted to do and what type of design work the design agencies focused on. The process of transition was a long one for GRAD-BB; however, the experience has shaped their views on the design industry and what they want from it in return:

> "I'm glad I went through that process and tried quite a few of those studios and different studio settings, like sizes, and I'm really happy with the size and the social aspect here as well. I think it's going really well." (GRAD-BB)

GRAD-ASH found internships at different agencies useful in helping them decide what type of agency they wanted to work at, saying: "Yeah, that was quite interesting, that was a small studio as well, but much smaller than this one, and I found that too small, but the idea of working in a big agency was quite intimidating." (GRAD-ASH)

While the graduates' early experiences of gaining experience in the design agency were useful, they were not always positive, as two graduates found. GRAD-COM's first internship experience left them feeling confused, as the agency did not set out any work or specify what they should do on a day-to-day basis; at the end of the experience, they were unsure if this was normal. At one internship, GRAD-DR found their confidence was knocked when the agency offered them the possibility of it turning into a junior designer role; however, this did not turn out as expected:

> "While I was there, I was really kind of … It really did, I think, at the time, really did affect me. And I think it just got worse, week after week, while I was there. And I think I was only there for a month. That did quite knock my confidence a bit, but looking back on it, I think it's just made me kind of … I don't know. I don't know. I think it was a bit of a learning curve for me." (GRAD-DR)

The graduates acknowledged that they expected to intern after graduation, with all 11 doing at least one internship before finding a job. Internships were viewed by the graduates as an expected or normal path to gaining employment at a design agency.

GRAD-MW and GRAD-ASH both talked about the expectation that graduates will intern when they leave university. After graduation, GRAD-MW devised a plan to look for internships, as they felt applying for jobs straight out of university would be unrealistic. They felt that they needed to complete at least one internship to gain an understanding of how design agencies work and the expectations of being a junior designer. GRAD-ASH understood that they would have to do an internship to get their foot in the design industry. GRAD2-AW discussed how internships provided them with a buffer during the transition. They described how their transition from student to intern was very steep; however, the transition from intern to junior designer had been more gradual, noting:

> "I'd say it's probably quite a gradual progression in a way. But yeah, I suppose, over time, looking back on it, you can sort of feel a bit of a difference. But I think, yeah, for sure, it's more of a transitional thing than an immediate change, I'd say." (GRAD2-AW)

Design agencies on graduate navigation

Two design agencies gave their views on how graduates could make the best of the graduate transition situation. DA-AW and DA-MW gave insights into their thoughts on graduates in general, with DA-AW saying that graduates must have the right balance of confidence and initiative to succeed: "You do need that right mix, it's quite a delicate thing. Too overconfident is not good, and lacking conviction is also not good." (DA-AW). Both DA-AW and DA-MW felt graduates should use the transition between university and full-time work as an opportunity to gain contacts, meet people, attend design events and research design agencies, and be open to opportunities that arise.

DA-AW felt that graduates, to an extent, make their own luck as designers. Both DA-AW and DA-MW indicated that gaining work experience or internships in design agencies is the most effective way to transition into the design industry. DA-MW indicated that graduates must use internships to learn and ask questions about the industry, saying:

> "I think it's good for them to make the transition in terms of having contacts. If a graduate goes in and spends a month, use that time to ask as many questions and get as many contacts as you possibly can. [...] Really, really ask the questions, and that's why it's a

wonderful opportunity while you're working. I suggest to learn, and just learn, on the job." (DA-MW)

Expanding on graduate transition, DA-MW discussed their involvement with a graduate programme that acts as a bridge between university and working in the design industry. The agency has been involved in [programme name] for several years, along with other agencies in the region. The purpose is to help graduates enter the design industry and prepare them for day-to-day working life in a design agency. This is achieved through a series of workshops run with design agencies using real-life briefs. This gives the graduates an understanding of how to approach the various stages of working on a client project, such as managing client expectations, collaborating with a design team, elevating ideas, presenting concepts, and running the project through to execution. DA-MW believes the design industry can assist with the graduate transition through learning opportunities, such as the graduate programme and internships.

Discussion: Navigation

The findings indicate that the graduates in the case studies focused on their personal situations when navigating their transition, with most of the graduates finding the experience challenging. However, upon reflection, they viewed the process as an insightful and useful learning experience, particularly in terms of their career direction. In contrast, the design agencies in the case studies did not provide a significant amount of data, although this was not unexpected due to the focus on the graduates' personal experience. Two agencies talked briefly about how graduates could make the most of opportunities during the transition.

Hays and Clements (2012) explain how the transition period experienced by graduates lasts beyond the gap between university and their first job. They believe transition starts before graduation and lasts well beyond the induction time of their first job (Hays & Clements, 2012). Thus, the period graduates actively navigate their transition from student to employee in the case studies is an extended period of change. The findings from the research indicate common ground between this view of graduate transition and the graduates talking about the steep learning curve once they started working in the design agency.

Furthermore, Hays and Clements (2012) discuss the transition period as being fluid and dynamic, implying that this is not a static period, but rather a place that travels between the university and early employment. They stress the importance of this and suggest that both universities and

employers should contribute to aid graduate transition (Hays & Clements, 2012). Findings from the case studies indicate that graduates have little contact or support from university once they have left, and there are few opportunities to gain experience unless they find an internship. Some organisations support graduates in their early careers, and these are supported by several design agencies in the industry; however, accessing these for graduates is ad hoc, depending on awareness and location.

For the graduate, navigation is about finding opportunities to get their 'foot in the door' at a design agency. Yet, this process can be unpredictable, with graduates often experiencing a change in their lives to negotiate opportunities in their transition. The areas that the graduates identified are geographical location, living situations, financial implications, and travel; these areas are dictated by the opportunities presented to the graduate, and these are usually accepted, as the situation may lead to employment. The graduates experienced many challenges as they regularly navigated new situations, and at times, these were unpleasant or intimidating for them. Navigating these scenarios has been a balance between adjusting and coping for the graduate, and the ease of adaptation varied between individuals and how they responded to the situations. The case studies highlighted that graduates who had a longer transition talked longer and in more detail about their experiences, compared to the graduates who moved into junior designer roles more quickly.

Geographical location

Geographical location and living arrangements are often overlooked, particularly how this affects graduates and how this can hamper or facilitate transitions (Schlossberg, 1981). In the case studies, one of the main points graduates discussed was having to relocate and how this affected their experience of navigating transition.

Location is a significant issue for graduates, and relocation is often a requirement to take advantage of opportunities (Roberts, 2017). Christie (2016) put forward a coherent argument linking better geographical mobility with graduates who show more confidence, implying graduates who have the choice and ability to move to where opportunities arise have a higher chance of success. Roberts (2017) observed the link between graduates, especially those in the creative arts, who had to relocate to London due to the high proportion of internships offered. All graduates in the case studies experienced relocation after university to take advantage of the opportunities offered to enter the design industry. Four graduates, not from London, felt pressured to relocate to find

internships. In three cases, these did not work out, and they have relocated again to other towns or cities. The findings suggest that graduates are willing to relocate, as they are aware of the necessary steps to getting experience. However, for many graduates, this is a difficult step, with the impact felt in other areas, such as living situations and financial implications.

Living situation

Graduate navigation is fraught with uncertainty, often with short-term opportunities and vague outcomes; therefore, graduates who have no family or friends to stay with often resort to short-term accommodation (Roberts, 2017). Montacute (2018) highlights the difficulty of short-term accommodation; it is expensive but common, due to barriers to securing long-term accommodation. Seven of the 11 graduates discussed how their living situations affected them during the transition, indicating that unstable living situations are an obstacle to navigation. The graduates spoke about the situation as a means to an end, and although it was not ideal, it would not last forever. However, while finding their living situations challenging, the graduates used a great deal of initiative and agility to overcome the situation so they could take on internships, showing a high level of resilience to overcome difficult situations.

Friends and family

The role of family and friends in providing support systems for graduates in transition is well documented. Lent et al. (2002) claimed that the strongest effect on graduate transition was support and encouragement from family and friends. The graduates found this was meaningful and important at this time of their lives. Christie's (2016) findings showed that 82% of graduates found family and friends supportive after university. Interpersonal support systems from family and friends are viewed as one of the key areas that help navigate transition (Schlossberg, 1981). However, the graduates in the case studies showed little correlation for family support during the transition. Only one graduate talked about their family as a critical support factor, and one graduate talked about their family offering emotional support but not financial support. Contrary to previous research, the remainder of the graduates did not cite their family or friends for support during the transition. This could be due to the small data pool of graduates, and graduates focusing on other areas of navigation.

Financial implications

Financial barriers act as barriers for graduates in transition due to lack of work (Guile, 2006). When opportunities arise, such as internships, pay is often low or non-existent, and graduates are wary of committing if they cannot afford to cover living costs (Roberts 2017). Guile (2006) found that graduates often accepted unpaid work to enable them to gain access to the creative industries, requiring financial help from family and friends. Money was at the forefront of concern for the graduates in the case studies, and decisions were made based on weighing up the benefits and disadvantages before committing to situations.

The graduates could identify that their financial situation impacted their standard of living and caused anxiety; however, they focused on the long-term expectation that this would lead to employment. Consideration had gone into how much money they would require to get through the process, with graduates wary of spending excessive money on accommodation and living costs. Guile (2006) identified that graduates who are supported financially through this process will flourish, even if they are not the most talented. No doubt, this does occur, and there is a large pool of research to support this. However, in this research, the findings did not confirm this, and three graduates had no financial support from family, relying on part-time jobs and savings to get through this period.

Internships as navigation tools

The graduates indicated that the most significant activity that helped their transition into the design industry was securing an internship at a design agency, with internships appearing to provide a buffer for graduate transition. Hays and Clements (2012) acknowledge that industry must be part of the graduate transition process and should consist of a collaborative approach between university and industry; however, they believe universities should play a major role in developing students' careers in the industry. Roberts (2017) agrees universities have a responsibility to graduates too, but differs on the extent of the role they play in transition, indicating universities should focus on developing partnerships between students and industry during undergraduate degrees. In contrast to Hays and Clements, Roberts (2017) identifies industry employers as key to providing internships for graduates, and it must be acknowledged that employers need support from the government, design organisations and the public sector. Whereas Christie (2016) understands the value internships offer graduates, there is concern that employers do not always provide beneficial work experience. Indicating there are substandard practices by employers, particularly in the creative and

media industries, Christie (2016) argues the industry could step up and provide a substantial contribution towards graduates learning through good practice, feedback, and pay for internships. As internship positions become more frequent and more readily available than entry-level jobs, employers can use internships as an informal recruitment process, with Roberts (2017) concluding that internships have become the key feature of graduate transition.

The findings from the case studies indicated that the graduate transition period revolves heavily around internships: applying and networking for this specific type of work experience allows graduates to enter the design industry. Furthermore, while undertaking internships, the graduates all discussed factors that correlated to their specific experiences of this time. There is no doubt that higher education institutions and universities need to prepare graduates for the transition into professional workplaces; however, the graduates in the case studies broadly agreed that at university they were given information regarding the design industry through various formats, as discussed in depth in 'Section 5.2 *Myths*'.

The graduates anticipated a steep learning curve when they started working in design agencies; however, their transition was often defined by internships over several months, leading to anxiety, loss of confidence, money issues, precarious living situations and relocation. The graduates in the case studies anticipated transition would take time; even so, many graduates were underprepared for how long it took. Their transition into the design agency has often been extended due to the apparent use of internships for informal recruitment in the design industry. The unexpected length of transition adds another dimension and time to the process and causes navigation to be more complex than in other industries (Guile, 2006). It appears that internships are used by graduates as a key navigation tool; however, this appears predetermined by industries that use internships to develop and assess graduates' work skills before committing to employment offers. The graduates in the case studies all experienced at least one internship before finding employment and recognised transition as a steep learning curve; however, they all viewed internships as the first stage of their careers. The internship experience provided them with experience and exposure to allow them to make decisions on the type of work and design agency they felt suited to them, giving them valuable input in shaping their career path.

Design agencies on graduate navigation

One design agency talked about its involvement with the graduate transition beyond the workplace. Their involvement with a profession-led scheme to help recent graduates develop the real-world skills required by the design industry highlights the need for meaningful learning opportunities. Roberts (2017) describes initiatives like this to support opportunities for graduates, especially for underrepresented ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and in areas outside of London. It has been shown that sector and profession-wide schemes can aid transition by improving the quality and accessibility of internships in the creative industries (Roberts, 2017).

Two design agencies suggested how graduates could navigate transition; although insightful, the advice was motivational rather than practical. Offering advice on how to 'get out there' and 'be confident' ignores the key barriers the graduates face around uncertainty and upheaval. It is important to recognise that all the design agencies involved did provide the opportunity of internships to the graduates, and the graduates all recognise the value of this experience, with internships being highlighted by graduates as the most useful tool for navigation, especially when agencies provide quality opportunities for learning.

5.4.3 INTERNSHIPS

Internships were a defining feature of this research, with all participants having a direct personal experience. All the graduates in the case studies completed at least one internship, and all of the design agencies offered internships for graduates. Following on from 'Internships as a navigation tool', this section will focus on the benefits and disadvantages highlighted by the participants in the case studies to develop an understanding of why internships have become a defining feature of graduate transition in design agencies.

Findings: Internships

Benefits

The graduates in the case studies acknowledged that their interning experience has provided them with valuable industry insight and enabled them to learn through experience. The findings revealed that most graduates highlighted the main benefit of interning as exposure to the industry. Other key themes to emerge were exploring different types of design agencies, learning without the pressure of employment and the benefit of internships to bridge the skills gap between university and industry. The findings highlighted that the design agencies involved were broadly positive about the

value of internships, with the core theme being able to provide graduates with a valuable real-world experience of working in a design agency. Two other themes emerged: the ability of agencies to give back to education and the value of graduates' input while interning.

Industry experience

Overwhelmingly, the graduates' fundamental reason for undertaking an internship was to gain work and industry experience in a design agency to secure a job. Graduates found internships provided them with exposure to the industry in a way that the university was unable to. GRAD-DR, GRAD2-TX, GRAD-ASH, GRAD-BB, and GRAD4-TX all discussed how their internships gave them an understanding of how a design agency functions. GRAD2-TX and GRAD-DR also discussed daily work routines, giving them insight into what working life is like, and getting to work within the wider team at a design agency exposes graduates to other roles beyond designers and how an agency delivers a client project. GRAD-DR highlighted this, saying: "I think what's really good is working with other people that aren't from this design world, or design backgrounds. So, like the account managers, and people here, I've never worked closely with people like that." (GRAD-DR). GRAD2-TX found that interning provided a valuable learning experience, particularly with routine and time, saying:

> "It helps to get into that routine, I feel, like going to work every day. Which is something that can be kind of a shock when you're a student because you kind of work at any point in the day." (GRAD2-TX)

GRAD4-TX found interning positive because it gave insight into the environment, projects and how teams are structured, all of which they had not learnt at university. GRAD-ASH, upon reflection, wished they had undertaken more internships to provide exposure to a variety of design agencies and ways of working. They believe internships allow graduates to find an agency that is a good fit for them. GRAD-BB discussed how internships play a vital role in preparing graduates for working in a design agency. They accept they are a necessary step for graduates, as they lack the work experience required to fulfil a meaningful role in an agency, saying: "When you graduate, you don't have the instant experience to allow you to be trusted to be a permanent designer." (GRAD-BB)

Two graduates spoke about internships as "any experience is good experience, even if it is bad", with both graduates taking the viewpoint there was nothing to lose during an internship. GRAD3-TX thought any internship experience could provide a good experience, even if it did not work out. This

reference came from personal experience, where GRAD3-TX was not happy with the internship, but viewed it as something positive, saying: "Even if you have a terrible time, that gives you a reference point of what you don't like, then because of that, by a process of elimination, you can begin to see what you do like." (GRAD3-TX). GRAD-DR had a similar experience and said when they realised that it was not the right fit, they just moved on to another internship, accepting this was part of their learning curve.

Design agencies also talked about the value of internships for graduates in terms of gaining experience in the industry. DA-COM spoke about graduates and their lack of understanding about working in an agency, suggesting the experience of interning provides them with a taste of the real world. DA-TX saw internships as an opportunity for graduates to get their foot in the door, with the experience being beneficial to them. The agency also regarded the design industry, overall, as a friendly, approachable industry; so, for graduates, being nice, putting in the effort and being willing to learn will get them a long way.

Three graduates discussed how internships assist in bridging the gap between university and working in the design industry. GRAD-DR and GRAD2-TX both viewed internships as allowing them to understand the expectations required in the workplace, essentially giving them opportunities to grow up, take responsibility, and gain competence in a real-world situation. GRAD-DR found that the experience of interning prepared them for the junior designer role, saying: "Because at uni, obviously, it's a completely different lifestyle. I think that interning really helps you do that before you go into a full-time job." (GRAD-DR). GRAD2-TX enjoyed interning, as it introduced working hours and how to navigate a working week. GRAD-BB believes work experience and/or internships should be compulsory at the degree level before graduation. They felt that if students were required to do this, their transition into the design industry might not be as difficult, saying:

> "I think if you did that in the second year, and actually having talked to people in the industry, they're not expecting a whole lot from you in the second year. You're not going to be given anything like 'this needs to go out to a client', so there shouldn't be so much fear around it; it's a bit more open and transparent." (GRAD-BB)

For design agencies, giving back to education was identified as a key driver in offering internships for graduates. At DA-ASH, they run an internship programme designed to give back to education; the agency values its strong links to higher education and is proud to be involved. The benefit for

the agency is the success of the students and graduates who have been through its doors over the years, and from a personal perspective, the agency is proud of its reputation for doing so. The key driver for DA-ASH offering internships is to provide students and graduates with professional skills and exposure to the workings of an agency, as they identified that this helps the graduates transition into the design industry. Another agency, DA-TX, talked about internships as a form of giving back to universities and education by offering graduates a chance to put into practice what they have learnt during their education. The agency views this as a positive experience for the agency and has the benefit of keeping them updated on current trends in design education.

Two design agencies acknowledged that graduate interns provide a valuable contribution to the agency through their skills. DA-TX appreciates the interns at the agency for a variety of reasons – different skills, different viewpoints and backgrounds. The agency acknowledges that the ongoing process of working with graduates has advantages, saying: "I think it also, it keeps the studio quite fresh with new people coming in, and when you get these kids with crazy animation skills and stuff like that, you're like whoa!" (DA-TX). DA-MW pointed out that when they have had interns in, they often offer a new perspective on design approaches, saying: "I think you take them on because they've got fresh ideas, new ideas, a different way of looking at things. They're much younger, so that's a good thing." (DA-MW)

Exploring different design agencies

Five of the graduates discovered interning was a vital tool to help them decide what type of design agency they wanted to work in. Through the process of interning, the graduates were exposed to a variety of design agencies and how they fitted into each team. GRAD-MW thought internships are experiences the graduates can use to gauge what feels right and what does not, leading to an understanding of what type of agency they would like to work in. When GRAD-ASH applied for internships, they approached agencies whose work they had admired, but felt there was a mismatch in terms of personalities, saying:

> "I think that's hugely important if you're going to be spending most of your day with these people. So, I think it is an exploration of what you like, where you want to work, all that sort of thing, but also whom you want to work with." (GRAD-ASH)

GRAD1-TX had experienced a similar scenario when they had interned at agencies they were in awe of, but the internships gave them a chance to be realistic about whether they would fit into the team.

GRAD1-TX also discussed interning as giving them the option to try before committing to a role: "I could just imagine myself saying yes to a job and then you get there and you're like 'I do not fit in here at all'." (GRAD1-TX). GRAD3-TX found they worked best in an agency that was social and where people talked to each other, saying: "That gave me a rough idea of what I need: a studio that is more social, that for me when I came here just clicked instantly." (GRAD3-TX). Similarly, GRAD2-TX discovered that interning allowed them to find out what different studios are like, building a picture of what they do and ascertaining whether they aspired to the same principles.

Three design agencies who discussed internships as being valuable for graduates to gain industry experience elaborated further, saying internships gave the graduates the opportunity to decide what type of agency suited them regarding the design work. DA-MW highlighted the value of graduates being able to understand what suits them as designers, and internships provide a low-risk option to explore this. DA-COM said: "I guess if you went around to different studios, you might get a slightly different taste of how different agencies would do it." (DA-COM). DA-AW believed internships allowed both sides to figure out if the role was right, saying: "Because it's often, you're not able to fully assess whether the role is there or not. And it's often, actually, even if the role's not there, you find a role if it's the right person." (DA-AW)

Learning without pressure

Four graduates discussed how internships provide a learning environment without pressure or commitment from either side. GRAD-COM and GRAD-MW both found internships gave them the chance to learn without too much pressure, saying that if they went straight into a junior designer role, the pressure to perform at this level and not to fail would be greater. GRAD-COM said: "I'd feel a lot more pressure not to make mistakes or to kind of be good, really, whereas in an internship, you just kind of get to grow a little more." (GRAD-COM). GRAD-MW found interning helped because they were "not being expected to fail, junior sort knowledge, building up your knowledge and stuff, getting into the industry that way." (GRAD-MW). GRAD1-AW and GRAD2-TX both liked the temporary element of internships for testing out the situation and getting a feel for things.

Disadvantages

The graduates agreed that the main disadvantages of internships revolved around financial issues— no or poor pay, lack of affordability and money pressures. Other areas that graduates talked about were low confidence during internships and a lack of planning in internships. The design agencies

also spoke about the potential disadvantages of internships, both in relation to graduates and their effects on the agency. The findings are grouped into themes covering money, pay and affordability, time and planning, and unacceptable practices.

Money, pay, and affordability

The main disadvantage that emerged about internships was the practice of unpaid internships. Six graduates acknowledged that money was the main issue when they were looking for interning. The graduates expressed their dismay the practice was still occurring, with GRAD-COM saying: "I've got a lot of friends who are in the same position where they're getting unpaid internships." GRAD-MW talked about graduates who see 'star design agencies' as an exception and would intern for free to get the agencies' names on their CV The main reason graduates expected some remuneration was to cover their expenses, with GRAD-DR explaining their reasoning: "I would have had to borrow money off my parents and stuff. And that, if you're trying to grow up and live on your own, borrowing money off your parents is not the right way to do it." (GRAD-DR). GRAD1-AW also discussed the need to support themselves while working, saying: "If this place offered me a free internship, I would have said no. Because I couldn't afford it. It's physically impossible." (GRAD1-AW). GRAD-COM had taken a paid internship previously, but the remuneration was low and they found herself quickly regretting it, saying: "But my first one was only £250 a month, which didn't cover even my travel." (GRAD-COM)

Four of the graduates were offered, but turned down, unpaid internships. The graduates turned down the internships as they believed it was wrong for design agencies to not pay them; this was from both a moral and a practical point of view. GRAD1-AW said: "Some people think they can still make them do it for free, which is straight-up wrong." The graduates were not prepared to work for free, as they could not cover the costs involved when interning, which included accommodation, travel, and food. However, they felt enormous pressure to take on any internship, as they understood how valuable having completed an internship would be to their future employability, with GRAD-COM saying: "At uni, you were told, 'Do not accept them', but suddenly, now you've graduated and no one else is really replying. You are pressured to take these opportunities." (GRAD-COM)

The design agencies expressed concern for graduates when interning and how this affected their situations, especially in the areas of money and living. All the design agencies who took part in this

research paid their interns and, in many instances, also covered lunch and travel. Four agencies stressed the importance that internships should be paid, with DA-BB saying: "I think quite often these internships are not paid, they can essentially be like an employee without being employed." Both DA-MW and DA-COM also talked about non-paying internships, and felt agencies that engage in this practice do not value interns, with DA-MW saying: "I think they should be paid, and even if it's just a minimum wage, at least they are being paid and recognised for their value and their contribution." (DA-MW). DA-DR was concerned that even when graduates were paid, they still struggled to cover their living costs, especially in London, saying: "But they still have got to live in London. [Often, they] can't afford that. So, they're staying on couches. They're in situations where the studios kind of want them to be working all hours." (DA-DR).

Coping with low confidence and isolation
Feelings of low confidence, being demoralised, and being isolated were experienced by three graduates when they interned during their transition. GRAD-DR recognised that they experienced low confidence at several points of interning; these correlated with internships they recognised were not going well or were not the right fit between them and the agency. GRAD2-TX found multiple internships can make graduates question where the process leads to in the long term, saying: "I suppose, if that is a continuous string, and it's always sort of … who's going to sign me up sort of thing… could be quite demoralising, I suppose." (GRAD2-TX). GRAD3-TX recognised graduates can feel isolated on internships as they are on their own in an agency, saying: "You're the only one there so they sort of encourage you, but then you also don't necessarily have as much of a support network because there's no one else in the same position as you." (GRAD3-TX)

Time and planning
Two graduates talked about how design agencies' lack of planning can be a disadvantage on internships, resulting in an experience that hinders learning. GRAD3-TX and GRAD4-TX both spoke about their experiences interning, and at times the agencies had not planned out work or used them to take on odd jobs around the workplace. Using examples of design agencies not planning work for graduates, GRAD4-TX said: "Sometimes they don't plan your time and therefore you aren't benefitting much or not getting any work!" Another obstacle to learning was when graduates were used by agencies as extra help, with GRAD3-TX talking about being used to do jobs not related to design work:

"It's sorting the files, putting up shelves and stuff like that. Which to get your foot in the door can help, but I don't know, I feel like a more valuable experience is when they try and immerse you in all the different design stages." (GRAD3-TX)

DA-ASH and DA-TX talked about the time and effort involved in planning internships. The agencies are mindful of providing a positive learning experience; this requires pre-planning to enable the graduates to have meaningful opportunities while they are in the agency. Alongside pre-planning, agencies must set aside time to explain, discuss, and oversee the work the graduate will be taking on. DA-ASH spoke about the pressure of making sure it all fits in, saying: "But if you're under pressure, it's time and it's you getting people up to speed, you're sort of educating someone as well as your day job, so it's kind of... Yeah, this is a planning stage definitely." (DA-ASH). However, the agency placed a high level of importance on making sure the graduate does not drift or is ignored; as they explain, the process would be a waste of time for all involved, concluding: "I think if you bothered doing it, then don't it half measured, just do it properly." (DA-ASH). The agency DA-TX finds it useful to assess each graduate's strengths and weaknesses and plan around this for the experience to be beneficial, saying:

"You can tell quite quickly that's the thing that gets them excited, so can we give them something close to that. Because then we're gonna get excited about it and put more effort into it, I think, than something they struggle with." (DA-TX)

Unacceptable practices

The design agencies indicated they believe there are agencies in the industry who do not value graduates or internships, with four agencies in the case studies discussing this issue. DA-COM talked about the impact on graduates in agencies who use interns to fulfil client projects instead of employing people: "Some studios would take on interns just for the sake of it, and you feel like you're just part of the process, that you're in-and-out." (DA-COM). DA-COM viewed these agencies as lacking transparency over potential long-term positions. This insight was also discussed by DA-BB, who felt strongly that some quarters of the design industry had a distinct lack of transparency towards graduates, and was disappointed by their attitude:

"As a graduate, you could be sitting in an interview-like situation talking about an internship going away, with the possibility of maybe that turning into something at some point in the future, but without any clarity of when, for how long, how I am going to be paid, how I am going to be looked after. None of those things are discussed. They're just kind of like, 'We'll call you, if and when.' It's very slack, I think." (DA-BB)

DA-DR and DA-MW both noticed a trend where internships last longer, often without pay. DA-DR thought interning lengths and the overall time of doing internships before jobs were offered had become too long, noting: "I find it quite surprising, the attitude to doing internships for years now, like for a year or so. I find that quite wrong." (DA-DR). The agency indicated that if a graduate was interning longer than about a month, it should be clear whether it would lead to a permanent role or not. This sentiment was also raised by DA-MW, who has seen and heard design agencies taking on interns for months, even years, and often not paid; all of which DA-MW thought was an unacceptable practice.

Discussion: Internships

Benefits

With the case studies providing insight from graduates and the design agencies, it was apparent that internships are viewed favourably as a tool during the transition. Graduates were broadly positive about their internship experiences, and they were pragmatic about the advantages of internships, as they believed it was the main component in finding employment. The design agencies cited benefits to the graduates, mostly around developing experience in the design agency as the key benefit.

Industry experience

During the transition, the graduate paradox comes into focus, with graduates facing the realisation that employers expect them to have experience of working in the industry to gain employment. Graduates require work experience to secure a job, yet the paradox is that many entry-level jobs require substantial experience (Perrone & Vickers, 2003). The findings in this research indicated that the graduates were aware of this and were prepared to intern after graduation; in fact, they expected to undertake at least one internship. The inference here is that graduates are being told internships are industry-standard, either by the university, the industry or through peers.

Hays and Clements (2012), citing Wood and Kaczynski (2007), make a particularly strong case for graduates' lack of work readiness, arguing recent graduates are not prepared for the workplace, and many lack the skills required for gaining employment. Graduates themselves are aware of their own lack of understanding of workplace procedures and culture, concurring with employers who know graduates are inexperienced and require support in early-career learning (Hays & Clements, 2012). The graduate participants indicated they are aware of their lack of work readiness, and

internships are an accessible way to provide exposure to how design agencies work. Realising that internships are in fact necessary for their learning, the graduates appreciate the efforts of the design agencies offering opportunities to gain experience. However, the implication that graduates are to blame for their lack of work readiness is hard to justify, with both graduates and design agencies involved finding it difficult to explain how this would be learnt any other way than by on-the-job learning.

Guile (2006) observed that university courses struggle with developing the vocational knowledge required by employers, and these skills can only be gained through on-the-job experience. Employers, especially in the creative sector, often use work placements to provide these opportunities without the need to commit long term. For the graduate, these opportunities allow them to gain experience in the workplace through vocational practice. Both graduates and agencies in the case studies agreed that it was difficult to develop skills specific to the industry at university, and understood that the best way to learn was on the job. Design agencies are aware that graduates need to gain experience and can use internships to develop these skills. It is important to remember that the agencies in this research value internships as a learning tool for graduates and therefore have taken care of the structure and content of the internship; in many instances, this has led to a job for the graduate.

Daniel and Daniel (2013) found that internships provided positive outcomes for interns, in particular exposure to industry knowledge, learning, experience, and employment prospects. However, in these situations, interns can experience challenges, including employers' lack of time and planning, the costs involved, feeling inadequate and being given menial tasks. The findings suggested that the graduates were generally positive about their internship experience, finding they gained knowledge and work experience, especially at the design agencies where they were working during the research. They acknowledged that previous internships or friends' experiences had suffered due to lack of planning by agencies and feeling let down in these roles.

The research of Daniel and Daniel (2013) on creative economy internships found 78% of employers were positive regarding their experience of graduates at their organisation, while a further 68% confirmed it provided a benefit to their organisation, such as fresh ideas in the workplace. Employers further described the satisfaction of helping graduates learn and develop their skills. Three design agencies reinforced this idea and mentioned the positive contribution graduates make

in bringing new ideas to the team. Understanding this contribution is a positive indication that graduates will be the future of the design industry, and that the future of design is always evolving.

Exploring different design agencies

Christie (2016) studied graduates' view of their career path and found that where they see themselves working undergoes considerable change in their early career, with just under 60% of graduates changing roles in the first 16 months after graduation. Only 25.9% of graduates followed the same career path as when they graduated. Christie (2016) highlighted that relationships between graduates and employers were mixed during this time, with the graduates whose experiences were positive showing growth in confidence. However, in circumstances where there had been a negative experience, the graduates realised what was wrong or right about the situation, leading them to decisions about their future path. The graduates, upon reflection, found multiple internships helpful, often understanding that the experience had provided them with exposure to various practices, studio culture, and how agencies work. This insight helped graduates clarify their future direction and the type of workplace they felt comfortable in, even if this involved a change in plan from their original path.

Learning without pressure

Boshuizen (2003) stated that graduates often face learning difficulties when the environment they are working in does not provide a stable and supportive learning environment. This is highlighted when organisations view graduates as fully developed professionals rather than trainees. Graduates' transition into their first jobs is important to both the graduates and the design agencies, as Schlossberg (1981) found that unsuccessful transitions can result in job loss or poor performance in the workplace. Internships would benefit from clear information from the agency for the graduate, a support person who can provide guidance and understanding, and peer support from others in a similar situation. The graduates in the case studies viewed internships as providing an opportunity during the transition to learn without pressure. The internship experience allowed the graduates a breathing space when settling into the industry and gave them the freedom to make mistakes without consequences. This allowed them the 'freedom to fail', which perhaps opens more possibilities for learning than a culture of failure.

Disadvantages

Although the graduates and design agencies were positive about the opportunities internships provided, it was highlighted that there are still disadvantages to internships. The findings indicated that the disadvantages tended to focus on poor quality internships and how this affected the graduate, rather than the overarching concept of internships.

Money, pay, and affordability

In the UK's creative and cultural sector, the practice of offering internships to graduates is common among employers as it allows them to not commit financially (Guile, 2006). Internships that were unpaid or offered very low pay created a financial barrier to graduates, as they were unable to cover their associated costs, such as accommodation and transport (Roberts, 2017). In the case studies, the graduates stated that the major barrier to internships was directly related to money. With all the graduates in the case studies completing at least one internship, they all have direct experience of the relationship between interning, pay, and affordability. Alongside this, they are aware of what their peers from university experienced in terms of pay or unpaid internships.

All the graduates had strong opinions on unpaid internships, viewing these practices as unfair, wrong, and taking advantage of graduates. There have been times when the resolve to stick to their beliefs has been challenged, and at times, the pressure to take an internship made them consider unpaid internships, to take the first step into the design industry. The graduates cited their peers who did take unpaid internships and the effects this had on them, such as financial difficulties, travelling long distances, and stress and anxiety. The implications for graduates looking for internships after university highlighted the precarious situation they found themselves in when navigating transition. Graduates, if unable to find paid internships, can be pressured to accept unpaid positions to further their careers. This highlights affordability and social mobility, with graduates having their career options narrowed if they cannot afford to be unpaid. Graduates whose families can cover costs of living may consider unpaid internships if the opportunity is favourable, when weighed against future benefits in the industry (Roberts, 2017).

Montacute (2018) addressed the issue of minimum living costs that needed to be covered when interning: internships are often in large cities, such as London and Manchester, impacting the cost of living. The Sutton Trust (cited in Montacute, 2018) calculated that an intern would need approximately £1,100 per month in London and £830 in Manchester to cover basic living expenses such as accommodation and food. Despite this, Guile (2006) highlighted the increased number of

graduates entering the creative sector as the reason why many graduates resort to accepting unpaid or poorly paid internships. Generally, the graduates were savvy about the implications of internships and appeared to have been well informed before leaving university regarding expectations. Their understanding of the costs involved, such as accommodation, travel, and food, indicated that they expected to be paid to cover costs. However, issues still arise, such as miscalculating the cost of living versus the internship pay and longer-than-expected transition periods. Even when paid, graduates indicated that this only covered basic costs, and they were keen to move into a junior designer role with a proper salary. Alongside the moral dilemma of unpaid internships, the graduates were aware they were contributing to agency jobs and should be remunerated for their work. They pointed out that those internships offer a two-way relationship; they are doing work, while the agency is assisting their learning. The agencies in the research were also aware of this and appeared to value the graduates' input to the team. Furthermore, the agencies also expressed their belief that internships should be paid for the same reasons: the graduates should be remunerated for their work, but they were aware of the level of input required to help them learn.

Coping with low confidence and isolation

At the start of graduates' careers learning intensifies, and they find the magnification of expectations, consequences, and pace of work increases; alongside this, anxiety and stress levels are often raised (Hays & Clements, 2012). Three of the graduates who participated expressed higher levels of stress relating to the internship process. Interestingly, this was not related to their learning, but rather to the impact of the environment they were learning in. They spoke about how the internships made them doubt their career direction, their future, and their lack of support, leading to low confidence. Cassidy and Wright (2008) recognised that if opportunities do not lead to employment, graduates' mental health can suffer. With the graduates doubting themselves during this time, it appeared that communication between agency and graduate could have improved their understanding of the purpose and outcomes of the internship. The findings suggest, from the graduates' perspective, that the longer the transition lasts, the less in control they feel of their future. Furthermore, the graduates talked about feeling isolated in the design agency as newcomers, and found taking the initiative to ask for support difficult, indicating that agencies need to be aware that graduates can be less confident and robust than they outwardly appear.

Time and planning

Daniel and Daniel (2013) stated that employers who provided internships found the positives outweighed the negatives; however, they were concerned about time and cost, both of which appeared to be barriers to providing effective internships for graduates. Two design agencies agreed that time and planning act as barriers to providing effective internships for graduates. The agencies claimed that, although it is difficult, they work towards providing personalised experiences for interns based on their strengths and interests. Effectively, the effort they expend on making the learning experience right for graduates takes time and planning. This indicates engagement for an early career in internships that is commendable, and that other agencies could learn from. Unfortunately, two graduates had experienced poorly planned internships, resulting in a lack of learning opportunities and ineffective time management. The findings indicate that there is a direct relationship between understanding what will occur in an internship and how the internship will unfold.

Unacceptable practices

Unpaid internships are still prevalent in the UK, particularly in the arts and media professions, which have a higher proportion of unpaid internships (Montacute, 2018). This is attributed to the large numbers of applicants for entry-level roles, meaning employers can find applicants even when there is no or very low remuneration (Montacute, 2018). Roberts (2017) cites guidance for employers issued by the HM Government in 2017, clarifying internships and work experience fall under the remit of the national minimum wage and employers are required to comply with the law. Graduates focused on the idea that unpaid internships are morally wrong; however, it was the design agencies who felt strongly about unacceptable practices from some quarters in the design industry. Areas covered by the agencies went beyond unpaid internships, discussing issues such as flouting the law, lack of transparency, long-term internships, lack of learning opportunities, and using interns to replace employees. Four agencies felt very strongly about this topic, and they directed their displeasure at the agencies that take advantage of graduates in this way. Montacute (2018) is an advocate of transparent opportunities for graduates and believes internships should be formally advertised and paid. The design agencies are clear about their stance on the purpose of internships, and all participating agencies provided paid internships and learning opportunities for the graduates; however, internships appear to be found informally in this research rather than advertised. With all graduates finding their internships informally, advertising for internships in the design industry appears some way off. The design industry appears network-based in early-career

recruitment, and uses degree shows extensively for contacts, thereby leading to informal recruitment for internships, supplemented by the graduates' ability to "get out there" and make contact. It is questionable whether formally advertising for internships would be a help or a hindrance for small design agencies that are already struggling to find time to plan effective internships, let alone overseeing a formal recruitment drive.

Internships: weighing up the benefits and disadvantages

Montacute (2018) states that there is evidence that internships are the normal route in some sectors to ensure a permanent role. The findings suggest that internships are a major component of potential employment in a design agency. However, the findings also showed it is more complicated than it first appears, with graduates and design agencies citing both benefits and disadvantages of this practice. It is worth noting that there was an alignment on the benefits of internships for graduates to gain industry experience as the reason why internships exist. The practice of learning in the workplace is a clear benefit for graduates, and the participants were positive about their time interning. Overall, the graduates described the introduction into the design industry through internships as helpful, regardless of the difficulties they have had to overcome.

The disadvantages cited by graduates and design agencies were slightly different. Money is an issue that was highlighted the most, with the graduates opposing unpaid internships, and the agencies also not approving of agencies offering unpaid internships, believing they give the design industry a bad reputation. There are limited figures regarding graduates who undertake internships; despite the lack of accurate data, it is recognised that a high number of graduates are still in internships six months after graduation (Montacute, 2018). The findings showed that the graduates had mixed fortunes in transition, with varying timeframes and the number of internships. However, by the end of the interviews, ten of the 11 graduates had been offered full-time employment from their last internship.

4.3.4 CONCLUSION: TRANSITION

Transition is traditionally defined as consisting of three stages (Hays & Clements, 2012; Taylor et al., 2007) broadly covering "unfreezing the status quo, or equilibrium, action to adopt a change and refreezing the change to make it endure." (Hays & Clements, 2012, p. 7). This research also highlighted three stages of transition, and these are defined by three core sections in 'Transitions: The place in-between'—how the graduate copes emotionally with the change; 'Navigation'—how

the graduate navigates their way through transition; and 'Internships'—the emergence of internships to gain entry into the design industry.

The *place in-between* is the part of the transition that occurs after leaving university and before gaining employment in the design industry. This is characterised by the feelings experienced by graduates at this time; these focused on uncertainty, timelines, identity, and complexity. The interviews and subsequent discussion found that graduate experiences varied at this time; however, it appeared that the longer the transition, the more the graduate found it difficult. All graduates accepted transition, no matter the length, although it was a challenging time for them, harder than expected, and a steep learning curve.

The graduate transition from university to working in the design industry is a personal experience and one that is unique to everyone. Graduate transition involves much more than just a job search; however, the focus of most advice for graduates focuses on preparing for job interviews, setting career goals, and writing CVs (Perrone & Vickers, 2003). Graduates felt their universities had prepared them for life after graduation; however, the common refrain in the interviews suggested nothing would ever be able to prepare them for transition.

The graduates in the research appeared to have navigated transition while experiencing barriers, such as relocating to new areas, unstable living situations, and money issues. The findings indicated graduates are resilient in dealing with uncertain and changeable situations; although they find them difficult, they tend to take a long view on navigation, focusing on finding a permanent job as the result. Graduates and design agencies both indicated internships were the preferred tool for navigation, as they provided graduates with the opportunity to learn in the workplace and the ability to 'get their foot in the door'. Graduates indicated that internships offered the best learning experience, even when the internship was considered of poor quality.

Schlossberg (1981) views graduate transition as 'gradual', meaning this event is anticipated and entry into the job market is not seen as sudden. Gradual transitions are generally easier to adapt to as the person can prepare for them. However, even when the transition is anticipated, the uncertainty regarding outcomes provides a great deal of stress for the individual, regardless of a positive or negative outcome. The case studies indicated that even when anticipated, the graduates found the transition challenging.

The main outcome from 'Transitions' was the reliance on internships as a navigation tool and for developing graduates' workplace learning. It appears that internships are the code for transition in the design agency. Internships were featured in all aspects of transition, to the degree that they became the focal point of discussion. When discussing 'The Place In-Between' and 'Navigation' the graduates used internships as the frame of reference to describe their experiences and journey to the design agency. The graduates' experiences of internships provide insight into the breadth of quality and usefulness to transition. Overall, the graduates are happy with the outcomes they are in, as they have found job roles they enjoy in design agencies they felt suited to. Design agencies offered support and learning opportunities for graduates through the internship process. Internships provided agencies with the opportunity to assess graduate skills, particularly work readiness, and develop on-the-job training specific to the agency. For the agency, internships enable them to make decisions on extending internships or offering job roles to graduates. However, questions remain. Are internships the best way for graduates to transition into the design industry, or is this the accepted way of transitioning out of complicit behaviour?

CHAPTER SIX –TRANSITION AND THE DESIGN AGENCY

AS A LEARNING COMMUNITY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Chapter 6 is to bring together the findings and discussions from Chapter 5 while also drawing on the literature review to provide a cohesive narrative that focuses on the key themes that emerged from this PhD research.

This chapter will start with an examination of design higher education, the myths that surround it, and the outcomes of the research findings in relation to this. This will be discussed in two areas: the value that design agencies place on higher education, and the development of engagement and partnerships.

Next, the focus will turn to the place in-between and the impact of this on the graduates, particularly around uncertainty and the lack of community, and how this affects graduates as they seek employment in design agencies. Also discussed is the use of internships to broaden connections and develop relationships as a tool to enter a community.

The section on design agency culture examines the link between transition and early career learning in the design agency. This is done by focusing on four areas: entering a community, adjusting to the design agency, the design agency culture, and developing learning further.

The final section of this chapter brings together multiple themes to discuss the design agency as a learning community. The emergence of themes indicates areas where design agencies can frame early career learning for graduates and how the design agency can be viewed as a place of learning.

6.2 THE REALITY OF DESIGN HIGHER EDUCATION

In the literature review, the focus on myths that surround higher education regarding design education was examined; further to this, the research provided findings that were discussed in relation to the myths. Barthes's (1993) work on mythology provided the context of myths that have emerged around design education, and the impact this has had on education, graduates, and the design industry. Myths do not start as mistruths or malicious thoughts, but rather as the leap of assumptions or taking statements as fact without understanding the issue or subject (Barthes, 1993). Out-of-context communication through word of mouth, media, and events can lead to the development of ideas that are distorted, given new meaning, and represented as fact, making them seem obvious. Furthermore, this development of 'knowledge' is often accepted as reality through the fabric of socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

The findings and discussion around *myths* in higher education were enlightening across the broad range of myths identified in the literature review. Overall, the data that emerged from the participants indicated they were supportive and generally positive about design higher education in the UK. While the research only touched on a small number of participants, the response, particularly from the design agencies, indicated they were satisfied with the graduates' education.

6.2.1 DESIGN AGENCIES VALUE HIGHER EDUCATION

The research provided insight into the design agencies' views towards higher education, and this was most strongly expressed by their use of graduates to fill early-career roles in the workplace. The design agencies were positive about the value of higher education for the graduates' skill set.

With the design industry having one of the highest levels of degree-educated workforces (MillionPlus, 2013a), it was not surprising to see design agencies employing recent graduates in their agencies. The demand for design skills is growing, with particular demand for creative thinking and digital skills (Design Council, 2018b), and agencies have looked for graduates who have design degrees from universities as a starting point. The agencies also used universities as a platform to find recent graduates, turning to end-of-degree shows and using their connections with universities to find graduates that might be suitable for internships and potential employment.

The design agencies discussed why they valued the graduates and why they had recruited them. They talked about how the graduates' university experiences have developed and shaped their

design thinking, creativity, and personal development. Design degrees, although not necessary, appear to be highly valued for multiple reasons by design agencies, and their need to look elsewhere becomes redundant. The Design Council (2020b) has identified having a skilled workforce as vital to developing a strong design economy; furthermore, their evidence shows that people with design skills assist in creating a productive workforce. The agency DA-AW described how the university had provided the graduates with a solid foundation in a wide range of skills – from creative thinking right through to practical skills – and discussed how this had made a positive impression in the workplace.

Wenger (1998) indicated that the difference between training and education lies in the output; training leads to competence, while education strives to provide new trajectories for the learner, and as such "education is not merely formative – it is transformative" (Wenger, 1998, p.263). Several of the design agencies touched on the value of education and discussed the differences between education and training. DA-MW and DA-COM talked about the purpose of design education and its relationship with the design industry. DA-MW saw the value of design degrees for a wide range of sectors and job roles, and they stressed that the purpose of design degrees is not to feed the design industry. DA-COM also differentiated between what is taught in design degree courses versus what design agencies need to teach, citing the responsibility of the design industry to step up in teaching early-career designers in the workplace.

Design agencies in the research appeared to understand that graduate learning is staggered between developing design thinking at university through to developing industry knowledge in the agency. The agencies' responses indicated that graduate learning occurs in the workplace, built on the foundations laid at university. The agencies also placed great emphasis on graduates' employability skills and personal traits, and how they applied these in the workplace to settle in, engage, develop, and learn. This emphasis was notable across all the agencies, and this point was particularly relevant when the agencies talked about graduate learning in the workplace. The research showed that the design agencies valued the graduates' employability skills, especially in fitting into the workplace. However, Bridgstock (2011) noted that discipline-specific knowledge and skills are often more important. Predominantly, the design agencies in the research indicated that they understand that higher education has provided graduates with a solid education in the principles of design thinking. The agencies viewed graduates' early career experiences as developing industry knowledge and competence to become designers. DA-COM discussed the

difference between higher education and employment, and highlighted that graduates' learning as designers is picked up and developed in the workplace. Furthermore, DA-COM indicated this is the responsibility of the design industry, and identified agencies should be prepared to do so to develop early career learning in graduates.

6.2.2 DEVELOPING ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Clews and Mallinder (2010) found that over 90% of higher education institutions indicated they are engaged with creative businesses to contribute to students' learning. Engagement typically was through student placements, providing real-world briefs, the use of practitioner-teachers and research opportunities. Six of the seven design agencies in the research had developed links with design departments at the university and were involved with a wide range of activities that utilised their professional knowledge to the benefit of students and tutors. For design agencies, this involvement brings a deeper understanding of the higher education landscape in design education in the UK. Through this lens, they have gained an understanding of curriculum, teaching, and learning, alongside insight into the skills and capabilities of students. The outcome of this, as active participants, is that they can understand the value graduates can contribute to the design industry, alongside the understanding of the purpose of education, and the knowledge that workplace learning can develop graduates' skills further for the industry. The agency DA-AW highlighted that closer connection with universities had provided successful outcomes, by employing graduates who had the skills the agency needed and through reconnecting with involvement with teaching, especially around real-world briefs.

Building on this, however, the design industry and higher education could develop better and more robust ways of working in partnership together to develop deeper engagement. This is particularly important with new and emerging practices in the design industry. Research has highlighted skills gaps that have been identified in the design industry (Design Council, 2018b); however, developing engagement between higher education and industry would appear to be highly useful to mitigate areas that need further development. Through industry partnerships and involvement, higher education can anticipate new and emerging creative skills, providing the ability to develop new courses and curricula and offer world-leading education opportunities (MillionPlus, 2015a). For the agencies involved in this research, there appeared to be a correlation between their involvement with higher education and an understanding of the benefits of design education and the value provided to the graduates through developing skills.

Involvement by design agencies with higher education does not mean there are no frustrations with the system. The findings showed some areas where agencies felt improvements could be made. DA-MW voiced their frustration at areas that they felt could be developed further in design degree courses. Specifically, the lack of work-ready skills for the industry was remarked on, with DA-MW indicating that higher education needs to focus further on developing this for students in their courses. DA-MW is involved with an industry-led graduate programme to help recent graduates develop the skills required by the design industry, which shaped their views on the topic.

The research showed that a high level of engagement by design agencies with higher education provided a generally positive view of design degrees, teaching, and graduates. However, the exploratory research interviews, conducted with design agencies that are not involved with higher education, provided a different viewpoint. The main viewpoints expressed focused on the standard of teaching, particularly the lack of development of industry-specific skills, and curricula that are outdated for the industry needs. While some agencies highlighted the need for better engagement between higher education and industry to improve this, they viewed it as the responsibility of HIGHER EDUCATION rather than theirs.

Overall, the findings indicated that some design agencies showed an interest in helping develop graduates through workplace learning. This mindset is much needed and valued for the development of early-career designers – without these opportunities and the ability to gain industry experience, it leaves graduates in a precarious situation. Furthermore, it raises the question of why more agencies cannot develop this mindset, rather than resorting to repeating the myths surrounding design education to justify why they do not support graduates in their early careers. This is ironic, since they are happy to employ graduates once they have several years of experience to their name.

Myths surrounding higher education provide a worrying narrative that can result in negative stereotypes around the creative industries, and more could be done to demystify topics related to design higher education. It appears the lack of participation contributes to a fabric of knowledge that is misconstrued through lack of understanding, scrutiny, verification and importantly, the lack of involvement, drawing conclusions based on other people's thoughts rather than a deep understanding through being involved with design education in the UK.

6.3 THE PLACE IN-BETWEEN

6.3.1 UNCERTAINTY AND LACK OF COMMUNITY

Even when design agencies collaborate and are involved with higher education institutions, the transition remains an uncertain time for graduates. The creative industries are often characterised by graduates navigating transition as individuals (Bridgstock, 2011). Hays and Clements (2012) view transition as a significant period between the university and working life, characterised by the lack of support from both the university and the industry. The findings from this research highlighted the sparse contribution from the design agencies during the graduate transition; furthermore, it was of concern that the agencies are not fully aware of the experiences graduates face during their transition between higher education and finding a job in the design agency. The findings revealed that all the graduates experienced a degree of difficulty during the transition, and they faced a variety of complexities as they tried to secure paid employment in a design agency.

Uncertainty, in life, is part of the modern world, and for graduates, the challenge of entering the design industry is a complex situation to navigate. The *place in-between* for the graduates in this research was defined by complexity and uncertainty; the extent to which this was experienced varied from graduate to graduate and was often determined by how long it took to transition between higher education and gaining employment in the design agency. Many of the graduates found that the time between leaving university and finding a job was longer than expected, impacting their personal well-being and anxiety during this time. They highlighted that their transition was more complex than they thought it would be. The graduates talked at length about the need to balance opportunities with their financial situation; as opportunities, such as internships, were offered, however, when travel, food and accommodation were taken into consideration, the graduates worked out they often could not cover their costs and lost money. Christie (2016) described how graduates who have the "ability to draw upon valuable resources in the guise of social economic and cultural capital is significant in managing early challenges and differences in social background impact on this" (p. 2) can navigate transitions better than others. However, it was apparent in the research that with or without support, the transition can be difficult and complex, particularly in the design industry with its reliance on practices such as internships (Bridgstock, 2011). The research highlighted several factors that contributed to the graduates' experience of transition. The graduates GRAD-BB, GRAD-COM, and GRAD-ASH all described their lives as being "on hold" during the transition; they talked about situations in their lives as being transitory and unstable while they looked for permanent roles. Their experiences as they chased opportunities led to

considerable changes, such as living situations, lack of financial security, and moving cities. GRAD-AW talked about always having to be a different person – for each internship or opportunity in the design industry, they felt they were redefining themselves again and having to adjust how they appeared to fit in and make the best of opportunities they were presented with.

For the graduates, the transition could be seen as a displacement from one learning community before entering a new learning community. Design courses at university are often characterised by learning together in groups and socially constructed knowledge, with courses such as design tending to learn through social processes, rather than individual activity (Clews & Mallinder, 2010). Furthermore, this way of learning develops the students' ability to communicate, work as a team, develop critical thinking and understand different perspectives. These skills were highlighted by the design agencies in the research as valuable and sought-after when looking at graduate attributes. With learning in higher education dependent on social engagement, both with their peers and tutors, the fabric of belonging to a learning community emerges. Just as design agencies have been identified as learning communities, design courses can be described as learning communities, even within the confines of formal education (Wenger, 1998). The lack of a stable community appears to be the main feature of transition. In the research findings, graduates described feelings of loss after graduation as they moved on from their previous lives at university. GRAD-COM and GRAD-MW talked about how this impacted how they dealt with the transition. GRAD-COM missed their friends, citing that the support they provided was no longer there. GRAD-MW talked about how their creativity and ways of working had been impacted once their course had finished. Both described having to adapt, overcome isolation and develop new ways of working or coping.

However, it appeared that the overall timeframe of the transition experience provided graduates with outcomes that can be described in positive and negative contexts. For the graduates, the process of transition provided experiences they had to overcome and navigate along the way. Perhaps the biggest learning curve was the experience and resilience in getting through the process. These skills will shape the graduates' ability to navigate similar situations in the future, which is especially important in the creative industries where freelance, self-employed, and capsule working are prominent.

What graduates and design agencies did recognise was the impact internships had on graduates' transition. Both groups of participants recognised the importance of internships as a valuable tool

for graduates to gain experience in the design industry. But overall, the research indicated there could be more support for graduates during the transition, and specifically, both higher education institutions and design agencies could do more to help graduates, as neither appeared to be overly involved in the graduate transition process.

6.3.2 INTERNSHIPS AND BROADENING CONNECTIONS

Internships were the defining navigation tools used by the graduates in this research. This aligns with Roberts (2017), who identified the rise of internships as a recruitment tool, especially in the creative sector. The findings in the research provided insight into the use of internships in design agencies—both from the graduates' and the design agencies' perspectives—with them all talking at length about the benefits and disadvantages of internships. The predominant reason for graduates to use internships was to gain experience working in design agencies, with the view of gaining employment, with all the graduates expressing this. GRAD-BB saw internships as a vital tool in preparing graduates to work in a design agency. GRAD2-TX and GRAD-DR both found internships gave them insight into how an agency functions and the various roles within, something they could not learn at university. A large proportion of the graduates expressed that they also saw internships as a way of experiencing different agencies – the way they were operated, the people who work there, the personal relationships, and how they fitted into this. Both GRAD1-TX and GRAD2-TX appreciated internships that provided them with the ability to assess whether they fitted into agencies from both work and personal perspectives. This was echoed by three of the design agencies, who said it was important that the graduates fit into the workplace; however, this was viewed from a work perspective more than a social point of view. DA-AW pointed out that internships offer both graduates and agencies the ability to figure out if the fit is right, while DA-MW thought internships offer graduates a low-risk opportunity to try out agencies to find the right fit.

The concept of the graduates seeking a place of community emerged from the discussion in *'Uncertainty and lack of community'*, as graduates have experienced a period where they have navigated complex personal situations and uncertainty. Internships can be viewed as a tool for navigation; however, they also provide the opportunity to be part of a community where there is a focus on their development and learning. The findings indicated that for the graduates and the design agencies, this fit needs to take into consideration not just the work but also the people and the relationships that bind them together. Wenger (1998) describes the process of the formation of communities in relation to 'Modes of Belonging'. For the graduate, when interning, they have

entered a new community – the design agency. There are distinct ways for the graduate to start to belong to the agency: engagement, imagination, and alignment, and it is through the interaction between these and the community that will determine its success. The process of engagement is between the graduate and the agency; imagination is the sharing of connections, exploring, and a willingness to explore new relationships; finally, alignment is the coordination of perspectives and purpose to work together (Wenger, 1998). The findings indicated that the graduates experienced similar processes throughout the transition process, either successfully or not, but these defining moments provided insight into what they were looking for and what worked for them. Conversely, this is broadly what the design agencies were assessing too; however, this was only touched upon when talking about internships in the earlier section in Chapter 5: Myths. Here, the design agencies highlighted that they looked for graduates who "fitted in" to the agency, often describing personal traits they highly regarded.

The graduates and the design agencies both agreed that not all internships are conducive to graduates' learning. At the agencies where the graduates were employed in the case studies, the graduates were positive about the opportunities the agency provided for learning and support. The graduates said they had experienced or known other graduates who had experienced internships they described as exploitative or badly run. In these descriptions, it appears there was a lack of community and engagement; for example, GRAD3-TX talked about feeling isolated on an internship, where they did not feel like they belonged. GRAD1-AW felt that if internships were unpaid, this indicated the agency did not value graduates. The agencies also highlighted practices that exist in design agencies, where internships were used in an exploitative way to take advantage of graduates. DA-DR and DA-MW felt internships should not last too long and expressed concern that there was a trend of internships going on for up to a year. There was concern about remuneration for the graduate, along with long-term outcomes such as employment.

Internships, when structured well, can provide valuable learning opportunities for graduates. The research highlighted the benefits and disadvantages of internships, and combined with transition, this appeared to be a complex time for the graduates. Internships offered a chance for graduates to overcome the 'graduate paradox' and gain experience to initiate the move towards securing a permanent role in the design agency. When this went well, the design agencies appeared to offer graduates the chance to feel welcomed into the community and develop a sense of belonging. The graduates talked about how they felt supported during their internships in the agencies by working

on real projects, having supportive team members, and feeling valued; and it appeared the sense of

'fitting in' was an important feature of how internships went, especially for graduates.

6.4 THE DESIGN AGENCY CULTURE

The section on the design agency culture is an outcome of the findings and discussion in Chapter 5, specifically, the emergence of the graduates' early experiences of the design agency and how this affects their transition and learning at this early stage of their career. The areas covered are as follows:

Entering a community

For graduates, entering a design agency can be a daunting experience. The design agency, as an established community, can enable the transition into the workplace by welcoming newcomers, communicating clearly, and providing opportunities for integration. By examining how communities can aid the transition from the perspective of the graduate, there are outcomes for design agencies to consider when offering internships or graduate roles.

Adjusting to the design agency

Transition is a period of change for the graduate, and the adjustment to the design agency community highlights new procedures, expectations, and ways of working. For the graduate, these exposed areas around their confidence levels and anxiety were coupled with the steep learning curve of professional knowledge development; however, over time, the graduates became more confident in the community as they settled in.

The design agency culture

The culture of the design agency was highlighted by the graduates as crucial to their personal and professional development. Communities are bound by how they structure themselves, both by how they organise work and the social fabric of the community; this contributes to how the culture of a community is developed. The design agency culture emerged as an important factor for learning in the workplace for graduates.

Developing learning further

The preference for learning through experience and practice was broadly effective in the design agency; however, it exposed areas where graduate learning could be enhanced or where there were barriers to learning. This section showed variation between the graduates and design

agencies regarding what could facilitate further learning, and the identification of specific areas needed further attention.

6.4.1 ENTERING A COMMUNITY

With the design agencies showing a preference for graduates with employability skills, specifically in areas that indicate being part of a team, teamwork, and involvement with other employees, this highlights the importance design agencies place on having the right mix of people in the workplace. All the design agencies gave positive comments regarding the graduates' contribution to the workplace and how they were fitting into the team. The research highlighted the mutual benefit between the design agencies and the graduates in developing harmonious workplace environments to aid the sense of community and belonging. The agencies' priority was to develop an environment that would allow the team to work together and assist each other; while the graduates expressed their need to feel welcome, accepted and given the opportunity to learn, in order to feel valued.

Both Wenger (1998) and Eraut (2002) discuss expectations and communication within communities, specifically at the entry level. Wenger (1998) finds that entering an established community is difficult for newcomers and suggests that effective integration for newcomers is through inclusion directly into the community. The benefits for learning are through what Wenger (1998) defines as 'legitimate peripheral participation', which he defines as "the process by which newcomers become included in a community of practice" (p. 100). Eraut (2002) examined competencies within the structure of existing communities to outline expectations and signpost these through communication and structure. Eraut (2002) states that learning opportunities are dependent on the way the community organises and allocates the work. By developing shared assumptions within the community, competence can be gauged, particularly for new graduates. Through this process, graduates can contribute and assist, and when experience is gained, more responsibility will be given.

Wenger (1998) expands this, stating that learning occurs, for new members, through participation and exposure to practice with an established member. Through practice, which involves access and engagement with members, understanding and defining accountability, and developing discourses, newcomers can be engaged and able to understand how the community operates. However, newcomers must be accepted by the community and be granted legitimacy; otherwise, learning will be difficult. Through the process of being accepted, the newcomer can learn through practice.

6.4.2 ADJUSTING TO THE DESIGN AGENCY

For the graduates, adjusting to the design agency was a component of transition, both in terms of professional development and personal growth. Upon reflection, the graduates realised how steep the learning curve had been for them. The research highlighted that the graduates had experienced feelings of being overwhelmed when adjusting to working in the design agency. However, over time, it appeared that these feelings subsided as they became more familiar and comfortable in the workplace. This correlated with the graduates' increased confidence at work, and they became more able to deal with new situations, work faster, and develop new skills. The graduates made causal links between adjusting to the workplace through experience and being accepted into the wider community. Wenger's (1998) analysis of engagement with a community establishes the link between participants: "in order to support learning, engagement requires authentic access to both the participative and the reflective aspects of practice in concert" (p. 184). Essentially, through engaging in the community, which in this instance is the design agency, learning for the graduate can be enabled through developing personal relationships, sharing trajectories, engaging in shared projects, and the building of shared experiences.

However, Wenger (1998) also acknowledged that insufficient participation or reification by participants can inhibit learning, and unfortunately not all graduates found adjusting to the workplace a smooth experience. Adjusting to changing workloads appeared to be a challenge; for example, GRAD1-TX found the increased workload stressful because they felt the team had not supported them. GRAD1-AW found the quieter patch hard to deal with as the focus was off design, and GRAD-ASH found adjusting to the design agency to be an ongoing process.

In contrast, the design agencies' views on the graduates adjusting to the workplace tended to focus on employability and the graduates' personal attributes; however, the graduate's adaptability in terms of workplace skills was also mentioned. Specific areas mentioned included software skills, managing workflow, design skills, and dealing with clients.

The contrast between the graduates' shock at the adjustment to working in the design agency compared to the agencies' satisfaction with graduate performance highlights the complex process of learning for newcomers into a community. Wenger (1998) describes how an established community can engage new members through the acquisition of knowledge. In turn, this joint enterprise can create a bond within the community, which can then develop respect between

members and provide further opportunities for the creation of knowledge (Wenger, 1998). On the other hand, Ellström (2006) recognised that learning in the workplace can be adaptive, and as such it could also be argued that the graduates have used adaptive learning to understand and learn established routines in the agency. It is plausible, in terms of the case studies, to take the views of both Wenger and Ellström as being valid, as the graduates' adaptiveness in the workplace is occurring both individually and as part of a community. Therefore, learning at this point is multi-layered and complex for the graduate, and as such requires patience and support from the agency.

6.4.3 THE DESIGN AGENCY CULTURE

Wenger (1998) states that organisations are "social designs directed at practice. […] Communities of practice are thus key to an organisation's competence and to the evolution of that competence." (p. 241). By recognising that organisations can negotiate their own terms and shape their own boundaries, Wenger (1998) acknowledges that they produce their own policies, job roles, rules, and ways of working; therefore, a specific community of practice can emerge from its own structure. Furthermore, Illeris (2011) identifies the importance of the organisation's environment in relation to the learning process of the individual; this falls into two distinct areas in the workplace: the technical-organisational learning environment and the social-cultural learning environment.

Wenger's (1998) description of an organisational community of practice and Illeris' (2011) definition of workplace learning environments, along with the findings from the case studies, particularly from the graduates, revealed that the organisational culture of the design agency emerges as an important element for supporting and developing learning in the workplace. The areas being discussed can be described as the 'design agency culture'. 'Culture' within the design agency covered aspects across the workplace practice, ranging from the organisational side, such as a clear structure, timekeeping, and focus on development, to the social side, such as positive attitude, collaboration, and a welcoming team environment. As such, the culture of the design agency was cited as indispensable for providing support to the graduates in this research.

Illeris et al. (2004) state that the possibility for technical-organisation learning will "depend on the content of the work, how the work is organised and the technology that is used" (p. 31), and defines this framework as the physical, technical, and organisational environment within the organisation. These workplaces provide learning possibilities "by making demands and by providing possibilities.

They constitute both resources for and limitations on learning." (Illeris et al., 2004, p. 36). Graduates talked about when the design agency had been supportive in this area and the impact this has had on them. GRAD-BB highlighted an example of this, outlining that the agency had given clear instructions for approaching jobs, and this, in turn, made them feel a valued part of the team. This led to partial responsibility and an active role in the job, with the graduate explaining that the team "kind of brainstorm concepts, and construe interactions, and ... depending on the particular one, I might take on one part of it and take responsibility do another part." (GRAD-BB)

When design agencies are explicit with situations, this supports the graduate, with examples including a clear structure of how specific jobs will run, what role people will take on, overall timelines, giving extra time for entry-level employees to complete a job, having a clear hierarchy within the team, and providing points to develop new skills. When the agency provided clear signposting for the graduate, this removed ambiguity in these situations. The research showed examples of how design agencies can build in this process to assist graduates, with DA-MW talking about their approach to support the graduate, both immediately and in the long term. Explaining the process from the outset, the agency would outline the design process that occurs in a professional agency, from research, strategy, and presentation. Beyond this, the agency is keen to impart knowledge about how the business is run and where the graduate fits into the processes, and what is expected of them. Essentially, the agency is keen to get the graduate involved in every part of working life so as to understand how the agency runs, even if the graduate is not specifically working on that part.

Graduates, as newcomers to the community, appreciate a professional, organised, and structured workplace, so they understand what is occurring and what is expected of them. This was highlighted in the research through some of the responses by graduates, such as GRAD-COM, who felt the design agency was supporting them through being patient and teaching on the job. GRAD-COM talked about a situation when they had set up work incorrectly and asked for help, saying "I can easily get help on that. The other day, I was making these Illustrator files and realised that I had set it up wrong. I had almost a massive tutorial on Illustrator for an hour, which is kind of what you need, I think. [...] I feel like I got a lot of potential to actually learn shortcuts and things." (GRAD-COM). GRAD-DR also experienced situations in which the workplace structure provided support when the workload was overwhelming. The graduate explained that the agency stepped in to provide more time and direction to complete the job:

"Because, still, I'm a junior. I'm not necessarily going to be able to work at the same pace as other people, but I'd like to. I'll try. Yeah, I think that's because the team is quite close. I think everyone really understands where everyone is at. Everyone gets a lot of good support." (GRAD-DR)

Social-cultural learning is defined through the learning process occurring not just as an individual, but also through the social fabric of the community within the workplace. Learning in these situations typically occurs through interaction with more established members of the community, where established values and norms already exist (Illeris et al., 2004). Although Illeris et al. (2004) and Wenger (1998) both agree that established communities can provide a rich ground for learning through social interaction, Wenger focuses on newcomers to the community and how support can be provided for them. By identifying four points of support for newcomers' learning in an organisation: participation for all members of the community, emphasis on learning rather than teaching, engagement in the design of practice as a place of learning, and access to resources they need to connect, Wenger (1998) views learning can be developed in the workplace for newcomers. A design agency with a good culture can support graduates and encourage learning through these four points, and graduates in the case studies highlighted these, giving examples such as collaboration within the workplace, learning through doing, being involved in development groups, an increase in responsibility, teamwork and providing resources to develop their own design interests. The research provided examples of how design agency culture can help support graduates, such as GRAD1-TX, who found the agency very supportive, saying "in general it is family run so it is very nurturing, and they want you to grow as a person as well." (GRAD1-TX). The support is extended to a 'buddy' the graduate can talk with over any issues, and GRAD1-TX found this to be invaluable, saying: "They know that you're gonna come and ask for help, so it's rather than approaching with caution there is that set of expectations." (GRAD1-TX). GRAD-ASH found the culture at the design agency good, which made them feel happy at work as they were being treated as a part of the team: "We're all in it together, really. Which is really nice, that's good. I mean obviously if I ask questions they'll always try and help me out, give me answers, teach me things." (GRAD-ASH). These findings in the research indicate that the design agency culture can provide a positive impact, as the graduates have felt included within the agency.

Furthermore, there were examples when the design agencies indicated that the culture in the workplace contributed to graduate support. DA-AW attributed the small size of the agency, both physically and team numbers, as a key part of their culture, as the intimate environment means that

there is nowhere to hide. As an agency, they feel that the nurturing and open culture in the studio made asking for support easier for the graduate, saying:

> "I think we've got a good culture here. People are able and willing to kind of shout out if they need help. [...] You can ask for support in any direction, and that's the culture that we are nurturing and the one that we want to carry on with." (DA-MW)

At DA-TX, the design agency acknowledged that supporting graduates to develop their own design interests was valuable, and it provided an 'inspiration budget', which graduates could choose to spend on whatever they chose, but it was designed to use for inspiring events or to aid development in areas they feel are important to them. The four graduates at DA-TX talked about how this was a positive way of supporting them in their development and nurturing their interests.

Understanding how an organisation can utilise the community of practice that exists within the workplace to support learning is often overlooked, as it is not recognised as a formal learning resource (Wenger, 1998). What was unexpected from the data was the lack of identification from the design agencies that their own culture could provide an environment for learning and support. There were two examples where the agencies could identify the agency culture as a contribution to learning, but overall, when talking about how they supported graduates, the responses were a broad but disorganised set of themes around support. This could be interpreted as unique to each organisational community, or one possible explanation is that these agencies were unsure how they supported graduates, so they could not say this in an easily defined answer. However, graduates did recognise that the design agency culture supported their learning in a variety of ways, and this was highlighted by all the graduates in the case studies. Not only did they recognise the contribution to learning, but they also appeared to place a high value on the support system provided, and in turn, this influenced their view of the agency in a positive way.

6.4.4 DEVELOPING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion showed that the design agencies' expectations for graduate learning have been largely left to learning from experience, often using seating arrangements to facilitate this, and a focus on the need for graduates to develop their software skills. The graduates also felt that their learning occurred through experience; they also used reflection to make sense of their learning and provide clarification on their knowledge. However, it was evident there were

opportunities for further learning development, and in some instances there appeared to be barriers to learning development for graduates.

Boud and Walker (1993) understand that barriers to learning are factors that inhibit progress in a learner's development, particularly when learning through experience and reflection. These can be, but are not limited to, lack of support, lack of time, pressures and demands, lack of confidence or self-esteem and expectations of others. The design agencies appeared to understand that experiential learning was important for graduate learning; however, a lack of understanding of how it could be implemented effectively was often misunderstood.

The research indicated at certain points that too much is assumed by the agencies, especially when graduates are overwhelmed or out of their depth in particular areas. The reliance on using experience as a learning tool, without enough understanding of the barriers graduates face, means that learning can be limited or take longer. Boud and Walker (1993) categorised their work on barriers under three headings: understanding barriers to learning, discovering barriers to learning, and working with barriers. Understanding barriers covers both the internal and external barriers of the learner, which often lead to diminished learning opportunities. Discovering barriers to learning means how to facilitate learning when barriers are present in the learner. Finally, working with barriers is the acceptance that barriers can be overcome and learning can be transformative.

Overall, both the design agencies and graduates were happy with the learning development that was occurring in a broad sense, yet they saw areas that could be enhanced to further develop learning. However, both the design agencies and the graduates lacked a clear vision about how to tackle these areas, and it was apparent there were barriers to further learning. The areas identified across the answers were broad but also highlighted small areas of specific learning rather than a long-term concept of how learning could occur for the graduate. Furthermore, there was variation in how agencies and graduates discussed learning development. The agencies tended to discuss what they could do to help facilitate learning further, and the areas were broad and unique to each agency, ranging from implementing more regular reviews, providing more opportunities to develop concepts, having a dedicated training budget, being involved with the business side of the agency, and organising design-related trips to galleries and exhibitions. Both DA-MW and DA-ASH talked about areas they could improve on, with DA-ASH conceding that they could do more to develop the graduates' learning through team outings, such as exhibitions and inspirational trips beyond the

agency. DA-MW was aware of potential ways they could help develop the graduates' knowledge further, saying they would like to implement a review process regularly throughout the year, rather than only annually. While most of the agencies were aware that they could do more, they often expressed a lack of time and budget to make these happen, for example, DA-BB, who would like to have a training and development programme, specifically citing technical and software skills and creative development as key areas. However, the budget currently does not allow this.

The graduates often focused on areas where they felt needed to gain knowledge and skills. They referred to small gaps in knowledge they would like to learn, yet often cited barriers to why they had not been able to achieve this. Often the barriers were reliant on the agency actioning a process or providing support. For example, GRAD-COM highlighted the need to develop knowledge around getting files ready for artwork and print, which they have not been exposed to before. However, they needed guidance from a more senior designer to do this. GRAD-MW had identified two areas that would help develop their skills, particularly regarding client interaction, such as presenting concepts and work. They would also like to have the opportunity to attend a specific software course to develop their knowledge, but they are dependent on the agency to approve this.

There was recognition by the design agencies that they are aware of the barriers to graduates learning at specific points, but are unable to develop this further, which leads to graduates having reduced opportunities to learn, thus inhibiting their development. An example was given by DA-ASH, who found there had been times when their communication had not been clear or there was a lack of follow-up. While graduates are aware of the need to develop their learning, the barriers they are experiencing can restrict their ability to learn. GRAD2-TX admitted that the lack of support had made them feel out of depth, stressed out and unsure of what to do next on a project. GRAD-ASH realised there were opportunities to learn further in the agency; however, they were held back as they did not feel confident enough to discuss this in the workplace. Reflection and feedback can initiate discussion about learning, including what barriers the graduates are facing and how these can be overcome, and the use of regular catch-ups would be useful to identify and work through the barriers.

6.5 THE DESIGN AGENCY AS A LEARNING COMMUNITY

This research aimed to understand more fully how graduates learn their occupation through work, alongside the narrative of their transition journey. The findings and discussion from Chapter 5 led to the emergence of the design agency as a learning community for the graduates, either during their time as interns or as junior designers. Chapter 6 has already examined the community from four points: entering a community, adjusting to a community, the design agency culture, and developing learning further. In this concluding section, the focus will turn to what makes the design agency a learning community. There are five themes that contribute to this:

- Transition, relationships, and identity
- The design agency as a place of learning
- Learning through engagement and practice
- Mentoring in the design agency
- The design agency as a learning community

6.5.1 TRANSITION, RELATIONSHIPS, AND IDENTITY

The research found that the graduates experienced challenges, changes and adjustments during the time described as the 'place in-between', and they used internships as a navigation tool to enter design agencies. In relation to learning in a community, for the graduate, the transition is about redefining the sense of place. As they move out of the place in-between and into a community, their relationship and identity with the community solidifies – this is where they need to feel comfortable and can develop a sense of belonging. In the context of design agencies as a learning community, graduates start to develop bonds and relationships that can assist their professional knowledge.

For the graduate, this is part of their transition journey, through their experience of leaving university, looking for work, experiencing changes in their personal life, taking on internships, and finding job roles. This intense period contributes to their identity and personal development. Wenger (1998) determined that learning and identity are inherently linked, saying:

> "Because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming – to become a certain person or, conversely, to avoid becoming a certain person." (p. 215)

The past experiences of graduates are incorporated into their learning trajectories, providing a significant contribution to their learning paths. This determines and contributes to their perspectives on the community and participation in it; the importance here is the creation of learning communities that are effective. The graduates in the case studies who experienced multiple internships and workplace environments highlighted that there were situations when they struggled to experience meaningful learning outcomes due to a lack of planning and engagement by the agencies.

Sennett (2008) argues that developing skills in the workplace is only one aspect of practice, and alongside developing professional knowledge it is equally important to develop relationships with others, particularly in the workplace – essentially the act of social experience between each other can be understood as the craft. The social relationships in the design agencies, especially for the graduate and the more experienced team members, are instrumental to developing professional capabilities. These relationships – between graduates and experienced team members – provide many benefits both for the graduate and the design agency. Newcomers, such as the graduate, feel a sense of belonging; feeling accepted, learning, and fitting in was highlighted by the graduates as a positive experience overall. Conversely, there were times the graduates described situations when things did not work out and they were worried or concerned about their next steps, development and how they were perceived by the wider community, for example, GRAD2-TX, who misunderstood a project direction and felt concerned about how they would be judged, especially as the work was presented in a group.

6.5.2 THE DESIGN AGENCY AS A PLACE OF LEARNING

The case studies highlighted that the design agency was a place of learning for the graduates. Aligning with findings from the Design Council (2018a), the design agencies valued the graduates' higher education, showing a preference for degree-educated newcomers into the community. Emphasis was placed on graduates' employability skills and personal attributes at this early stage – due predominantly to the desire to find the right graduate to fit into the existing community of the design agency. This indicated a preference for graduates who exhibit signs of 'fitting in' specifically around personality traits, such as being helpful, proactive, and team players. As newcomers to the community, graduates must navigate an existing social environment. Wenger (1998) defined membership in a community as a matter of mutual engagement; this is necessary between the graduates and the existing team members to allow the newcomer to engage with the community

and allow learning to occur. Learning is dependent on the ability to contribute and is the interplay between experience and competence (Wenger, 1998).

Research has shown that employers are often more concerned with generic skills than with specific industry skills (BIS, 2015). This gives design agencies the opportunity to shape and mould graduates to their preferred working methods. However, the Design Council (2018a) found that design firms offer a low proportion of training beyond the workplace, indicating that learning is predominantly acquired through learning on the job. Agencies talked about how the graduates' 'real learning' would start once in the agency, indicating that higher education was beneficial up to a point; for example, the agencies valued the graduates' design skills learnt at university. The agencies said 'professional development' would be learnt on the job, indicating they see graduate development occurring in the design agency community.

6.5.3 LEARNING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT AND PRACTICE

The concept of learning that emerges from practice has been discussed by Billet (2008), Sennett (2008), and Wenger (1998). Learning in the agency starts immediately for the graduate, predominantly by learning through experience while being tasked with projects in the workplace. The findings in the case studies indicated that the design agencies relied on seating arrangements to assist with graduate learning. Placing the graduate with an experienced team member provided opportunities for the exchange of knowledge, such as asking for help, observation, and imitation. Learning in this way is a feature of crafts and the workshop environment (Sennett, 2008), and Billet (2016) affirms this, saying: "Indeed, learning through observation and imitation (i.e. mimetic learning) stands as a foundational process through which humans have construed and constructed knowledge across our history." (p. 618).

There is a focus on the graduate actively engaging in active knowledge in the design agency through approaches and procedures via observation and imitation; however, there are shortcomings in this way of learning, as it only incorporates the learner in the relationship. Learning by demonstration or osmosis can burden the graduate, as this assumes direct imitation can occur; Sennett (2008) indicates that alongside demonstrating, more experienced team members can be more effective by using expressive language to provide concrete and definite tools for the learner. This follows the main principle of instruction: show, do not tell. Billet (2016) claimed that learning is facilitated through two core aspects: first, the engagement and experience of working in a specific

work community over time, and second, using those experiences to deliberately structure occupational knowledge. It is here that more experienced team members contribute to the graduates' development. The case studies highlighted a variety of outcomes in learning through seating arrangements; this was described by the graduates as helpful on a day-to-day basis. Some shortcomings were also pointed out, with the experienced team members lacking time to engage with graduates and graduates feeling anxious about asking for help, especially when new to the agency. This highlights the difficult position graduates face when entering the community, with the pressure of transition and the opportunity to learn through experience, yet there are barriers the agency could take into consideration to further ease the early stages of being a newcomer into the community, such as understanding techniques to engage graduates, understanding how instructions could be more explicit and developing the more experienced team members' understanding of how to be an effective mentor and providing enough time for practice, instruction, and feedback to learn from experience.

What was not clear was how the immersion of daily tasks is structured to create a pathway within the work setting. The research, however, did show that software skills were prioritised in many instances and a focal point of skill development in the agency. The responses from the design agencies indicated that there was an urgent need for the graduates to master software skills upon entering the community; this view was reinforced by the graduates, who understood they needed to prioritise this. This can be described as a deliberate pathway of learning for graduates, which Billet (2016) saw as a common feature of apprenticeship-style learning models:

> "So, while apprenticeships as a mode of learning are supported by engaging in the lived experience of workplaces, there is a deliberate structuring of workplace activities that meet the goals of individuals' learning and also of sustaining and advancing the workplace's practices." (p. 621)

It is important to understand that while the design agencies placed a high value on the development of the graduates' software skills, this was not reflected in how the agencies developed activities to develop knowledge. Here, the agencies relied on the seating arrangements and the support of an experienced team member. There were several responses from graduates who experienced positive outcomes through this process, but many described a lack of time and resources for developing software skills effectively in the workplace. There were some instances when graduates were given tutorials in the workplace if their lack of knowledge was a barrier to completing work,

but most of the graduates talked about participating in software tutorials outside of the workplace in their own free time, so they could operate at work more effectively. This poses the question of when and where software skills should be developed and by whom.

The research also revealed that graduates make mistakes and learn from them. The graduates gave examples of situations in which mistakes had happened in the workplace, and the outcomes of these. They were often bashful about admitting these; however, they could see that they had learnt through the mistake, and often they described decisive moments of learning development, such as leaps in software knowledge, or understanding how their communication was perceived. At first, the graduates in the design agency remarked that they often felt nervous about making mistakes or asking for help, but as this fear diminished, they could see that making mistakes contributed to their learning trajectory. They realised that making mistakes is necessary to develop skills and techniques, and the willingness to experiment increased for graduates once they felt more confident in their ability to take risks and develop further. Over time, their confidence increased, and they were able to recover or work out correct methods, which Sennett (2008) described as a learnt skill rather than a personality trait. Therefore, the learner can understand the different perspectives of learning the correct way to do something and the ability to experiment and develop to improve (Sennett, 2008).

The use of experienced team members to support learning was not the only method employed by the design agencies to support the graduates. During the research, various methods emerged, such as the use of buddies, informal catch-ups, regular feedback sessions and reviews discussed by most agencies. However, the implementation of these tools varied between agencies, and the findings indicated that the graduates in the case studies who experienced more support through these methods were aware that this helped contribute to their knowledge development. Through discussion covering performance review, goals, and areas of concern, the graduates could articulate how they could develop learning further. These methods of practice can be described as 'pedagogic practices' which Billet (2014) describes as everyday activities that can be applied through work and interactions with more experienced team members who can offer guidance, coaching, and guide the learners' thinking and acting towards learning. The finding that the graduates valued these interactions gives a valuable insight into how they can use pedagogic practices to understand their learning progress and set future goals. It is potentially even more

insightful for the design agency, as they can utilise and incorporate these simple yet effective practices into everyday life in the workplace to develop learning.

6.5.4 MENTORING IN THE DESIGN AGENCY

The combination of using experienced team members, seating arrangements, the focus on developing signature pedagogies, and pedagogic practices brings together the final piece of the design agency as a learning community – the role of mentors. It was surprising that the research, which highlighted the use of experienced team members to oversee graduate learning, did not feature mentoring as a major component of graduates' support and learning in the design agencies. Two graduates talked about how at times they related to someone in the workplace as a mentor, but broadly, discussions about mentoring were not explicit and scarce.

It has been acknowledged that the transition from the university to the workplace can be a shock to the graduate due to new types of learning, along with their speed, and the change to working in a team. It is in these situations that mentoring is particularly prevalent and beneficial (Clutterbuck, 2004). The findings showed a wide range of complex situations that the graduates had to navigate to secure a role in a design agency. Furthermore, many of the situations they experienced contributed to their anxiety, sense of change, and loss of confidence over this period. The entry into the design community appeared to give the graduates stability and a sense of opportunity and purpose. The use of experienced team members to assist provided the graduates with a sense of engagement; however, the foundation of these relationships could be further enhanced to provide a deeper learning experience for the graduate and build the foundations for the design agency to be a learning community.

The use of mentors emerges from Sennett's (2008) historical model of the master and apprentice in the workshop, where learning and training are passed down through observation, imitation, practice, and experience, alongside the personal relationship that binds them together. The apprenticeship structure often follows this basic model, and modern apprenticeships are defined by employment and education (Fuller et al., 2017). McConnell (2015) argues that early-career designers require support and structure in the workplace, and compares this to the apprenticeship model involving a mentor with the learner, describing the principles that define the relationship: "the expectation that two people (or more) should invest time learning from each other and laying proper foundations in an on-the-job setting" (para. 26). With the emphasis on workplace learning growing in

the modern workplace, so too has the use of experienced workers to assist the development and capabilities of less-experienced workers (Billet, 2003). The research has emphasised the use of this method in the design agencies; however, this raises several questions: Who is the more experienced designer? What makes them suitable to assist the graduates' learning and development? What do mentors need to know?

Sennett (2008) discussed communities and the members that exist within them, citing the social expert as desirable in the workplace. Sennett describes social experts as good at explaining and advising, and comfortable with mentoring. Furthermore, they can draw on their experience, not just from the past, but also with a view to the future. The benefit for the workplace is the contribution of good practice, and over time, this contributes to the focus on people within the organisation and encourages mentoring (Sennett, 2008). For the design agency, the choice of a mentor is important, as the impact on graduate learning will be reflected in this. Furthermore, this reflects on the agency community, as the impact of having sociable experts as employers appears to have wide-ranging benefits for all members of the community.

However, the use of workplace mentoring has raised questions about who takes this role in the workplace, with mentoring placing extra demands on their day-to-day work life. Billet (2003) found that mentors in the workplace pointed out that their work was "more demanding and intense and that the mentoring was conducted with little or no support or acknowledgement from the workplace." (p. 2). Mentors want to assist, but often are unable to, due to their own workload (Billet, 2003). While there are structural issues around how mentors can effectively provide mentorships, Billet's (2002) conclusion on mentors and the use of guided learning in the workplace stated that mentors believed their role was effective in helping and developing workplace learning. The success of mentoring appeared to correlate with the mentor's effort, rather than other factors. The main factors cited by mentors were the lack of support from the workplace and a lack of time to support mentees due to their workload. The implication for the design agency is that mentoring is a learning structure that requires planning – both in terms of time and planning, but also in terms of what learning is occurring.

Finally, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, the findings showed only two implicit references to mentoring, with GRAD-BB and GRAD-COM both talking about how they had a 'mentor' figure in the workplace. In both cases, the graduates described mentoring as informal. However,

informal mentorship is not the same as formal mentorship; informal mentorship is characterised by the lack of formal arrangements between the mentor and mentee, and this can hinder outcomes in terms of success, measurement, and structure (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). The use of formal mentoring allows us to set goals, both personal and professional, aiding in the transfer of skills and knowledge (Kram, 1988). Mentors often aid novices or learners when they need assistance to do something they might find difficult on their own (Billet, 2014); this relationship was dependent on the learners' engagement in the process of learning, and Billet (2014) stated that just being part of a community is not the only factor in novices' learning trajectory. For the design agency, the relevance is understanding explicit learning modes, with mentoring being defined as a learning process for the graduate, along with setting goals for the graduate to work towards, such as the use of feedback sessions, review and other methods discussed earlier. The existing learning process of having an experienced team member assist a graduate through seating arrangements can be further developed to enhance learning potential in the design agency. For the graduate, the potential of the relationship to develop into a richer learning experience in the workplace aids not only professional capabilities but also personal relationships in the community.

6.5.5 THE DESIGN AGENCY AS A LEARNING COMMUNITY

Reframing the design agency as a learning community can provide learning opportunities for all members in the workplace, but especially for graduates. For graduates, this is particularly important as they continue to learn after leaving university, as the design agencies in the research indicated the workplace will be where they develop their industry-based knowledge.

Through securing roles in the design agency, graduates become part of the wider community in the agency. Engagement is a key component of building learning communities – both established members and newcomers are integral to the success of learning in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). The use of seating arrangements in the design agencies highlighted how design agencies are using engagement with senior designers to provide feedback and assistance to graduates. Further areas of engagement were through informal feedback sessions, chats, and reviews; however, these were often ad hoc and approaches varied from agency to agency. Wenger suggests a general approach to facilitate learning through engagement, covering four points: the emphasis on learning rather than teaching, learning as a process of participation, engaging communities through their practice, and providing the necessary resources required (Wenger, 1998). The research indicated that there is evidence of this approach to engagement occurring in the

design agencies, with both graduates and agencies describing practices, such as working on projects that allow the graduates to learn through practice, working in teams to develop work, the use of seating arrangements, and providing feedback. Further exploration of these four points could contribute to a framework when developing the concept of the design agency as a learning community, which could be used to assist further learning opportunities.

The research highlighted by the graduates and the design agencies indicated that learning is primarily structured through experiential learning, feedback, and seating arrangements. Because of this – how graduates learn – it is important to understand who provides explicit instructions, who gives feedback and how, and how the community engages in this together. As a learning community, the design agency draws parallels with Sennett's (2008) summary of the workshop, where he examines what the workshop means in relation to modern crafts, such as design. The workshop is reframed as a place of experience where the craft is developed, but the core experience is shaped by the relationships between the people who belong and work together in the workshop. There is a need to understand and explain to newcomers in the workshop that the experience of dealing with others is a craft in itself. Sennett explains, "We would try and make the particular knowledge we possess transparent in order that others can understand and respond to it." (p. 287). For Sennett, the workshop is not defined by the traditional master/apprentice relationship, but something more complex in human relations.

Creating a learning community has many benefits for the design agency. This goes beyond early career learning for graduates; it affects the people within the agency and how they work within it. The building of communities enables the dual function of identity, which Wenger (1998) identified as follows:

> "Engagement in practice is a double source of identification: we invest ourselves in what we do and at the same time we invest ourselves in our relations with other people. As we build communities of practice through this process, we work out our relations with others and with the world, and we gain a lived sense of who we are." (p. 192)

By drawing on the communities of practice and the workshop, the design agency can draw on and develop the craft of design, enabling a way of practice that becomes part of the agency. Identity, engagement, and human relationships are bound together through the lens of community and,

alongside the concept of the workshop, provide a framework that begins to make sense of how the design agency contributes to learning and development.

CHAPTER SEVEN – CONCLUSION

7.1 PHD AIMS AND SUMMARY

The aims of the PhD

The purpose of this PhD was to identify how design graduates transition from higher education into design industry, specifically in relation to their early career learning development in design agencies in the UK. The research aims are reiterated here:

- To identify the processes of learning that occur in the first roles for graduates in design agencies.
- To investigate how design agencies support and develop work-based learning.

Further to the aims of the research the thesis examined the role of internships, particularly as graduates appear to use internships to navigate transition, use them as learning tools, and aid career progression. The role of higher education and the impact of this on graduate's career progression was also examined, principally from the perspective of the design agency regarding their opinion of how design education has shaped and contributed to the graduate skill set.

A summary of the PhD thesis

A full overview of the thesis summary is outlined on p. 10-12 for detailed reading. A short summary is given below, to provide a brief overview in relation to the aims and objectives of this PhD.

Chapter One introduced the rationale to the PhD and why it was undertaken. Through personal experience of working in design agencies and identifying research on graduate transition, employability, and workplace learning, there appeared to be relatively little research specifically on design graduates' transition into the design industry.

Chapter Two contained the literature review of existing knowledge around graduate transition from the perspective of three interrelated areas: myths that have emerged around design higher education in the UK; the communities graduate enters in their early career roles and how this impacts workplace learning; and how transition can affect graduates and the tools they use to navigate this time.

Chapter Three focused on the exploratory research undertaken to gain insight into graduate transition, internships, and early career learning from the perspective of design graduates, design agencies, and higher education institutions. The key recommendations informed the approach taken in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four provided the methodology for the PhD research, outlining a social constructivist approach to understand how the meaning is constructed through engagement and interaction as design agencies and graduates make sense of their world. Case studies were devised to gain a deeper understanding of graduate transition and early career learning by design agencies and graduates.

Chapter Five identified the findings from the case studies, alongside a detailed discussion; this was explored through key themes in relation to the graduates' transition and early career learning in design agencies. Myths focused on the participants perceptions of design higher education; communities examined how learning is initiated in design agency; and transition explored the graduates' journey between higher education and their early career roles.

Chapter Six draws together the findings and discussions to provide a cohesive narrative that focuses on the key themes that emerged from the thesis. It was highlighted that design agencies valued higher education; transition impacted graduates particularly around uncertainty and the lack of community; and the design agency emerged as a learning community for graduates in their early careers.

7.2 MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

RQ1 What determines graduates' transition from higher education into design agencies from the graduate's perspective and understanding?

This research has contributed to the understanding of the complexities for graduates as they transition between higher education and gaining employment in the design agency. The findings showed that transition can be a difficult time for graduates, often experiencing a longer timeframe than anticipated when securing their first roles. Uncertainty and loss of community contribute towards some of the difficulties faced by graduates, and the findings have helped develop a greater understanding of how these effect graduates as they navigate their path to employment. A natural progression of this work is to analyse how the design industry and higher education could support graduates during this time, as currently there appears to be limited resources available for graduates to draw on. This is discussed further in recommendations for further research. Alongside developing an improved internship standard, further resources could be developed to support graduates with advice and resources on topics such as: legal advice, financial assistance, and accommodation services.

RQ2 Is graduate transition becoming defined by internships before employment?

One of the more significant findings to emerge from the research is that the graduates identified internships as the tool to solve the 'graduate paradox'. The most important aspect of transition was undertaking an internship to gain experience and find employment in a design agency. The use of internships as a tool to find employment is not new, especially in the creative sectors (Roberts, 2017), however, the research provided insights to how graduates navigate through transition – the 'place in-between', and the importance internships in this process. The graduates indicated they expected to intern; at university they had been prepared by course leaders, design industry professionals, and previous students to understand that internships are a feature to finding employment in a design agency. This research highlighted all graduate participants interned during their transition; with multiple internships undertaken before finding a permanent role.

For graduates, it appears that transition can be defined by using internships as a navigation tool and the insights contribute towards a greater understanding of the benefits and disadvantages of internships in design agencies during this period. The findings also provided understanding of exploitative internships and the effect it has on graduates in transition. If internships are a feature of

entering the design agency it implies there needs to be a focus on developing an internship standard to ensure bad practice and exploitative internships can be circumvented.

RQ3 How could learning be structured, supported, and developed specifically for internships based in design agencies?

The research provided insight to how internships can provide positive learning experiences that aid early career development. The insights gained from this research can contribute towards the development of learning opportunities during internships based in the design agency. With the emergence of graduates using internships to navigate transition, design agencies must be aware of how they contribute to graduate learning by providing good quality internships that are structured to provide appropriate learning and support for graduates who are entering the design industry. Learning in the design agency, whether in an internship or as a junior designer, should offer graduates the opportunity to develop their professional knowledge in an impactful and meaningful way that enhances their career. Internships should not be viewed, by design agencies, as an opportunity to have extra resource in the workplace that is unpaid or as a cost-effective solution in place of an employee. The design agencies who participated in the research highlighted successful internships require forward planning, day-to-day organisation, time needs to be allocated to allow for development, and a supportive workplace environment. These aspects contribute to internships that are valued by the graduates as positive learning experiences.

RQ4 How does learning currently occur in the design agency for graduates, and how is it supported and developed?

This research has identified that the design agency is a learning community for graduates. The findings showed the graduates described the design agency culture provided a positive effect on their learning and early career development. Using experiential learning, feedback, seating arrangements, and reflection the graduates could identify how the design agency enabled opportunities to develop their professional knowledge required to work in the design industry. Aspects the graduates identified that helped their development were centered on the design agency community, such as a friendly environment, an understanding of expectations, the ability to ask for help, support, and teamwork.

The research has also shown that the design agencies are supportive and engaged in the graduates learning and development, with a particular focus on quickly developing workplace skills

required for the job such as software skills. Their expectations of graduates in their early career roles were pragmatic, allowing graduates the opportunity to learn in an environment that was supportive, provided the opportunity to ask questions, understand mistakes happen, and allow the development of new skills. The research suggested that the design agencies previous experience of offering internships or employing graduates had provided insight to early career development. The research also revealed that the agencies were involved with higher education to some degree, providing an understanding of the educational landscape the graduates had experienced.

RQ5 How can design agencies facilitate, support, and develop workplace learning and early career development for recent design graduates?

The design agencies employed techniques to enable graduate learning in the workplace, predominantly through seating arrangements to enable learning through experience. However, it also appeared that using these techniques, graduate learning is predominately through incidental learning. The research identified the agency's often assumed learning was occurring for the graduates, yet often graduates faced barriers to learning effectively, such as lack of feedback, the lack of regular review structure, and lack of confidence particularly when new to the design agency. However, the research suggested the design agencies are often unaware of how they are contributing to graduate learning, particularly in relation to how the design agency culture contribute to this. This insight could contribute to assisting design agencies in their understanding of how they inadvertently assist early career learning and can develop this further.

The findings indicated that graduates are learning in the workplace, with the assistance of experienced team members. Design agencies could draw on the apprenticeship model assist in structuring workplace learning effectively for graduates. Understanding how to develop effective mentorship would aid knowledge transfer; highlighting the need to prepare current community members to enable these roles and provide mentors with the support needed to take on this role alongside their existing job requirements. Further insights showed graduates preferred structure and communication as this provided them a learning trajectory with aims and objectives; this could be built into the graduate learning model. Although the agencies did provide this, it was in varying levels and often applied inconsistently. Feedback through reviews and appraisals was recognised as a tool for learning, by agencies, yet the implementation of these was sporadic in most instances. Predominately, the graduates are learning in the workplace, with only a few instances of learning

beyond the agency. When this did occur, the graduates appreciated the opportunity to widen their skills and indicated they felt valued by the agency.

RQ6 In turn, how can this influence and develop a model for work-based learning in design agencies that can help them scaffold and initiate learning in the workplace for graduates, whether during internships or entry career roles?

The findings highlight the importance of understanding how learning occurs to provide effective opportunities – both for internships and early career roles – especially for design agencies. Design agencies can contribute to graduate learning in the workplace through understanding how graduates learning and implement techniques in the workplace to enhance graduate development. The insights gained from this research can assist with developing graduate learning, however, there is a need for the insights to be provided in an easily accessible format for design agencies. The use of a respected and established design organisiation to deliver a model for work-based learning would be preferable to provide gravitas in an industry that can be cynical of graduates and early career development, as highlighted in the exploratory research.

7.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Design Agencies

This work contributes to existing knowledge of workplace learning by providing a specific focus on early career learning for graduates in design agencies. The significance of this, particularly for design agencies, is a greater understanding of how learning occurs and how graduates respond to learning structures.

The design agency as a learning community emerged as a significant concept, with graduates indicating the culture of the design agency is an important contribution to providing a good learning environment. The findings indicate the design agencies involved cared about developing graduates early career learning and practices were in place to enable this. However, it was highlighted there are areas that could provide further structure or learning opportunities through developing a toolkit or framework that could assist agencies with a deeper understanding of graduates learning. Furthermore, the significance of this research provides a new understanding of graduates' transitions and early career learning for design agencies that currently don't offer internships or take on junior designers. This knowledge will prove useful in expanding understanding for agencies who find it challenging or need guidance on how to provide early career opportunities for graduates.

The findings reported here shed new light on graduate transition and the impact this has during this time. This new understanding should help to improve design agencies understanding of the affects transition has on graduates, which in turn provides insight to the complexity of graduates' situation at this point in their lives and take in to consideration the additional barriers they face.

Higher Education

The findings of this research provide insights for higher education regarding graduate transition, as graduates identified the time between leaving university and finding employment was a time of significant change for them. Navigating complex situations and a dealing with uncertainty, often over an extended time can be a difficult for recent graduates dealing with a loss of their university community. These findings suggest a role for higher education in providing support beyond graduation, and potentially a solution that involves the design industry for a partnership approach to graduate transition.

The results of the findings support the ideas that the purpose of design education, at higher education level, is not solely for supplying the design industry; however, building better relationships with the design industry (and vice-versa) is important to provide understanding and context. Further insights provide higher education with a deeper understanding of what design agencies value and expect of graduates. Design graduates were well received by the design agencies; however, it was implied that the 'real learning' starts in the agency – but importantly this was not directed at higher education, rather it reflected the requirements of industry.

The myths that often accompany the narrative around design higher education in the UK were generally found to be complex but unsupported by the design agencies in the research. Overall, it was found that the design agencies value higher education and are happy to engage with higher education; further work is required to bring together the two stakeholders to enable discussion on areas, such as development around emerging practices within industry.

Graduates

This research provides context for current students who are thinking of entering the design industry, particularly design agencies. The findings provide an insight to what other graduates have experienced during transition and early career learning, with the graduate participants in this research indicating they were unprepared for working in design agencies and the effects of transition on their lives.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This research lays the groundwork for future research into areas around early career learning for graduates and graduates' transition. Three key recommendations for development and further research are listed:

Explore working practices for design agencies as a learning community

Further work is required to develop the findings from this research – specifically around how graduate learning can be implemented in the design agency – into an easily accessible format that design agencies can access for guidance and help for internships and early career roles for graduates. The development of methods for design agencies to aid workplace practices in their community provides opportunities to enable better practice, not only for newcomers, but also for existing members. Particularly for members of the community who could act as mentors for graduate newcomers. The opportunity for a design organisation to work in partnership on this would be beneficial to provide the link between academia and industry relevance.

Graduate transition as a focus for higher education and design industry

Developing engagement and partnerships between higher education and design agencies has been identified as having benefits for all three stakeholder groups, however, further measures need to be developed to support graduate transition – both by higher education and design agencies. For the graduate 'the place in-between' has emerged as challenging period for many. The research indicated that both higher education and agencies currently appear to not fully understand graduates transition in a way that could provide tangible support during this time. Further research to develop practical understanding and solutions, particularly around internship practices and expectations, would help immensely.

The impact of Covid-19 on design graduates

The end of the PhD research and final write up coincided with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The implications for graduates in their early careers have been radically reshaped during this time, impacting areas such as graduate recruitment, internships, and the rise in work from home roles. This has provided a new landscape for graduates to navigate, and early indications provide concerning outcomes, particularly around employment figures for design graduates. Wong (2021) highlighted junior designers were the most affected group of designers from Covid-19, with junior designer roles falling in 2020 by 29%.

Graduates felt the impact with the loss of internships opportunities as design agencies were unable to adapt or were struggling with the impact of Covid-19 (Kale, 2020). Finally, while working from home was necessary at points during Covid-19, the creative industries have readily adapted to remote working, with many roles staying remote or hybrid. The nature of working from home can impact early career learning for graduates – this research highlighted graduate learning predominately occurs through seating arrangements and physical interaction – the design agency as a learning community. The shift to working at home and communication through video calls leads to important questions around understanding how this affects early career learning for graduates in the design agency.

Current and future work

As an outcome of this research, I have been approached by a design organisation to work alongside them to develop a curriculum for young people who would like to enter the design industry, but who haven't studied at higher education level. Drawing on the research findings, key areas of learnings have been applied during the curriculum development; specifically, through developing a learning community of young creatives, learning through engagements, the use of design agencies as places of learning, and mentorship. This work is currently in development.

Further work is being developed in a large organisation in relation to developing an apprenticeship programme for school leavers who would like to enter the creative industries. The programme is in its infancy; however, a framework is currently being developed with this research forming part of the framework, with a particular focus on how work based learning can be developed and applied.

Interestingly both applications above are both based on bypassing higher education as the key requirement of accessing careers in the design industry. This highlights alternative paths beyond having a design degree to get a job in a design agency, drawing on several of the key themes that emerged from this research, such as work based learning and the use of mentorship to develop early career learning.

7.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The research identified areas of contribution on graduate transition and early career learning, however, this research has potential limitations. The research methodology focused on a relatively small selection of participants in the form of case studies – with seven case studies, covering seven agencies and eleven graduates. The exploratory research provided further insight with five agencies, three graduates, and three higher education institutions. The design industry in the UK is a large and complex sector, and the PhD provides insight to a specific area within this – the design agency. However, as with any small-scale research, the findings offer valuable insight within a limited capacity.

The design agencies who participated, by virtue of the research, offered roles to graduates – both internships and junior designer positions. Because of this, the existence of valuing graduates and providing roles for them, along with the research findings indicated an understanding by the agencies towards higher education, early-career learning, and the benefits of graduates in the design agency. Therefore, study was limited by the absence of the agencies who don't take on gradates, offer internships, employ junior designers, or are involved with design higher education. For it is these design agencies that could benefit from a better understanding of graduate transition and early career learning in the agency; potentially leading to more graduate opportunities in design agencies. Furthermore, the absence of their opinions on the myths surrounding higher education were largely absent. The exploratory research did provide insight due to agencies who don't engage with higher education, but this was limited to only a few participants.

The research highlighted agencies who offered productive internships that led to employment, yet it was apparent within the design industry a wide scope of internships available to graduates. Through some graduate previous internships and anecdotally, the research indicated that exploitative internships exist in the design industry. The study is limited by the lack of information on exploitative internship practices and the implications on graduates and the wider design industry's reputation because of this.

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APPENDICES

INTERVIEW ONE: DA-ASH

Interviewer: So, how did you find Lizzie, and how did this role come about?

Design Agency: We have quite a close connection to Falmouth University. I'm not sure the full name, but it's University of the Arts university. Mark Steen who I mentioned, our creative director, founding partner of ASHA, he has been ... I think he studied there? Or he certainly done some talks down there, so he's got quite a close link with the courses and the students. We have traditionally, since I've started here about six years ago, we've always had a kind of study stream of Falmouth students coming for internship and they do one or two week on average one or two week placement, normally through the summer months and -

Interviewer: Can I just ... is that when they're on their degrees?

Design Agency: Yeah, normally the end of their second year, turns to be. And they come through the summer and so, how did we find Lizzie? Well she was one of those interns and we had a junior designer ... or he sort of progressed to mid-way senior designer really, Chris who left so we had a position vacant for junior designer and we looked back through CVs and I think at that point we looked back through some of the interns and the placements we'd had and also looked through some of the CVs and found the students and other people that proved to be kind of nice characters, people we got on with and Lizzie was part of those people who came back in for a spell and she worked with us for a few weeks along with ... So we had her for spell and a couple others as well, and I think we and Mark Steen was happy with her and her position in the end, it was a happy fit.

Interviewer: So would you ever advertise for junior designer or do you only go back through contacts.

Design Agency: That was a conversation we had, should we advertise the position and I think we decided rather than put out to agencies or in the press or whatever, we would look through our contacts and the people we knew and resources that we had at hand to find the best fit and we were fairly confident, Mark Steen was fairly confident that we would get someone through that process.

Interviewer: So the first options, I mean if it hadn't of worked out that way, you would probably would of, could of...

Design Agency: We might have gotten there eventually.

Interviewer: Okay, that's fine. How is Lizzie going? Is it a bit how you imagined it to be when she first started?

Design Agency: Yeah, I think ... to be honest she's probably advanced at what where we expected in terms of development and ability to manage work and coming into a professional environment with no previous experience and kind of work in the way we do which can be quite pressured, spells of pressure and quite manic at times. She's dealt with that really well, and probably exceeded expectations on that level and I mean, we've almost had to stop ourselves a couple of times Scott and I. Scott and I worked with her, not as closely, day-to-day. So we've both often or not often, but we've occasionally just stopped ourselves and though, actually she needs more time 'cause she's still a junior, and she's exceeding expectations on so many other levels so we need to make sure she's okay kind of thing, so it's being that, that's part of the process, it's just a discussion between ourselves so that's something that's happened.

Design Agency: And just making sure she's okay, making sure she's happy with the workload and happy with the stuff she's being asked to do, so that's something we've sort of try and make sure those are taken care of.

Interviewer: Cool, and so what would your expectations of a graduate be? You know, of Lizzie and previously Chris, when they come in as just someone coming in to work at straight out of University ... I mean, would you ... what would you be expecting them to do? And that what would you be expecting them to learn?

Design Agency: I think you'd expect a certain degree of technical proficiency, they wouldn't be able to be part of the team without a certain level of proficiency and that's the key software so, Adobe CC is obviously the stuff we use in Design Illustrator Photoshop, you need some more of a working knowledge of that otherwise you pretty much quickly get bump down. So that's a given, and then beyond I think just a sort of aptitude and just an ability to think on your feet and be proactive is quite important and ask her to be kind of proactive and just maybe go a bit beyond or think ahead of what you're been asked to do. And I think a sense of ... I think what's important is to get some idea of the context in which your work is being seen.

Design Agency: So I think if there's some of that, then you're on to a good thing. Someone who knows, you can just see it as a piece communication not just a sort of closed of bit of design, in its same right, it actually has a purpose, so it's quite important to our staff is, connects with people and I think rather than just being designer for designers to stay the same, it's about ... we're actually communicating with people, perhaps and not designers obviously there.

Design Agency: Wider audiences, so I think some ability to see that, to see the role of design and then just to get on with people ... I don't know, just normal things and just not being too precious, being able to share the work they do, open up to the team, be able to ... I mean, it's quite important at that level, to be able to take a fair bit of input and practical critiquing from senior members. And act on it and kind of ... where also take direction, yeah pretty much to take a fair bit of direction. 'Cause you're not really ... you're inviting, quite often, you're inviting creative and purpose at certain points but then you're asking to the ability to take directions quite specific directions and stuff, and get on with it kind of thing.

Interviewer: And do you see that taking direction is part of the learning process?

Design Agency: Yeah, definitely! That's something that's ... Up to that point juniors, prior to that would've had cart blanche probably just writing their own briefs, designing to their own tastes and outputting to answering their own briefs in fact being their own audience. It's a real switch when they come to a professional environment after ... take ... just get in step with rules that kind of the "rules of the world", where you're answering to different ... you've got budgetary constraints, you've got people that don't necessarily understand the way you think, you've gotta make ... you've got to communicate, and that's a leap.

Interviewer: Yeah, it is.

Design Agency: Often one that people don't make.

Interviewer: I know right! Although everyone I talk to are obviously amazing graduates. How is ASHA supporting or helping support and develop Lizzie's learning?

Design Agency: I think just in terms of giving her bit more responsibility than maybe an ordinary junior would have, we try obviously get her involved in projects but the ability to run small parts, small projects and work with the project managers, delivery the work in liaison with Hannah, the project manager and Freya who supports Hannah. And just sort of give her little areas of responsibility that she can develop and feel she had bits of ownership, which really helps people's development and still work in under a watchful eye of ... 'Cause we're quite top heavy in a way, we got Mark Steen, and myself and Scott and the Grave Team, so she's kind of been

a junior in amongst all that upwards in 20-25 year's experience in each of us, it's quite daunting. So we're kind of aware of that but were gonna give her ... she's been brought on. Just try and give her responsibilities, no there's not a lot of that formal training going on, but she's quite adapt to the program for example.

Design Agency: I don't know what she's asked for or her expectation of more formal training ... the programs or day seminars for example, I don't know what she expects on that, but that hasn't been any of that. It's more on the job responsibilities.

Interviewer: And is there anything further? Do you think that you could do to facilitate her learning? And it might not be within the studio, it might be -

Design Agency: Yeah, I think that one of the things we try to do and develop along with Mark's theme, is sort of that, days out certainly up in London, to go see exhibitions and experience what's going out there and just the exhibitions or anything interesting from design perspective and actually just going up to London and seeing what's going on in the high streets and things that's very useful for us. So that sort of thing, I think would be good. A few more trips out is good, that's the sort of thing we've tried to cultivate and I think Lizzie should be part of that. In those sorts of terms we see it as sort of ... I mean she's very much ... we put her in a team, she comes along and she'd be this peer group going up to experience new things and get inspiration.

Interviewer: And how has Lizzie's supported her own development since she's been with you? And I ... I'm being... It might be things that she's not even aware of?

Design Agency: Well I think she's just ... she's ... her enthusiasm and her pragmatic enthusiasm, she's not put off by anything, so just naturally dives into things and which means, she's ... there's nothing she wouldn't get involved with if you'd ask her to be a part of, it just like she's very well-embracing from that perspective, so she's ... it's just her natural outlook that's really help her I think. 'Cause we work on quite a variate of things, from Print Online to film video base things, and we're a small team so anyone that's in here gets involved in quite a lot of rage of stuff, but she's able to dive in on it and it's good.

Interviewer: And you find that seems to be personality-based or the person itself, and in fact when you look back the interns that have been successful here, the ones that ... is that also being the main drive?

Design Agency: Yeah, personality is really key I think. 'Cause we are so ... such small agency it's quite a key character and personality often will play a big part in that. So you gotta be able to deal with personalities and also bring your own personality into as well. She's very level-headed and she's not phased by anything so it's a good thing, a good asset. And anyone that comes in like that is okay, anyone that ... I think that the less successful ones are were people have not an agenda of such but kind of a point to prove that sort of thing. So that goes wrong pretty quick, 'cause it's just not gonna work.

Interviewer: And just a side question, do you socialize outside of work as well or is it not ... does everyone tend to work together and then pack up and go home?

Design Agency: Everybody does, but I'm not saying it couldn't happen but we sporadically try and arrange things, and they're good ones when they happen. But I personally, I commute, so I'm like an hour away in Melbry side. I can't stay and have a drink or anything like that necessarily but lunch time we like to go around the corner, get together have a chat and bit more down time and then we're quite fortunate we get, well occasional get nominated for awards so they'll be someone or couple of people go off and have a night like that so we're not ... I mean other agencies I've been to you're with your down the pub every lunch time or ... it's quite hard work actually. We're really not like that, so we're quite ... we're probably the least social agency I've been to working at but I wouldn't say it's an anti-social -

Interviewer: No, it's because everyone's got their own life outside of work.

Design Agency:	Hannah's in Bristol, Scott, Mark Steen and Michael got families so we're all kind of off with them-
Interviewer:	Tight up a little things outside of work ... cool. And I know you briefly mentioned Lizzie's technical software skill, but what other skills are been useful and also aside from her personality. Possibly what needs improvement, but I'd say that because she's ... might be bad at it, I'm talking about things that she needs to learn more and that might just come with experience?
Design Agency:	That's a bit of a hard one really ... 'Cause she's sort of exceeding I'd say on a number of levels. I think just occasionally she might just kind of launch at something too much or go off and do a piece of work before she checks back with how it relates to the brief or whatever and that's just down to enthusiasm really -
Interviewer:	So it's not a negative a need right, it's really -
Design Agency:	It's not really a negative, it's more just a communication thing. She's quite quiet and quite self-contained, I think we're all sort of working on our communication skills with times so maybe with a bit of that and ...
Interviewer:	Could you tell me since Lizzie been here, something major, a major positive that's happened that you've noticed and it ... or something you've thought, "that was really good", "She did a good job there" or it might have been a design piece, it might be the way she's dealt with a situation, something that you thought, "that was impressive" ?
Design Agency:	I think there's one specific thing more of her own cross range of projects is just her flexibility and ability to consistently to deliver. Deliver to briefs to a high standard, just really kind of ... her research is very, she gets to do a piece of research, she's very good at getting quite a wide, broad set of research. But then if you give her something specific, creative brief, she'll give you quite a good range of options and they'll useful, it's thoughtful stuff, it's not just sort of arbitrary volume, it's kind of quality and quantity, so she's ... but with good thoughts behind it. There's no raw high standard at it, that's really good.
Design Agency:	I think she just marks in, the most impressive thing is she a shrink away from anything if its life. And I think we're all [inaudible 00:19:10] tend to the car or whatever, she's in the thick of it. If we're all doing marks for a new identity, she's generating lots of stuff, she's really a key player.
Interviewer:	It feels like she's definitely part of the team and she's -
Design Agency:	Yeah, absolutely. She's kind of a key part of it and that's given rise to us to sort of over expecting. But just having to stop ourselves and think, "you know, she's actually fresh out of Uni".
Interviewer:	Sometimes that external confident can be mistaken for an internal confidence as well perhaps ... I'm not gonna pigeon hole here, but I've noticed it a lot, graduates sometimes, are underneath like a duck paddling their feet fast and going home and going, "Whoa, that was quite hard"!.
Design Agency:	We don't really get a sense of that from her 'cause we've ... sometimes it's like as you often get you might generate a lot of work and then have a lot of it, just eventually not ... "Binge" is not a nice word, but just not used to, and that can be really daunting, a wave of levelling you out, but she just doesn't get daunted and you sort of look in at her closely the next day or whatever, she's just not ... doesn't appear to get phased by stuff like that which is ... I mean it really kind. It's quite impressive I'd say. Don't think I could be ... I couldn't do it. I'm just saying!
Interviewer:	No I know, it's her hard -
Design Agency:	It's a resilience I don't have

Interviewer: It's a hard thing to take when you're younger especially. Would you ever perhaps mention, "oh! Are you okay with that"? Or what did you think?

Design Agency: I mean, Scott is good like that, so he'll constantly sort of say, if there's a … were in a critical process, he'll more often than not leave that aspect of it and he'll sort of vocalize that. But I do too as well, we've been working together on a couple of jobs. Lizzie and myself bit more closely and that's definitely a part of the process. I'll suggest things and she's just very good at taking on-board suggestions.

Interviewer: It is a permanent role … do you … any of the skills … because obviously Lizzie's come straight from Falmouth, do you think any of the things she's learnt at Falmouth have been her general education in her degree course has help with or do you think that most of the learning is happening in the agency?

Design Agency: I think she's learnt a lot at Falmouth, I would say. Because she came here, ready to rock n' roll, she was straight out of the traps on jobs. There wasn't a spell where we were giving her something less than we were working on, so just to get her skills up or her … I mean even on her internship it was just straight in the mix with it all and able to just work as part of team. There are occasions were both of us, Scott and myself sort of land over and just showed her technical aspects of software and how to achieve something that you would expect to do.

Design Agency: Whereas with Chris, he was kind of telling us how to do it, 'cause he's like brilliant and that stuff and obviously a lot more senior but nothing to the point where you think, "she really has got a gap there, and we need to just be careful with that". I mean just to the point where, she's probably not as adapted as us and stuff and just needs a bit of looking out for, but not to the point where she take couldn't tackle and next to what we're doing.

Interviewer: What do you see as … and this is not specific to Lizzie, its just to graduates in general. What do you see is the advantages and disadvantages of internships?

Design Agency: The internship program really is a means of giving back in a way to students and to education in general, to design education in general, and I think Mark Steen is very clear on that as well, I suspect, I don't have specific conversations about it but snippets you hear. But I think … so it is a sort of a giving back thing, so the advantages for the agency I suppose you create links with an educational establishment, you're … I mean it's very good, from an enhancing your reputation, I mean the students they come here they … we do a lot the charity sector work. And that's always … they always mention that, so that they're aware of it. And then I think you kind of over the years … guys there was … or invariability end up in top agencies or good agencies. And they carry our name around them, around with them and so it builds our reputation. I think it's that sense of get back what you give, I think it's just, if you give at that scale, you just getting back long-term, but you're giving in the short-term.

Design Agency: I think what the education establishment gets out of it is just the professional skills, the student gets that working environment feel. I mean almost without fail, they have positive time and the learn a lot, it's like a car crash of learning.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:26:09]

Design Agency: It's just they're condensing sort of that they're doing in six weeks into week or more. They just probably just exhausted at the end. But they really respond, invariability respond really well to it, they like it, enjoy it. We always get really good response afterwards and after they come back in maybe after a couple of years and say hello, keep in touch. We've met them … we've met ex-interns up in some of the exhibitions that they've put on. And its really nice to catch up with them and hear what they're doing out and about and most of them land good jobs, go to London, quite a lot go to London, and you just enhancing this community which is small community anyway, so you're just kind of growing that and you just got those connections and re-enforce that sense of a community aspects, everyone wins really.

Design Agency: You know the disadvantages is your ... it takes us out, it takes energy, it takes time out that week, you've gotta sit in and when they do coming a lot of them ... you know we have people that are purely illustration-based sometimes, you don't work on computers occasional and that's like what are we getting to get these people to do and how, so it's a lot of thinking, talking amongst us just to see what we're gonna do with person for a week or two weeks. And then they might be kind of semi-literal the computer but then not really know who do to stuff, so it's a constant year cake and we can do this, show him how to do things.

Design Agency: So you know, you're investing quite a bit of time and if you've got a lot on, that can be quite demanding. So that's what happens occasional times, not often and actually quite ... it's quite useful, we can set them a small aspect of their job and they generate some good stuff that's useful. Genuinely useful, we try not to make it sorts of [place-holder 00:28:38] kind of thing its just [crosstalk 00:28:40] exactly so it's like it's really, nothing less rewarding for both sides. But if you're under pressure, it's time and its you getting people up to speed, you're sort of educating someone as well as your day job, so it's kind of ...

Interviewer: It sounds like you invest a lot of time thinking about what they're gonna do while they're here -

Design Agency: Yeah, this is a planning stage definitely. We have a little point, we know if someone is coming in, we're like "Okay, so what's in store, for them or us in the coming week or couple of weeks".

Interviewer: Cool, that sounds really good. And not necessarily to do with your [Usher 00:29:28] but in terms of other agencies, what do you think about agencies that don't take on an intern just for the sake of it, and don't plan and think about what they're doing?

Design Agency: What do I think about agencies that don't plan -

Interviewer: Well sort of don't take on interns and they just have them there for the sake of it, I mean -

Design Agency: Well they can go an drift, they can go missing pretty quickly and that's ... what's the point really, so it just a bit ... it's easy because you can, you know, if you're busy you can just ignore them, I can image that happens you know, it's easy for it to happen. But you know, particularly in bigger agencies, and I've been in those places where someone is over the corner, and you just, "Who's that"? You sort of just don't say anything. It's all a bit sad, but that can happen but then everyone is losing aren't they so that the placement is not getting much out of it and neither is the agency, so it's all of a missed opportunity I think if you bothered doing it than, don't it half measured, just do it properly.

Interviewer: Cool and that was all!

Design Agency: That was it!!

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD-ASH

Interviewer: So how did this role come about and describe the process that it took?

Graduate: So I left uni and I had a couple of placements planned in London, although I didn't really want to go to London, initially. I come from quite locally to Cheltenham so I've always been countryside based. Then I went to Falmouth to uni so the idea of going to London was pretty intimidating.

Interviewer: Fair enough.

Graduate: So I thought I would try different things first. So I emailed here and they asked me to come in to do an internship with them. After about a month they asked me if I would stay a little bit longer, and stay a little bit longer, and then here I am.

Interviewer: So then did one day did they just say, "Would you like a Junior Designer role?"

Graduate: Yeah pretty much, and they did make it clear that ... because it's quite a small company that they don't always make a lot of money, so they were a bit nervous about taking someone else on, but they said that they didn't want me to go anywhere else.

Interviewer: Sure.

Graduate: Actually the day that I got offered the extension to my placement initially, two of my London internships fell through anyway. So I was feeling pretty crap about myself, and then that happened that picked it all back up again.

Interviewer: Great.

Graduate: So it all aligned. It was good.

Interviewer: So if you hadn't been offered the job you would have essentially taken an internship or a placement in a London agency?

Graduate: I would have carried on doing internships. I also applied to some in Bath, Bristol, different places like that.

Interviewer: To stay closer to home?

Graduate: Yeah, just wherever looked interesting really.

Interviewer: Sure, so you were looking more at the work rather than the location?

Graduate: Absolutely yeah. And something that really stood out to me about ASHA is the amount of social stuff they do. When I was at uni we did a sort of transitions model when we were looking at what we wanted to do when we left, and one of the things was social design, I had a real interest in it, but I also know how difficult it is to get into social design, because often they can't afford to pay people.

Interviewer: The affordability is [crosstalk 00:02:29].

Graduate: So it was a huge draw for me, and obviously I've fallen on my feet really in the sense that they do social stuff but to keep themselves afloat they also do-

Interviewer: Commercial work.

Graduate: Yeah commercial and that's interesting as well, to have both sides.

Interviewer: So you've got a particular interest in their approach to design?

Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	That's really cool. So can you just run me through how long you've been at ASHA. So when did you start your very first day?
Graduate:	It was the end of August in 2017.
Interviewer:	And then you were interning until ... approximately when did they offer you the job?
Graduate:	I think they must offered me a job about October time. I think in October yeah.
Interviewer:	Okay. Did you imagine that this would be the path you would take after graduation?
Graduate:	No. When I was in my final year at uni I thought I don't want to do design anymore. I wanted to work in a creative place, I thought about ... Loads of building work going on, it's quite dusty. I thought about working in the accounts side of it, and the organizational side of it, so I sort of looked into that a lot and went and chatted to some studios about that role. So I sort of thought that's where I would end up, and then it got to a couple of months after graduating and I was really missing being hands on and doing design, so I thought, "You know what I need to keep applying for design internships, I don't know what I do want to do." So actually in leaving uni I didn't think I would be doing design, but I am and I'm loving doing it, so I think I just needed that break.
Interviewer:	Or a clearer perspective?
Graduate:	Yeah that's right.
Interviewer:	Did you do any work placements while you were at university?
Graduate:	I did one, I applied to quite a few but I only got one, but I did one in Marlborough, so again not London it was fairly local. Yeah that was quite interesting, that was a small studio as well, but much smaller than this one, and I found that too small, but the idea of working in a big agency was quite intimidating.
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:04:52] somewhere in between.
Graduate:	Yeah, so ASHA is a good fit.
Interviewer:	That's great. And what were your expectations of this role when you started, even as an intern and then moving through to a junior designer?
Graduate:	I guess as an intern I don't think I was really looking for a job necessarily when I started interning because it was my first placement out of uni. I think I wanted experience to see whether I liked design, whether that's what I wanted to do. So I think it was that and then as it went on my expectation was to learn really, learn how they work, how it's different from what I've heard other people talking about. Yeah, I think that answers the question.
Interviewer:	As a junior designer how's it going?
Graduate:	Yeah it's good. I feel properly settled in, obviously interning and then going into the junior role there wasn't really a transition, it was very much the same, so it took a while to sort of stop feeling like the intern and start to feel like I was working here. But now yeah it's really settled in but I'm still learning every day.
Interviewer:	Yes I imagine so. How is ASHA helping support and develop your learning as a junior designer?

Graduate:	So I sit smack bang in between Scott and Simon so if one of them is busy I can prod the other one, so they're always there for me to ask questions to, as annoying as they are.
Interviewer:	Are they really open to that? [crosstalk 00:06:40] encouraging of-
Graduate:	Yeah they are, and for example if I've finished a piece of work and they have a look at it, and there are things done visually it's fine but there ... I've done it in a way that they wouldn't have done it and they'll then talk me through how they would have done it, not saying that my way's wrong but it just means that if they pick it up in the future, if I'd done it that way it would be-
Interviewer:	Different perspective and also-
Graduate:	So it's good, I'm sort of as well as learning stuff that I already knew, I'm sort of building almost different ways of doing things as well, and they'll take time out to talk me through that even if I don't ask as well.
Interviewer:	Sure, so it's almost building on the knowledge. How do you think that ... I'm not saying that they're doing anything wrong, that's not what I'm saying at all, but how would you ... how do you think that it could be developed more, how would you like to learn more, or develop more? What would be helpful to that?
Graduate:	I think if I took a more hands on approach, maybe if I felt more confident, not that I don't feel confident, I don't know how to explain it. I think if I pushed to be ... to have my ideas forward more, if I did that sort of thing more it maybe would be better but at that same time I think in such a small place it's also quite dangerous. And obviously because they've got so much experience it's ... you're always wanting to listen to what they're saying and it's hard to say.
Interviewer:	Do you feel that it's almost a relationship where you're taking and then as you get more experience you can always give more back, so it's kind of like a see-saw effect, or backwards and forwards and eventually you will be able to build up your voice almost?
Graduate:	Yeah absolutely.
Interviewer:	When you said I'm not quite ... I know you feel that you are confident but maybe it's confident in a certain way of dealing ... ?
Graduate:	Yeah absolutely.
Interviewer:	How has university prepared you for the design industry do you think?
Graduate:	We did a lot of sort of ... we had to write our own briefs and did a lot of self initiated projects, so that was quite good because it was all to you, your own time management. So that was good, although obviously my times pretty much managed for me here, I also know when I'm set things to do how long they're going to take, and I can work fast or slow. So that's the other they did, we always had lots of lengths in projects, so some that would last months, which is pretty unrealistic here, and some that were week long which at uni felt like they were too quick, but here it's very fast paced, but it doesn't feel like that now.
Interviewer:	So was it a shock at first, or do you think you were relatively expecting that?
Graduate:	I think I was expecting it, I think if I'd been planning, organizing the time myself I would have found it quite stressful but because I knew someone else was completely in control of it I knew it was going to be okay.
Interviewer:	There was someone guiding you through the process?

Graduate:	Yeah absolutely.
Interviewer:	So having someone else to help you out, not necessarily specifically help you, but someone overseeing the job and you're part of a team is helpful.
Graduate:	Yeah, because we also did some collaborative projects at uni, which was really good.
Interviewer:	Was with that industry or?
Graduate:	Yeah we did some things with industry and then also just in small groups as well, so that was really useful.
Interviewer:	So with other students?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	What skills have been most useful? Your own personal skills since you've been here?
Graduate:	I think ideas, being able to offer an ... sort of initially coming here, like an outside perspective on things because ... and not that there was a problem with it, but the guys have a very set way of working, which obviously works for them, but then I've had a different way of working and learning their way of working now, but I think it was beneficial me sort of doing it wrong sometimes, if you see what I mean?
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely yeah.
Graduate:	It's opened out a little bit.
Interviewer:	Just having a new perspective and a different way of looking at things. So have they all worked together for quite a long time as well?
Graduate:	Yeah I think the newest person here came about five years ago, so.
Interviewer:	So they're all very comfortable with each other. How have you supported your own development since you've been here in terms of skills, it could be design skills, personal skills?
Graduate:	I've moved to Cheltenham so that's sort a personal thing I guess, which is nice, I can work to walk and things like that which makes me feel more part of the sort of community as well.
Interviewer:	Can I ask when you were doing your internship were you traveling?
Graduate:	Yeah, I was getting the bus every day.
Interviewer:	Sure, so has that helped that you are living here?
Graduate:	Yeah, it makes the days a lot shorter, which is nice. And design wise being able to finish at half five, six o'clock, half six, whatever, put my stuff away and go home has been really good for me. At uni I would not do that.
Interviewer:	It was just a continuous roll of [crosstalk 00:12:54].
Graduate:	Absolutely so I fell out of love with it, but being able to stop and start again has really made me appreciate it again, so I've helped myself in making myself-
Interviewer:	Boundaries.

Graduate:	Yeah absolutely.
Interviewer:	Cool. So although it's a job you're enjoying it, because it's almost a contained thing rather than [crosstalk 00:13:14]. And does that mean that you can do other things that you enjoy outside of work?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Can you tell me a major positive since you've been here?
Graduate:	Major positive, I don't really know, it's all just been pretty good.
Interviewer:	Is there a job that you worked on that you ... sometimes when you think to yourself that was really good. Or even internally where you thought I really-
Graduate:	Well we've done quite a bit of social stuff since I got here and one of the first proper projects I worked on was the St Martin in the Fields and Radio 4 Christmas Appeal group, which I hadn't heard of before coming here, but my Aunt had heard of it so that was all that mattered.
Interviewer:	Gives you some context.
Graduate:	But we had the figures through today and we've made more ... or they've made more this year, more donations that any other year, so that's really good, and to feel that I was a part of that and helped that happen was really good. And last year was their 90th year so that was going to be their big one-
Interviewer:	Significant.
Graduate:	... and we beat that one.
Interviewer:	So obviously the things that you mentioned that are quite dear to you like the social stuff that obviously does resonate a little bit more to you than the other, well I'm not saying over top but that has been a positive thing that you get to work on, that you like?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And has there ... this is the flip side, had there been a point where you've thought I'm not quite sure what to do here, it's almost ... has there been any mistakes, or moments where you felt out of your depth and you might need some help, and how have you dealt with that?
Graduate:	I remember when I was interning here, I had a really good week and then the second week I came and I think because I'd had a good week I had very high expectations. I spent a day and I felt like I got absolutely nowhere, spent a day just ideas, ideas, ideas and I went home and I was like I don't want to do this. I just felt ... I hadn't even been knocked down or anything like that, it has just been it's not quite there, keep working on it, and I just thought I've spent all day on this I'm never going to get there, got in in the morning, carried on and it was absolutely fine, but honestly I went home and I thought, "No this is why I don't want to do design."
Interviewer:	So there was an element of self doubt at that point in time?
Graduate:	Yeah I think so.
Interviewer:	What made you pull through it?
Graduate:	I think ... well I remember coming in and Scott saying, "I had an idea last night." I think he'd seen that I'd been hitting my head against a wall all day, and so being a

team you're all in it together which is really nice. So whereas at uni I would have gone home, felt bad about myself, come back the next day and not made any progress again because I'd still be feeling sorry for myself, there was someone there to pick it up.

Interviewer: Help you pull yourself out [crosstalk 00:16:42]. And ... that questions not relevant. So I know you did an internship and what do you see ... and this is not specific to you it's almost as a general idea for design graduates, what do you see as advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates?

Graduate: I think it's really important to do, and I almost wish I'd done more, but then I wouldn't have wanted to miss out on working here so swings and roundabouts. Because you ... well I guess it depends on the person, but for me the place I was working in was important as the work they were doing and the work I'd be doing. Also a website isn't a true reflection of a place and the people. I went and chatted to a couple of agencies and studios and really loved the look of their work, went to talk to them and thought that we didn't get on really, and I think that's hugely important if you're going to be spending most of your day with these people. So I think it is, as an exploration of what you like, where you want to work, all that sort of thing, but also who you want to work with.

Interviewer: Yeah definitely and that's personality and perspective.

Graduate: And also size of the place, how small, how big, how much freedom you get as well is quite important, some people really don't want that much freedom in their work, they want to be told what to do and to do it, other people don't like being tied down. So it is everyone's different and so is every studio so it's really important.

Interviewer: Just actually coming back to something you said earlier which was what you quite like is someone at the moment giving you almost a timeline and things, do you feel that's something where you like it now that you feel you can grow and start to have more ownership over time and develop your, I guess as you become more experienced you'd be able to take on bigger projects and be involved with that?

Graduate: Yeah so I guess that time management bit is always going to be there because of how the studio works and Hannah organizes what we do every week and she's in contact with the clients, so without her we'd all fall apart. But yes it's interesting hearing her ask Scott and Simon things, like, "How longs this going to take you?" When she's doing the billing and things like that, which she'd bill at per time and who's doing it, and they'll be able to say, "Oh that will be an hour, that will be two hours." Whereas I'd think, "Probably a whole day."

Interviewer: The experiences will come naturally and you'll learn to gauge that.

Graduate: Yeah, so there'll always be this higher power doing the times.

Interviewer: But you'd like to eventually be able to figure ... be able to start having that conversation directly?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: How do you see yourself progressing in the near future? You mentioned that you work with Scott and Simon, and do you work solely on jobs with them, or are you getting to work on things on your own, or work with ... present to clients?

Graduate: At the moment I'm working with them, so recently I've been working almost solely with Simon on a project. We all start off together and then Scott and Simon will generally take ownership of it, so that they don't have to do everything all the time. So yeah Simon and I are doing this project together, but on other occasions I've done things with Scott. I don't think at the moment I feel confident to do things by myself. Or if I did I would be poking them every two minutes so it's probably

	better to have someone work on it with me, but there will be point where I'd be going off and doing that.
Interviewer:	Cool. Okay, so that was all of the questions. There is one more actually, it's just a general one, what are your fellow graduates, that you know of, doing now? Are they-
Graduate:	So most of them are London based. One of my friends is doing a graduate scheme at BT Sport in the design department. Another one who also is really interested in social design but she freelances, but she's done it quite well she had all her contacts before she left uni, so she's freelancing but working in their offices, and she sort of has six set clients. [crosstalk 00:21:39]. Other people have got jobs in London, or interning in London, so mostly London based.

INTERVIEW TWO: DA-ASH

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:00:00]. Okay. So, how has Lizzie been going since we last talked?

Design Agency: Doing very well, yeah, absolutely flying along. Yeah, no worries at all. It's all good. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, business as usual.

Design Agency: Had a very busy spell, so we've all been under quite a lot of pressure, and she's been mucking in and very much part of everything that's happened, so it's been really good, yeah.

Interviewer: Good.

Design Agency: Good.

Interviewer: And so, I take it, then, that all your expectations of Lizzie and her role are being met from that-

Design Agency: Yeah, very much so, I think. The things we talked about last time are sort of continuing on the curve. I think, with the volume of work that's happening, she's been stretched. We've all been stretched. I think it's been a good hardworking spell, and she's come through with all of it. So, yeah, it's been good.

Interviewer: Great. Cool. What type of support is Lizzie getting when it gets really busy or when, I guess, just day-to-day work is happening?

Design Agency: Well, I think she's got an eye. We just take care to make sure she's happy with the work, like that she's got the stuff she's been given to do and those regular checkpoints and points where she can have a view, have a say, and get feedback on both sides. So, we're just very careful to manage that. As the workflow increases, we are, as far as possible, trying to get ourselves the time to all get together, talk any issues through, and make sure everyone's happy with what's going on, in terms of workload and the work that we're doing and the quality and everything else. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, there's kind of a [crosstalk 00:02:11] process that goes on where you're checking in, checking in, getting feedback.

Design Agency: Yeah, I think, on a higher managerial note, MarkSteen had a coffee with her around the corner. We've all had a little bit of a chat with MarkSteen and in terms of our wider feelings and views about what we're doing, so she's been a part of that, as well, so that's over and above the day-to-day stuff that's struck an iron bolt with her with ...

Interviewer: Cool. How's Lizzie been supporting her own development through, say, this busy time or as things get a bit hectic and the workload is increased?

Design Agency: Well, I think she is just ... the application and the enthusiasm is still there. She's been keen to help out in any aspect, and I think, through that, it's helped to develop all the range of skills that she's been developing, so it's sort of just continued on that curve, I think. She brought herself to it and then got out from it what she's put in and that kind of thing. She's not someone that holds back and waits to be given stuff. She's in there all the time, wants to be part of things, so it's good.

Interviewer: That's great.

Design Agency:	Yeah, very much an integral part of the process and the team and everything.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	She mentioned that when jobs are approached, it's very much of a team approach, and the feedback comes in as a team, and she quite likes that, but does anyone talk to her individually about her contribution to the team and how that possibly could be ... it could either be an individual achievement or, when things might not go to plan, how she could get back on track with things like that?
Design Agency:	Not really, no. We haven't had those sorts of discussions, like one-to-one type thing. It's always part of the team discussion, I think, so yeah.
Interviewer:	Okay. Cool.
Design Agency:	Marxton, as I say, had an individual chat with her. That was an opportunity to feedback, because of the management structure, I think she's more likely to report to Marxton than us on an individual level, yeah.
Interviewer:	That makes sense. Has something happened, since I last talked ... Has something happened that Lizzie's done which you've thought that was really cool, that you were really good, or you made a really great design choice there or something positive since we last talked that you've really noticed that Lizzie has achieved or done?
Design Agency:	Yeah. I think she did really well on just a day ... we had a pressured day to just create some icons for a company that are doing pushchairs and buggies. We're potentially looking at their brand, and she had to do some quite quick work, which is illustrative, and she pulled it out of the bag really quickly. I was working with her one-to-one on that, so that's [inaudible 00:06:09] and I had my own bit of work to do, and she was handing quite a large chunk of this other bit of work with my input and direction, I guess. She just did really well. She just covered it really well and got what we needed, got where we needed to get in a short space of time, so that sense of a safe pair of hands was really good.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Not only that, but no little flair in the illustrative element. Again, another string to her bow sort of thing. So, it was good, because we were down to two people, or two people on that little job that we had to turn around quite quickly, and [inaudible 00:07:02] both solid and dependable. Good. It's just-
Interviewer:	Someone you can trust and you feel-
Design Agency:	You can trust, who's got your back, who will take the feedback, work with it, and just real easy.
Interviewer:	Cool. That's really good.
Design Agency:	That was great.
Interviewer:	Cool. Without being negative, has there been any moments where you've possibly had to get Lizzie back on track, and how would you do that?
Design Agency:	Yeah. It was a project where we were all generating marks, like [inaudible 00:07:47] types, and I think just hers weren't coming to anything, really, wasn't really pushing it, exploring it much. So, it got a bit parked, I suppose.

	So, it was just one of those days where it's misfiring, I suppose, but it was not an issue in terms of the wider job, because we'd come off other rigs and things like that, but it was slightly unusual, just that it didn't really go far.
Interviewer:	Do you think, at her level, you would just expect these type of things to happen anyway, so you really don't give it too much of a thought, unless it started happening recently?
Design Agency:	The thing is it's just one of those moments where you kinda stop and think, for her level, or ... at times, it's just like expectations are ... well, you just have to slightly measure your expectations or reign them in or just make an allowance to a certain point. It wasn't really something that mattered, but it was just like, "Okay, we've hit the limit there, and perhaps it's just too much at the moment."
Interviewer:	Yeah. Is there any point at that time where maybe you would file that thought and perhaps walk her through, possibly, at a later stage, why they didn't work so well, and maybe look at how the job did turn out and reflect on what maybe was needed, so that she could understand why?
Design Agency:	Yeah, and, to be honest, going back to your earlier point about one-to-one feedback, we do do that, and I have done that in the past where I've taken her through, for example, an element, some of the software, some of the capabilities of the software and shortcuts and just ways of working. We've just had a little session where I've taken her through how to manage a document or something like that, and it's absolutely fine. So, I think it's one of those situations where we would be quite happy to ... either myself or Scott. In that sort of space, not the two of us, because it's too-
Interviewer:	Heavy, yeah.
Design Agency:	Heavy, yeah, so in a gentle way, in a nice way, in a perfectly natural way, just going over a few points or-
Interviewer:	Yeah, like in quite a-
Design Agency:	Make some suggestions, you know. [crosstalk 00:10:31].
Interviewer:	Yeah, just a really relaxing way.
Design Agency:	That is a thing we do.
Interviewer:	Yeah, it doesn't need to be too intense.
Design Agency:	No, [crosstalk 00:10:39] come into the boardroom. It's just a sit next to your computer kinda thing, just really a [crosstalk 00:10:47].
Interviewer:	Almost treat it like trips and a casual kind of chat. Yeah, no, definitely.
Design Agency:	Yeah, there's really nothing. There's never any point where it gets to any sort of formal, heavy degree. It's always very loose and informal and friendly, I hope.
Interviewer:	Cool. I think you're fine.
Design Agency:	That's the way I see it.
Interviewer:	I don't think she's mentioned anything bad. So, do you think that that's almost playing ... well, as a senior to her and someone with more experience, is slightly mentoring her through the moments, because it's not, as you say, formal or kind of heavy or anything like that. It's just-

Design Agency:	Yeah. [crosstalk 00:11:31]. Firstly, I have that sense that I'm a mentor for her, and there are others in the company, but that's the way I see what I can give to her definitely [inaudible 00:11:45].
Interviewer:	Cool. Yeah.
Design Agency:	Some of the benefit, whatever experience I've got, I could share that. We all benefit from that. There are points where we teach and points where we kind of steer, definitely.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	So, that's actually covered my next question, which was: how have you helped her learn and develop during these experiences? Which is what we've just really covered, but how do you see her role developing further? And I don't mean in terms of just job title, but how you would expect and how you could help her develop further.
Design Agency:	Well, I think talked briefly with Marxton about it, parts of the review that I had, but I think as she gets more experience, it's handing over a little bit more responsibility on jobs to her, so she's got responsibility of seeing stuff through, working with project management to just handle elements of jobs as we go forward, which I think she should be able to do soon enough, under our guidance and with [inaudible 00:13:04] I think. Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yeah, and would you tend to walk her through this beforehand and outline expectations and things?
Design Agency:	Yeah, I think we'd sort of [crosstalk 00:13:15] the process, "This is what happens, and then, away you go, you can have a go, and just tell us when something is ready. We'll check it for you and make sure everyone's happy. You're in control of that to a certain point." So, yeah, that's the sort of thing, I think, we'll look to develop with her.
Interviewer:	Yeah. If you could reflect on when Lizzie started with you and to now, how do you feel her learning and development has gone, and how do you feel her learning's mostly happened, like in what way has her learning happened?
Design Agency:	On the job, definitely, in at the deep end or in at the median end and then exploring to the deep end. With some strong guidance, I think, hopefully, she hasn't felt alone at any point or isolated. I think it's very much she's had to operate in part of a small team. She's been an integral part of that, and she's had mentoring both sides from Scott and I, and she's getting a very rounded sense of what design and branding's all about, because we've more and more taken on the strategic side of things, so we've done a lot of brainstorms where it's around the brand narrative, the strategy, the positioning, so she's been involved in that, and I don't think she would've maybe felt she would've got involved with that as a junior just starting out. So, it's from the very, very core early stage through to creating finished artwork implementation [inaudible 00:15:19].
Interviewer:	Yeah, so she's covering a lot of bases there.
Design Agency:	[crosstalk 00:15:20]. Yeah, I think in a small company that deals with large clients, you're gonna get that, so something she would've experienced, which she's getting a lot of experience early.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Yeah.

Interviewer:	Cool. Sorry. What are your goals and aims for Lizzie's future? It doesn't necessarily need to be long-term. It could be short-term, as well, within the next year.
Design Agency:	Well, just to keep her on that curve, I think to develop her sense of strategy and narrative will be really good, the feeling that what you do as a designer has to have an end point. It's kind of a means to an end, so it has to be a piece of communication rather than just a pretty picture, and that's a long process, a very deep process that needs thinking at every level. I think just to help her become that more rounded communicator, I suppose. She's quite good with language and things like that, I've noticed, so I think that's really helpful.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Okay. Getting away from Lizzie and just thinking about the design industry as a whole, do you feel that they have a responsibility to graduates at this stage of their career?
Design Agency:	They should do, because you're creating the future seniors and the future middleweights, the future creative directors, so if you want a creative industry to be in good hands, I would hope you're naturally pass on your knowledge and experience to the next generation, so that they can not just take that experience, but improve and make things better. Yeah, I think the industry should have that responsibility, to build a better generation coming out the [crosstalk 00:17:51].
Interviewer:	Cool. Is there anything else that you wanted to mention or say about Lizzie that we might not have covered that you found interesting or might be of interest about her learning and development?
Design Agency:	No, I don't know. I've just quite liked the way she's sort of a natural person. She's not design-obsessive. She doesn't live and breathe it or talk about it all the time. That's what we like [crosstalk 00:18:30].
Interviewer:	A lot of people say that.
Design Agency:	[crosstalk 00:18:33] well-rounded person, a bit more balanced.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Yeah, that's why she fits.
Interviewer:	Yeah. That's quite funny, not because of what you said, but because lots of people say it, as well. Yeah.
Design Agency:	Yeah, I think it gets very tiring, if you're just living, breathing, talking it all the time. The older I get, I just feel there's a bit more things out there than design, and, actually, a lot of inspiration I get is from completely unconnected things, so I think ... Yeah, that's a good aspect of her. It's great.
Interviewer:	Cool. Okay. Well, it sounds like everything's going really well, and she's meeting your expectations, and it's a positive experience.
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yeah. That's all the questions that I have for ... yeah, that's the whole entire thing, really.
Design Agency:	Is it? Is that-
Interviewer:	Yeah, it is. That's it.

Design Agency: [crosstalk 00:19:34] other points.

Interviewer: Huh?

Design Agency: Is that the end of-

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD-ASH

Interviewer: Cool. So are you all ready for interview two, or the final interview?

Graduate: All ready, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah cool. So basically it's just ... basically an extension of what we already talked about, so it's not really going to divert much from the previous chat. So how has everything been going since I last talked to you?

Interviewer: Oh sorry, your speaker is on mute I think. Suddenly.

Graduate: Can you hear me now?

Interviewer: Yes I can. It's all cool, you know what I haven't used Skype for so long. Oh you're back on mute again.

Interviewer: I can hear you, it's just when you talk there's no sound coming through.

Graduate: That's not good.

Interviewer: Oh I can hear you now, it's fine.

Graduate: Just let me know if you need me to repeat anything.

Interviewer: Cool, okay. So how's everything going since I last talked to you?

Graduate: Yes, it's been really good, sort of same old.

Interviewer: Yeah, just more of the same?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. And how do you think your expectations of the role and moving forward, are they being met as well?

Graduate: Yeah, I think so, yes. I don't know.

Interviewer: No, it's fine, you can just say what you feel.

Graduate: [inaudible 00:01:33].

Interviewer: And has the role developed any further, or have you got any plans for the role, kind of, developing any further?

Graduate: I don't think I do at the moment, to be honest, it's more just still learning, still getting to grips with the real industry really.

Interviewer: Yeah, so essentially you're happy at the rate you're learning, and you're not expecting to suddenly go flying upwards or anything, you would rather slowly and steadily build your [crosstalk 00:02:09]?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. How has your learning and development been going, is it the same as last time, or have you ... ?

Graduate:	We've had pretty much the same, we've had sort of some big deadlines and things like that, and some really short term projects we had to do, so that was difficult but obviously it was good to do as well.
Interviewer:	Yeah, yeah, it's the type of thing I guess you learn from isn't it?
Graduate:	That's right, so that was pretty good, and sort of understanding you can't, when you've got that sort of timescale, you can't push everything, you can't look at everything. You do have to be a little bit restrictive in your design and things like that because you have got deadlines to meet, but ...
Interviewer:	Sure, so you're learning to juggle or learning to approach new jobs, or bigger jobs, or different types of jobs, in ways that are appropriate for that response basically?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Okay, and so each time that happens that's a new experience and you're learning from it?
Graduate:	Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.
Interviewer:	And how is Simon, and sorry I've forgotten?
Graduate:	Scott.
Interviewer:	Scott. How are they supporting and helping you through this process?
Graduate:	Well just ... I think just treating me as one of the team that's just sort of we're all in it together really. Which is really nice, that's good.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Graduate:	I mean obviously if I ask questions they'll always try and help me out, give me answers, teach me things.
Interviewer:	So the same level of support and development is in place as last time, and there's nothing radically different, actually, it's just more of the same?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And have you done anything else yourself, personally, to help you deal with new experiences and learning in the time, or are you also approaching everything as a same old, same old, situation?
Graduate:	I think it is still same old, same old, really. I think it's just as well as sort of learning more, the more I go along, I'm also picking things up without realizing. So even if it's like checking emails, whatever, we always get designers or photographers sending stuff through, so that way I'm building up a sort of catalogue in my own mind as well. So without realizing that I'm actually doing anything, I am just sort of absorbing everything, sort of thing.
Interviewer:	Sure, and of course if you're doing that, that just happens naturally as you go.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Do you feel that you're happy with that way of learning, or would you like to do any other ways of learning?
Graduate:	At the moment I'm happy with that kind of learning.

Interviewer:	Cool. And has something happened since I last talked to you in the workplace, or in your work, that made you think, "I did that really well. That was a really positive experience for me." Or something that you felt really good about in your work?
Graduate:	Don't really know to be honest.
Interviewer:	I've put you on the spot.
Graduate:	It's hard to say, every now and again there's ... because everyone's quite celebratory here anyway. We do everything as a team, it's never really a proper singling out, it's all this is what we've achieved together, which I really like anyway. So I guess fairly regularly you're told your doing great work whether that's ... you never know whether that's individually or just how you work as part of the team I guess.
Interviewer:	Is there anything that you've achieved as part of a team, or that you've felt particularly proud of when that's happened?
Graduate:	Yeah, well we had this very tight deadline and I was really proud of us that we managed to do that, and actually I think it's a project that we're all quite proud of as well, especially in the couple of days we had to do it.
Interviewer:	So it's almost responding to challenges that just happen on a day to day basis that when things go well you respond happily and positively to it, and that's a good thing?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Has there been anything that's happened where you've just thought, "Oh, that didn't turn out as well as I thought it did." Or there was a moment where you thought, "I may have been able to do better at that." Or been a bit hard on yourself?
Graduate:	I think ... we started having placements in again, and having them in I think I almost put myself down a peg again. I almost feel like being back on placement and I think I've lost a bit of confidence but that's sort of all in my head, if you know what I mean, it's not true. But I think that I've sort of ... It's good in a way, it is good, but I've got to remember that I can do it and I have been doing it and yeah.
Interviewer:	So when the placements come in do you feel that ... internally sometimes you feel that I could do better, they're doing really well or something? Or do you feel that-
Graduate:	Yeah a part of that. I mean a couple have just blown my mind they're amazing [inaudible 00:08:06] being that good.
Interviewer:	I'm sure it's not true, but I know what you ... So basically seeing other people work makes you go, "Oh, they're really good at that. They're really good at that." And probably in your own head it's highlighting areas that perhaps that you're not as strong as, or I'm sure they're looking at you thinking, "You must be amazing to get the job." It's like a swap of emotions.
Graduate:	That's right yeah.
Interviewer:	So okay, actually seeing other people work makes you sometimes go ... and do you identify with certain things that doing that makes you feel like that, or is just ...?
Graduate:	I don't think so, no not anything in particular.

Interviewer:	Okay, cool. How do you feel about the way that you are learning and developing skills on the job as well, so do you feel ... we've lightly touched it on but would you like to learn and develop other skills in the workplace, that you'd like help with?
Graduate:	Yeah, loads.
Interviewer:	How realistic do you think it would be?
Graduate:	I think ... I know what a personal goal for me I think is photography. I don't think I've been very good at photography and it's something that quite a few of the guys here are very passionate about, and so I think I could really learn a lot from them. Maybe that's something I need to push, and try and do.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	But yeah I think being able to take a really good photograph is a huge skill, and a really positive thing, and I just can't do it. I can see exactly what I want to take a picture of but it never comes [crosstalk 00:09:57].
Interviewer:	It doesn't come out like that in reality. So do you think that's something that you're thinking about in the long term and that you'd develop yourself, or you would like support from the workplace to do that? Or do you think-
Graduate:	Both to be honest. I think it's something that I should start investing time in to. I realized that I was crap to be honest, [crosstalk 00:10:24]. I honestly think if I asked it would happen, they would give me pointers and things, but I guess the opportunity where it's been necessary hasn't come up, and if it did then it would be a kick in the butt for all of us I think to, you know, make something happen.
Interviewer:	Cool, so sometimes [crosstalk 00:10:47] these types of things just happen when you're free or ready to do it, or approach it, and it kind of takes a back seat because other things are more important in the meantime?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Okay. Is there anything that you would like to suggest, improve or change about the way you learn within the workplace?
Graduate:	To be honest I don't think so. I think I'm learning a lot without really realizing it. I think that's a really good way of doing it. But I also know that if I felt like I hadn't learnt something or if I wanted help with something I could ask and it would sort of talked to me, so that's good as well. But I know it happens both ways.
Interviewer:	Sure, definitely. What skills have been turning out to be really useful to you, since I last talked to you. Has there been any particular stand out skills that you've got that have been noticed, or that you've found that has been really helpful to your job?
Graduate:	To be honest just getting faster on the software, on programs, and I think even just thinking differently. Just the little things like that, that just speed up jobs, and make us click a bit more as a team. I'm sort of thinking in similar ways to them now, things like that. I think that's almost the best thing really.
Interviewer:	So it's almost like when people say, "Oh, as a team, or at this workplace, or design agency, we call approach things this." You're becoming more in tuned with that, and that's actually I really helpful thing because you start as a team, more of a well oiled machine together.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	So it's actually it's almost developing an ASHA kind of ethos to your work?

Graduate:	Yeah, that's a really good way of putting it, yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. What are your goals and aims for the future, and I don't mean kind of long term and personal, I'm talking about so even within the next three to six months, or a year within your role that you're undertaking now. How would you like to see that develop, and do you have any specific things that you want to happen in that time?
Graduate:	To be honest I think I'd like to just be ... a guess this is a personal goal, but be more confident in the knowledge that I can do things. I'm sort of getting there I think, but I think yeah a confidence in talking through ideas with clients, and things like that as well would be really good.
Interviewer:	When you say more confident is that mostly with clients in design ideas and how you think about design, or is it also included in more confident within the team, or do you feel that you are already quite confident within your own team network?
Graduate:	I think it is both, I'm definitely more confident in the team than I am presenting to clients or things like that. I think it is a mix of both, but mainly [crosstalk 00:14:25].
Interviewer:	So it's just overall feeling more comfortable, and essentially since I last talked to you not much time as taken place in the greatest scheme of things and I guess relatively you're still only ... Once you've been there a year I guess it probably would be slightly different wouldn't it?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Since we last talked have you thought about what we talked about and how you're learning could or should take place in your early career, or has it not come up at all?
Graduate:	Yeah it has, I have thought about it. I guess I've reflected on it more that sort of being proactive or thought about what I could do differently, but more sort of reflected on how ... and I know we get told it all the time at uni, you're not prepared for it until you're in it, that sort of thing. Reflecting really on how true that is and how you can just learn so much from just being in an environment as well. Like I said I've sort of picked up the ASHA way, and you can't predict what that's going to be when you're not in the environment so.
Interviewer:	Yeah, once you're there it's a whole different thing isn't it?
Interviewer:	Do you think that the design industry have a responsibility to recent graduates entering the design industry as a general idea?
Graduate:	I think so. I think it is good to have a fresh mind and different ways of thinking, because although I'm sort of getting onto the same thinking level as the guys I do think that sometimes that they do say very similar things, and do very similar things, and I think that's five, six years working together. So I think it is good to sort of interrupt it and break the mold, which is why interning is good because it allows that. But then I also do think that when you become a junior you do start to build relationships as well and also can change the balance.
Interviewer:	Yeah, cool. Do you have any advice for graduates coming up who are going to be leaving university and are looking for jobs? [crosstalk 00:17:04]
Graduate:	I think try anything that you have considered doing. For example, when I left I thought I wanted to do strategy rather than design and I went and investigated it and thought actually this isn't for me, I think. At least in my case uni doesn't put you off a degree but there's a lot of stress towards the end so you fall out of love with it a bit. So just try, do try everything.
Interviewer:	And be open I guess?

Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool and that is that. That's it. So yeah that's all the questions I have and it would great to talk to Simon afterwards if he's free. But thank you so much for taking part, there won't be a third interview, two's enough. I think I already mentioned that to Simon anyway but yeah I really appreciate the time and effort that you've taken out to answer my questions. [crosstalk 00:18:04].
Interviewer:	Okay. Cool.
Graduate:	Alright, I'll go and fetch Simon.
Interviewer:	Thanks so much, bye Lizzie.

INTERVIEW ONE: DA-AW

Interviewer: I guess the questions I'm going to ask, again, just refer to junior designers in general, or when I'm talking about that I'm talking about Callum and Josh, in particularly.

Interviewer: How did you find Callum and Josh, and how did the roles come to fruition, basically?

Design Agency: Both actually came through my wife, who's a teacher. She teaches part-time-

Interviewer: Very handy.

Design Agency: ...visiting lecturer. So she was at Winchester, where Callum was. That would've been two years ago, I think, she finished there. She was doing, I think, a day a week at the time, and then she moved to Kingston the year after that. And she's still there doing two days a week. It's been a really good way to reconnect with that graduate level.

Design Agency: Because we've had interns in the past. Bit of context, so we were three partners before. Myself, Paul, who is next door, and Pete, who's left two years ago. Pete was in charge of the recruitment side of things. Since he's left we've had a rethink of how we're doing things, particularly getting more people in at junior level and-

Interviewer: Building up.

Design Agency: ...building up their skill sets. Because we've had a couple of more senior designers that we've hired that haven't worked out. Because what we do here is quite a specific set of skills. We were struggling to find people with those skills already, so it seemed like a more logical thing to actually get people in early, and it's proved definitely a success.

Interviewer: Oh, good.

Design Agency: Both via connections with colleges. And they both came and did, did Josh do an internship? I think Josh maybe just came in-

Interviewer: You said he did, but it was short.

Design Agency: They would've both been four or six weeks, I think. Internships. They would've been paid internships, and then-

Interviewer: Do you make that decision fairly quickly, that if they work out that they move through-

Design Agency: Yeah, ideally, we would know pretty quick.

Interviewer: How are both of them going? Probably, if we could just concentrate on maybe Josh first. How's he going since he started? Is everything going as you imagined?

Design Agency: Yeah, they're both brilliant. Can't say enough good things. They particularly work well as a team, I think, since Josh has started. They've said that.

Interviewer: You know they mentioned it.

Design Agency: Initially, Callum started, I think it was in last January. Initially he was very junior compared to everybody else. Actually, a lot younger than everybody else in years, as well. And I think since Josh started they-

Interviewer: Jelled together.

Design Agency: ...jelled, definitely. And also, a bit of context, our lead designer, Briony, is on maternity leave. She left last summer, and she had a lot of complications with her twins being premature and stuff. All okay, but she-

Interviewer: Has taken longer...

Design Agency: ...left earlier than planned, about three months earlier than planned. So we haven't replaced her either. And we actually did have someone who came in for a few months and didn't work out.

Interviewer: So the two guys had to [crosstalk 00:03:25] step up.

Design Agency: They pretty much have stepped up. So it's basically me and them as a design team at the moment, and freelancers. Pretty steep learning curve. I'm not sure I answered your original question.

Interviewer: Oh, no, that's good. How are your expectations being met, which it sounds like, although it wasn't quite how you planned it to go-

Design Agency: No, they've been extremely [crosstalk 00:03:47]

Interviewer: ...the reaction to it has been-

Design Agency: Yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: ...exceptional, and that everything's actually worked out just fine.

Design Agency: It's definitely changed the way, I think, I'm much more thinking more about bringing people on at a graduate level-

Interviewer: So it's been a positive experience.

Design Agency: ...and not getting people ... not getting so much ... We've had senior people on significantly more money come in and just haven't had it. I don't know whether they're too ingrained in the industry as it was, or whether they ... I don't know, for whatever reason, we've had a few things that haven't worked out.

Interviewer: But this process over the last year has almost made you rethink how you would approach...

Design Agency: Yeah. I think we still do need to recruit in the middle as well, but-

Interviewer: It still needs to be a spread along-

Design Agency: I think what these two have given us is confidence that you can be a graduate and you can be ... You're basically good enough if you're willing to learn. They've both learned a lot, I think. And Josh seems to have learned ... He's always asking questions as well-

Interviewer: Oh, that's really good.

Design Agency: ...which is useful. I think that there's a couple of things that Pete leaving a couple of years ago and changing the way we've done things. I think it was a long time before Callum started, but before Callum started we had someone in who came via our lead designer, and he just didn't work out. It just made us stop and think that you don't necessarily need someone with 10 years' experience, you just need someone with the right approach and set of skills. It's very much a way of thinking, I think, problem-solving, those sorts of things.

Interviewer: That makes sense.

Design Agency: Skills can follow.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely.

Design Agency: You can learn on the job.

Interviewer: How are you, at the agency, helping support and develop both Callum and Josh as well. You've mentioned that they obviously had a bit of a baptism of fire, but how are you supporting them through this process?

Design Agency: They're both I think specifically hands on in the studio, making sure that they're getting the support they need, giving them ownership of things when the time's appropriate for it. Being very much supporting them where it's needed as well. They're beginning to look at courses and things that they'd like to take via Tom, who's the operation manager who you met. [inaudible 00:06:27] met him.

Design Agency: So we'd like to do more of that. There's also, Josh has got a side project that he's been doing.

Interviewer: Yeah, you mentioned.

Design Agency: We talked about that - Charlie

Interviewer: Yup.

Design Agency: Initially he was working a four-day week, and we kept that going. And we'd like to support him on that if he wants to do that in future. Callum's going back to Winchester to do some teaching as well, next Friday, I think that is.

Design Agency: We could probably be doing more, but I think the intention is to do more, but it's very much what do you need, and giving them the reins to ... they're very proactive, they don't need a lot of pushing in that direction. There's a couple of things they've self-initiated as well, which is good. And I think it's just allowing them to do that, giving them the freedom to do that. As well as, there are projects that come in where it's grunt work for a good few weeks, so it's important to mix that up with-

Interviewer: Yeah, to keep it-

Design Agency: ...different projects-

Interviewer: ...everyone feeling enthusiastic about it. So what type of ... you mentioned the external course. What type of course would that be? Is it software-based, or is it-

Design Agency: The one that was mentioned, I think, was a coding course, I think.

Interviewer: So yeah, it's a practical-

Design Agency: Yeah. Because they're both designers, but they're both hands-on with code. We've got developers who do all the serious development work, but they've worked on a couple of things, actually, together with-

Interviewer: But they've got cross-over skills [crosstalk 00:08:01]

Design Agency: ...coding and stuff, so I think it's quite useful for them as designers to learn how to code.

Interviewer: So you've just got a perspective from both sides and you can understand what's going on.

Design Agency: I think there's also things like doing the odd bit of video work, and I've been able to show them a few things. Things like After Effects Premiere, that kind of stuff that, I don't do it very much anymore, but-

Interviewer: No, I don't know. I don't even think I've got it on my computer anymore. How have, you've mentioned it slightly, but how have the two guys developed their own learning since they've been here. So, their own development and learning.

Design Agency: How do you mean? How've they-

Interviewer: Self-initiated, yeah. How are they, obviously-

Design Agency: It's just that they both have a lot of initiative, so they're keen to learn the way we do things now, but are very confident putting ideas forward as well. We do things like, what we try and encourage across the studio, is to open up lines of discussion around what sort of work we wanna be doing. We have a thing, book of the week, where everybody picks a book, and not necessarily a design-related book, but something that generally a point of reference or something we might wanna pursue. It might be music-based or architectural, language, or whatever.

Interviewer: Is this a weekly thing?

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: So it's like a design team meeting type of thing, or-

Design Agency: The book of the week is, literally, we buy a book. Everybody gets a turn, and then, you'll see it on the wall there. Josh's was last week. It was Pink Floyd. But we're also trying to, what we are ... We recently had a meeting where we all put down dream clients and categorized them all into which sort of work that we want to be doing. What kinds of things do we want to be following. And so I think Callum put down sport. But there were lots of ... It was a democratic look at what sort of projects we wanna be doing.

Interviewer: So you think and talk beyond what's happening currently, and it's beyond just what's happening now in the studio. You're thinking-

Design Agency: Yeah. And there's also R&D, so we do, roughly, 20% of our time is R&D work. We can get tax relief on it, and we also have funding from Innovate UK to do R&D. So that's another area where we're actively inviting Josh, Callum and everybody to contribute ideas to, what do you wanna do, what sort of project would you like to get your teeth into.

Interviewer: That sounds good.

Design Agency: That's a good way of escaping project work for a bit. Because project work is where you learn the craft, I think, quite quickly. As I was saying earlier, it's in at the deep end.

Interviewer: And you want to open your mind and keep creative [crosstalk 00:10:56]-

Design Agency: Need to balance that with ... Yeah, we've tried to keep a culture which actually reflects what it was like at college, where you're sharing ideas and you stick things on the wall, and you're opening ... You're looking outside of the industry very much.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. So it's not just a funnel that you're in constantly.

Interviewer: In terms of their skill sets, what have they come with to applied works that have been really useful?

Design Agency: That's a good question. I think it's very much an approach. They've got the right way of thinking about projects. They've got all the basic skills in Illustrator, Photoshop, web design skills. So they're competent in the software, but what they're learning to supplement that is things like UX, user flows, actually a lot of terminology as well, industry lingo kind of stuff.

Interviewer: The stuff that you're not exposed to at university.

Design Agency: What's a tool tip, that kind of thing. There's definitely skills that they come with which are software-based skills, but they've also been well-taught, I'd like to say, from my wife, and they come from colleges, so they've got a good grounding in actually presenting, discussing ideas, articulating an idea. Collaborating, as well, they both did collaborate at college, which is a really important skill if you're commissioning an illustrator. Josh's project is a collaboration with an illustrator, for example. That kind of thing is really important, actually, and probably quite undervalued.

Interviewer: So some of those things you're talking about are actually outside of the design room, they're moving into their personal skills, and-

Design Agency: Yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: ...people skills, communication.

Design Agency: But also collaboration and being able to identify and commission somebody, that kind of thing, is just taking what they've done at college and-

Interviewer: Yeah, because I imagine the biggest jump from uni to industry is probably dealing with clients, so if you've got that experience already, are dealing with externals-

Design Agency: They're both confident. So I think confidence is important. But not arrogant. They'll ask if they're not sure, but they're confident, and I think that's a really important skill. To be able to sit in a meeting with a client and-

Interviewer: Not freak out.

Design Agency: Yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: You've kind of covered this with various other things you've said, but where has their learning taken place, and you've mentioned that is in work, and you were talking about courses and things. Is this something you think about and take into consideration, about where they learn and what they'll learn?

Design Agency: Where, outside of Applied Works, you mean, or...?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: They haven't really done it too much yet. But I think it's making them aware that we're happy to support them in doing that. Internally, we have a fortnightly design review where everybody opens up what they're working on. We have another designer in Lisbon, actually, Vasco, who's working remotely. So he's kind of ... As well as the lead designer, who's on maternity leave, and me. That's the core team. And so we'll meet every other Friday and have a ... and I'll also show what I'm doing, because I feel I'm doing more strategic stuff with clients and things. And so that's a challenge, for everybody to have a say on everybody else's work, which I think is quite important as well, from a learning point of view.

Design Agency: I don't think there's any one place it happens, it just happens organically. You've got to try and make sure, I suppose, as a creative director, trying to make sure you're not telling them what to do, you're giving them advice and the skills to do it themselves. But occasionally, obviously, you need to say, how about we do this. But they haven't needed too much of that. I think it's been good.

Interviewer:	Great. And could you tell me, probably for them individually, has there been a major positive that you've noticed, where something's happened where you just thought, hey, that was really good. You nailed that. Or something like that.
Design Agency:	Callum. First thing he worked on was a, as I mentioned, a video project. It was a really complicated, it was basically visualizing a whole bunch of software that we'd designed over several years, and pushing them all into, mocking them onto screens. So, basically, we shot loads of people, close-ups of screens and mouse, and people, that sort of stuff. It was just a really intense period of time, and he had to go dive into it. He just took the initiative. He just basically did things that ... I felt very much like this is a lot to put on somebody who, he was actually still an intern, I think, at that time. The initiative he showed, it was like, we've gotta hire him, Callum. He's great. It didn't daunt him, I think.
Design Agency:	Josh, likewise. I can't think of one specific thing. Definitely the fact that he'd come through this incubator program that Zoe, my wife, ran, with his project. Immediately impressed by the fact that he'd got a really intuitive idea off the ground off his own back.
Design Agency:	So they were both, either before we'd hired them, actually before we'd hired them, yeah.
Interviewer:	So it was actually that was the thing that made you go, oh, that there's someone to watch.
Design Agency:	They're both special to look out for.
Interviewer:	And this is not meant to be a negative, but has there been any point where you've just gone, ooh, that was interesting. Hope you might learn from that, or where you thought, oh, maybe they need a little more help with that.
Design Agency:	There've been a couple of projects, I think, that have been more looking at core data. They were both working on the project, actually, I think I was on holiday. Paul, who is not creative director, he's a sort of account director, the other partner, said, just get involved and come up with some ideas and stuff. And it was too broad, it was just too-
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:18:01]
Design Agency:	...there was nothing really, that they just needed some, right, what's the data trying to say? What are we trying to do here? Let's get some real clarity out of the brief. I think that's quite an important point where I had to come in and just, right, this is what we need to do. And hopefully that's part of the, as you were saying earlier, the learning process, passing on skills and things. But it was just too broad. So you just have to sometimes focus on the user, the data, what we're trying to do as a project.
Interviewer:	Your [crosstalk 00:18:37] can run away on you, I guess?
Design Agency:	Yes, they can a bit. And the deadline was pretty intense at that point as well. I think it might have been the first project they worked on together. So I guess we were still working out how do you, if they're a team or do they go off and work individually? So I guess that was ... But it wasn't a problem, it was just, okay, maybe we need to just call [crosstalk 00:18:56]
Interviewer:	No. I would describe it as a learning process.
Design Agency:	[crosstalk 00:18:58] for a second, and just focus on where we're going. But nothing more than that.
Interviewer:	Oh, that's good. And I know you've been quite, you've already mentioned that what they've learned at university was obviously really useful, but what do you

think the skills that they have learnt at university that you've really thought, yup, that's definitely set them apart from, that's really helped, that [crosstalk 00:19:26]

Design Agency: Well, I've already said, it's a mindset, it's an approach, it's a way of thinking. It's all the intangible stuff, actually. It's having an eye for something. They both actually did, if I'm not mistaken, maths A-Levels. So actually, it's not so much the design skills, it's more the analytical thinking skills. I think the fact that they both did maths A-Levels, I did maths A-Levels as well, is quite useful, because we're often dealing with data and complicated topics and things that you can't really do at surface level. You've got to get stuck into.

Design Agency: When we interview people, it's so much more than can you find your way around Illustrator, do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely.

Design Agency: Because you can learn that much more easily. You can't learn that, it's actually who you are, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes.

Design Agency: I've forgotten your original question.

Interviewer: What uni skills have been really important.

Design Agency: I don't know whether that is a uni skill, actually, thinking about it. I think it's possibly just a skill. But, again, it's an intangible thing, isn't it? It's who you were at college with, it was who you were taught by, industry links, what projects you took on. I'm very interested in that as a broader topic, really, outside of these two. You've got to take opportunities at college. Pretty much all my business connections stretching back 20 years I can relate to, I can probably draw a line back to people I've met in college. It's really important that you value those relationships you make at college.

Interviewer: Where did you go to uni?

Design Agency: St. Martin's.

Interviewer: St. Martin's, okay. So you've still got ... it's London-based, that's right. I was talking to a graduate recently, and she went to Norwich, and she's regretting not going to Kingston-

Design Agency: Really?

Interviewer: ...because she just said everyone knows each other from Kingston, and the network, since she's graduated, she knows people who have gone to Kingston, she says it's so much stronger, they're all getting great opportunities, jobs-

Design Agency: I wouldn't say it excludes people from elsewhere, though. Zoe, my wife, before Winchester was at Lincoln, which is not remotely near London, [inaudible 00:21:54]. And she recruited two people for her business that she was running at the time, who've since gone on to set up their own business, design-based team. They're doing really great. So it doesn't-

Interviewer: No, it's not.

Design Agency: ...have to be London, but you do have to have good industry connections.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely.

Design Agency: Do you know Derek Yates?

Interviewer: No.

Design Agency: Heard of him? He's now at Ravensbourne but he was … he's got a very good connection, you should look him up. He released, did a book, I might actually have a copy of it here, that Zoe designed. I've got a draft in Zoe's portfolio, of all her work.

Interviewer: Got you an extra job to do.

Design Agency: He's a really good person from both perspectives of, so he was at Winchester when Callum was there, so this is the book he's done. It's all about connections with industry, and interviews with-

Interviewer: The book looks really familiar, though.

Design Agency: Yeah, you may have seen it. This is, I think, where you find [inaudible 00:23:07] breaks and things. And it's people like Derek who are really switched on, particularly with industry. Getting industry people in to talk and also yeah, just building connections with companies. That's why they're both here, ultimately.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely.

Design Agency: It's really difficult to find people as well. You go to shows and stuff, and it's very difficult to actually find people.

Interviewer: I get that a lot. Lots of people that I talk to, agencies, ask, can we get some graduates? And their links, themselves, back to education aren't particularly great. So they would like to have more a junior designer or an intern, but they really just don't know where to start.

Design Agency: It's very easy to get 100 CVs, and 99 of them are just not right. It's not that they're not good designers, they're just not quite right. And it's, as I said earlier, it's a very specific kind of-

Interviewer: Definitely.

Design Agency: …person we need. Not designer, but personality.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's the double combination of, you need a designer and a personality and all the skill sets along with it.

Design Agency: No, I don't think you do need all the skill sets. I think, if you're a graduate, you can learn them.

Interviewer: Oh, I don't mean like design skill sets. When I say that I just kind of … mostly personality, I think.

Design Agency: Right attributes, I think, because that's the worth, they need to able to learn those skills, even if they haven't got them.

Interviewer: Yeah, exactly. Cool. Both of the guys were coming through internships. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of offering those internship roles for people coming into [crosstalk 00:24:59]

Design Agency: I think somebody with literally no experience of work, straight out of college, is very difficult to assess. We could, I suppose, just employ them on a three-month, we have a three-month probation anyway. But I think it sets the parameters a little bit more clearly, that this is a, you see if you fit with us, we see if we fit with you, it's a paid internship to cover the travel and so on. And then we go from there.

Design Agency: Because it's often, you're not able to fully assess whether the role is there or not. And it's often, actually, even if the role's not there, you find a role if it's the right person.

Interviewer: Definitely. And do you take on interns if you're not looking for a junior designer?

Design Agency: Yeah, we have done. We had someone who was doing, I'm trying to remember what she was studying, but she was doing a research degree. It was completely … It wasn't a design degree at all. And she said, can I come and spend, I think it was six weeks or maybe eight weeks last summer, because of the types of work that we do. So she could get involved with research for I think it was the Gates Foundation she was doing a project with. So she was looking into the whole subject matter from a research perspective.

Design Agency: We certainly weren't looking to necessarily … I think we might even have considered offering her a job, but it wasn't quite right for her. But that's the advantage of her coming and doing an internship, from her perspective, is that it was the right thing for her as well as us. That we didn't have, we weren't looking for a researcher, but if she would've been the right fit, we might well have offered her a job.

Interviewer: I think I've just got one more question, which is, what do you think are the most important aspects of graduate transition for the graduate and the design industry?

Design Agency: Transitioning to…

Interviewer: Into the design industry.

Design Agency: Good question. I think it's the right balance of confidence and initiative. We've had people … quite a while ago now, we had a guy who came in, I thought he's really good, we should get him in. We got him in, and the confidence turned to arrogance, he was a bit cocky, and I just thought, you're actually not as good as you think you are. Good luck.

Interviewer: So that's an advantage of the internship, in a way.

Design Agency: Yeah, absolutely. But at the same time you don't want a shrinking violet who's not got the conviction to say, I think this is right. Even if it turns out that you have to debate about it and we go with something else. You do need that right mix, it's quite a delicate thing. Too overconfident is not good, and lacking conviction is also not good.

Interviewer: Definitely. Two polar opposites.

Design Agency: Has that answered your question?

Interviewer: Yeah, it has. I'll just ask one … What do you think about luck in terms of…

Design Agency: That's a very good question as well.

Interviewer: …as a concept of getting in.

Design Agency: It's a bit difficult to answer from other people's point of view. From my point of view, I think you kind of make your own luck, in a way. At St. Martin's, this is 20 years ago, but at St. Martin's, I think we had 120 people on the course. There were maybe 20 or 30 people that came in the studio. And for me, the people that didn't come in missed the point. They completely missed the point of the place. It was who you meet and it was … We went and did an [eye 00:28:57] soccer series for a year, for cable TV.

Design Agency: I think it's just looking for opportunities, saying yes. Going to an event rather that not going to an event. Turning up rather than not turning up. Sending the email to the person who's given you that business. I do think you, to some extent, make your own luck. But that's a personal thing. I think you could easily, maybe you could end up missing a few boats through no fault of your own. But I do think there is an aspect of I think it comes down to initiative again, and confidence.

Design Agency: If you're that person who's ... Actually, just develop a relationship with your tutor is a really important thing. You're like, do you want to come for a beer? And Zoe, often, is like, let's go for a beer. And there are people who go, and there are people who don't go. And the people who go are the people that Zoe remembers. Do you know what I mean? It's those little decisions that can actually be really, really important.

Interviewer: Do you know what? Josh, he mentioned that he saw one of his tutors a couple of months ago, and I thought, wow, that's crazy, because he's only just graduated over a year ago.

Design Agency: That doesn't surprise me at all.

Interviewer: But he's still out there. That's all the questions.

Design Agency: Great.

Interviewer: So, here you go.

Design Agency: Somebody's actually coming in

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD1-AW

Interviewer: Okay. So you're a Junior Designer here, aren't you?

Graduate: Yeah. Well, it's actually just Designer, which is quite nice.

Interviewer: Oh, cool.

Graduate: Just slightly nicer than being a Junior Designer.

Interviewer: Yeah. How long have you been here?

Graduate: I've only been here since I did an internship for a month in August, and I started in September.

Interviewer: Brilliant.

Graduate: We don't really have any Junior Designers.

Interviewer: It's just like a flat hierarchy?

Graduate: Yeah. I guess so, yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. So, how did this role come about, and describe the process that it took.

Graduate: Yeah. Well, I went to University at Kingston. One of my tutors is Zoe Rather and I was chatting to her and Zoe is married to Joe. It was all about who I knew.

Graduate: She was, "Oh, you should send Joe your portfolio, if you're interested in working for them." It wasn't like, it was like, "You should have a look if you're interested. You send it because you might enjoy that."

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Then I did. Got in touch with them. Came in for an interview. Carl interviewed me with Joe and our lead designer at the time, Brian. And then they got back in touch with me like, "Yeah, do you want to do an internship?" And, yeah, I had an internship.

Interviewer: Cool. Your internship was after you graduated?

Graduate: Yeah. We finished the course in May, the show in June, and we officially graduated in July. Technically, it was May, and then August.

Interviewer: Cool. Counting your internship, how long have you been at Applied Works now? Since May, wasn't it?

Graduate: Started in August, so August. I can't remember.

Interviewer: August 2017 though, wasn't it?

Graduate: Yeah, yeah. Near nine months, then.

Interviewer: Okay. It goes fast then.

Graduate: Wow, it has. It's gone really fast.

Interviewer: Did you imagine that this was how your path into the design industry would take after graduation?

Graduate:	I wouldn't say specifically knowing that Zoe would get me a job. Well, put me in touch. I had a very strong feeling that it'd be who I knew and who I'd met. Like, meeting you, for example, could lead on to other things in life. There's no pressure, really. But yeah, no.
Graduate:	It's kind of the way. It seems Kingston's got quite a strong network anyway. There's a massive group for everyone who's been on graphics at Kingston on Facebook. That gets you in touch with a lot of the jobs that aren't advertised anywhere else, which is quite interesting.
Graduate:	Yeah, I knew it'd be through knowing somebody as opposed to applying, because loads of them you do, oh like, "It's nice jobs, but really, really bad design." You can't proceed to actually work there, or the editors don't get back to you.
Interviewer:	Sure. Did you mention that you would have to intern to get a job, or did you think that that wasn't going to apply to you?
Graduate:	No, I definitely set sights to intern. I was quite worried actually. I didn't do any interning during Uni, which quite a few I knew did, but I couldn't really afford to do it. I was worried, but yeah, I knew I'd have to do an internship.
Graduate:	But I didn't expect to have to do the first internship, and got offered a job during the first internship and not have to do more of an internship. Like other of my friends had to do extra ones.
Interviewer:	Like multiple internships.
Graduate:	Yeah. One person, I know she's done internships at a few places, and then when she got her actual job, it was an internship, they extended it by a month, and then they gave her the job.
Interviewer:	Right. Yeah. You were surprised at how quickly you moved through it.
Graduate:	Yeah. I would definitely say that I was fortunate. It's not me thinking, "Amazing", I was just genuinely very fortunate. Yes.
Interviewer:	Cool. What were your expectations of this role when you started?
Graduate:	I don't really know. It sounds really bad.
Interviewer:	No, it's fine.
Graduate:	No. It probably sounds really bad to them, because I should have known what I was getting involved in. I don't know.
Graduate:	Kingston Graphic Arts, I was chatting to my friends about this recently, it doesn't prepare you for being in the real world. I didn't really know what to expect. I was kind of worried it would be a lot of branding. Not here, just in life.
Interviewer:	In general, yeah.
Graduate:	So, this is what brought me here, more that we don't, not as a rule, but we generally don't do a lot of branders' class. I expected it to be, that it was lower, that it might be more infographics. But, I've managed to stay clear of that, because again, it's quite a lot of English and it's not my strongest. Didn't really know what to expect. It's definitely going well.
Interviewer:	Cool. And how is the role going? You said it's going well, is it how you imagined it to be going?

Graduate:	No, but I don't really think more in life than a month, at best. But yeah, the role's been good. It's taught me a lot of UX design, for if I retain a client. And there's obviously a lot of ups and downs, because again, I was chatting to one of my tutors about two months ago, I was talking about being managed creatively.
Graduate:	Which, when you're at Uni, you don't have really. So, it's very weird to go from being able to do whatever you want, to going to this place and people being like, "That's not right." "Well, I think it's right."
Graduate:	"No, it's not right." And you'll be, "Oh".
Graduate:	So, it can be difficult. But I know that's how it works, so there's days when you do get really angry, but I think you get that at any job.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so it's just adjusting, almost, the design for the client base.
Graduate:	Yeah. Client base, and your own ,actually to doing work, and understanding that when you've got to back down, your argument's kind of wasted.
Interviewer:	Your arguments ... Yeah.
Graduate:	But, then there's other things I've come to learn. So I've got really into developing from working here. And we've been doing a little bit of developing on the design table. [inaudible 00:06:48]
Interviewer:	Cool. And when you go about all this day to day work that you're talking about, how does Applied Works, I'm not sure if you've worked with anyone particularly or if you work in a big group, but how do they help and support your learning when you're going through the process of working on-
Graduate:	That's a good question.
Interviewer:	Projects?
Graduate:	The silence isn't that they don't. The silence is me thinking.
Interviewer:	It's fine.
Graduate:	Everyone's free to chat, which is nice instead of, for example, if I did want Joe's opinion, I could ask him, and probably nine times out of 10 he'd be like, "Yeah, sure, give me a minute." Which is always really useful.
Graduate:	I ask quite a lot of questions because there's a lot of big words that he uses that I don't understand. King's English wasn't my thing. For the whole time being here, me and Callum have worked a lot on projects together, which isn't normally what happens.
Interviewer:	Can you tell me who Callum is?
Graduate:	Callum is another designer.
Interviewer:	He's someone at a similar level to you?
Graduate:	Yeah. He's the same age, so yeah.
Interviewer:	You're both around this in terms of level.
Graduate:	Yeah. Yeah. Same level kind of thing. We work together quite a lot. We ask each other's opinion. It's normally, "Does this look shit?" Or, we're building something, like we've been in the moment, it's like, "Have you done this, because I'm really

	struggling." And then the next one would look at it and go, "It happened to me, but that's why."
Interviewer:	You're talking your way through it almost.
Graduate:	Yeah. I genuinely channel there anyway, because I can't keep it inside, it drives me nuts.
Graduate:	But also, the development team are really nice, if you got a question, you can always ask them, and generally speaking, they're happy to answer questions.
Interviewer:	Cool. How do you think that your particular learning and development could be developed more when you're here? Is there anything that you think that you'd like to happen?
Graduate:	I don't know right now. I've done a lot of development learning on my own at home. Doing that here that week and last week has been really good.
Graduate:	In keeping a varied amount of projects, that's started to happen, where I've gotten new projects, that I've never done again. So that's learning, keeping up a variety of projects, and not doing the same thing. That you learn the job at work. Can't just sit and read a book.
Interviewer:	No, not at work. Do you find that actually coming to work is the learning, or do you need to ask people to help you learn, or is it a mixture of both?
Graduate:	I'd say, it's coming to work, learning. Asking for help, which you do as well. I don't think there's a time to specifically ask.
Graduate:	When I started, Briony, who is the Senior Designer, she said, "Have you ever used Illustrator before?" Which I hadn't. And she was like, "All right. Well, we'll try to use the whole thing."
Graduate:	So that kind of thing. Normally, it's, "Use this," or, "Have you used it?" If it's no, then it's like, "Well, blah, blah, blah."
Interviewer:	Cool. What skills have been most useful to you since you've been here? Especially ones from University, or it might be your own personal skill set.
Graduate:	It's probably the best one to have from Uni. Being able to cook's done pretty well.
Interviewer:	Sorry?
Graduate:	Being able to cook. That's gone down pretty well, especially on Pancake Day.
Interviewer:	Or mixed drinks.
Graduate:	Yeah. I think the biggest one was design thinking. I couldn't have brought it in from University or anywhere else. Everything else I probably could have picked up, because it's all software skills.
Graduate:	People could if they actually applied themselves.
Interviewer:	And how did you do a lot of software skills at University, or was that expected to be-
Graduate:	That was expected.
Interviewer:	You would just learn that yourself.

Graduate:	They were not a practical course. I didn't really learn how to typeset until two months before I graduated. That would be very weird if I said that's [inaudible 00:11:59]. They'd be outraged.
Interviewer:	Crazy. How have you supported your own development, since you've lived at University?
Graduate:	Doing my own projects. When I started, I only worked four days a week. I did one day at Makerversity, carrying on a project from Uni, put in the 25 program, with an illustrator I worked with.
Graduate:	After Christmas, we went, "This isn't going anywhere." Because it was too expensive, so we just put it to bed. And since then, I've been doing my sub-projects at home, mainly building a Game-one-one, which has been quite fun.
Interviewer:	Cool. And do you do that quite a lot?
Graduate:	Yeah. I probably do it every night.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	If I've got energy. Otherwise, they'll send it to someone else. They'll send it to [inaudible 00:12:54] if I'm coming home, and have great energy.
Graduate:	If I'm bored and start to twiddle my thumbs because I'll just feel like I wasted a day. At least I can listen to music and do some work.
Interviewer:	And do you do that on your own, or is that a group project?
Graduate:	At the moment, it's alone, but there have been group ones.
Interviewer:	Where has your learning taken place, in terms of learning as a designer? Has it been work-based? Or beyond work, as you mentioned yourself initiated projects as well?
Graduate:	A bit of both. I think being here teaches me more about design thinking, and creative direction, art direction, those kinds of things that you can't teach yourself. You have to learn from someone.
Graduate:	Which I know that Joe would absolutely love to hear me say, but I'm never going to say it to him. He has got more experience than me. He has got more skills in that area.
Graduate:	And then outside of work. You can teach yourself actual things, like techie skills.
Interviewer:	So, would you say that you're learning from people here who have got more experience in certain areas-
Graduate:	Definitely.
Interviewer:	And your own self-initiated projects are you learning, because you're muddling your way through it?
Graduate:	Yeah, learning as I go. Everyone's got more skills in one thing than someone else.
Interviewer:	Yeah. No one's got everything.
Graduate:	Exactly.

Interviewer:	Cool. And could you name a major positive since you've been here, when you've had a "Eureka" moment, or a bit where you've gone, "That was really good," "I did that really well," or, "That client was really happy." Just something that you thought, "I've got it now."
Graduate:	"I've got it now." Trying to think.
Graduate:	There's been a lot of the client being happy with... our retainer client for the UX software, they're generally quite complex projects, because they're Enterprise software. It's a lot of thinking, so it's been a lot of little wins in there.
Graduate:	I can't think of any "Eureka" moment yet off the top of my head. I don't know if I'd ever keep track of that in my mind.
Graduate:	I can't think of one, no.
Interviewer:	Has there been a moment where you just thought, "Oh, that was just terrible,"-
Graduate:	Oh, yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	Or the world is swallowing up or something.
Graduate:	Yeah, there's been a few of that. I think I know them a lot, because it teaches me what I don't want to do.
Graduate:	There's been loads of them. There was one for an R and D project, where I felt I could jump off a balcony. I was just tired of it.
Graduate:	And then some of them, with the client being..there was one client we had, it was like getting blood from a stone just to get any kind of answer out of them to help us understand their software.
Graduate:	That was bollock. I hated that. That don't make me happy.
Interviewer:	Can you see yourself learning anything from those negative moments, or the moments where they aren't going so well?
Graduate:	Yeah. Forget answers. Write a bunch of questions beforehand and ask them. If they don't reply to them, or give really bad answers, ask them again.
Graduate:	On either Face Camp, which is a client contact, or on a phone call, either one.
Graduate:	And the other one probably should be, "Suck it up, because everyone's got to do things they don't want to do."
Interviewer:	Yes, true. Cool.
Interviewer:	So, this is a general question, what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates?
Graduate:	Disadvantages, is that some people think they can still make them do it for free, which is straight-up wrong.
Graduate:	And the advantages are, there's no commitment on either party, so not to say you'd come in and be really lazy, but if you weren't feeling it, you don't have to feel too bad, and if they weren't feeling it, they don't have to feel too bad about the same, not feeling it.
Graduate:	Meanwhile, there's stuff with me at the moment, we all have to get along. But we did. Because that's redundant.

Graduate:	Two hours ago, he just goes, "Come here a minute." And everyone just has to test the water.
Graduate:	But the disadvantage would be that people do think they can charge nothing.
Interviewer:	I know you haven't had to probably be in that position, of the disadvantage, of being offered an internship that they wanted you to do for free. But do you know of other people that-
Graduate:	Yeah, loads. My housemate, he did a free one for WNA for three months, and they didn't pay him. And I still think that's wrong. That's why I didn't choose it. Because it's wrong.
Graduate:	If this place offered me a free internship, I would have gone, no. Because I couldn't afford it. It's physically impossible.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. Could I just ask, did you live in London, or did you move to London?
Graduate:	For Uni?
Interviewer:	And afterwards, yeah.
Graduate:	Yeah, well, Kingston's in London, so..yeah, I moved from York, and I went to Leeds College.
Interviewer:	You needed to have some room and money.
Graduate:	Definitely. Yeah, my parents don't live here.
Graduate:	I didn't get a lot of money from student loan because my dad is a quite a high earner, but they did help me out a little. But there's that weird bracket where the high earners, so you don't get any money, but they haven't got that much to give you.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	It's that weird moment when you know something's not quite right. So, yeah.
Interviewer:	It's really difficult. Cool.
Interviewer:	That's it, really. That's all.
Graduate:	Okay.

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD2-AW

Interviewer: ... feedback. You've been at Applied Works longer than Josh, haven't you?

Graduate: Yes.

Interviewer: How long have you been here?

Graduate: Yeah, probably another half a year than Josh.

Interviewer: Did you graduate in 2016?

Graduate: Yes.

Interviewer: Yep.

Graduate: Yeah. Yeah, and then sort of just worked a bit doing freelance stuff immediately after uni, and then did a few internships, including one here, which then sort of led to me going full-time. That was January last year.

Interviewer: So you've been here since January '17? And that's-

Graduate: Full-time. But-

Interviewer: Right.

Graduate: Yeah. I was there from probably around November [crosstalk 00:00:44].

Interviewer: And that was the internship?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. When you were freelancing, were you charging for that?

Graduate: Yes.

Interviewer: And when you were interning ... was this all in London, or were you in other parts of England, the UK?

Graduate: Yeah, mainly in London. Some of the freelance jobs that I've done sort of come from elsewhere, but ...

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, remote working.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. Did you imagine when you graduated, this would be the path that you would take to get into the design industry?

Graduate: In what sort of way?

Interviewer: The freelance work, the internships, all this before you got a full-time job.

Graduate: Yeah, probably sort of had an understanding that that would be the way it would go to start with, I think.

Interviewer: So you were pretty relaxed about when all this was going on at the time?

Graduate:	Yeah, I'd say so. Yeah, I planned to a few internships to see different places to start with, and before jumping into anything.
Interviewer:	Before you committed to anything.
Graduate:	Yeah, just to sort of get scope of sort of different positions you could do, and [crosstalk 00:02:01].
Interviewer:	Yeah. Were there any that you thought, "Not for me"? Or …
Graduate:	Not particularly. I think I've had quite good experiences in all of the places that I've been. But I suppose sort of more at internship level, it was more sort of worrying about how much you were allowed to do, in a way. Because obviously, yeah, you have to sort of build up that trust, that you're capable enough to work on projects before … you get more free rein.
Interviewer:	Did you really notice the difference between being an intern, and then turning that role into a designer role?
Graduate:	Sort of. I'd say it's probably quite a gradual progression in a way. But yeah, I suppose over time, looking back on it, you can sort of feel a bit of a difference. But I think, yeah, for sure, it's more of a transitional thing than an immediate change, I'd say.
Interviewer:	Cool. When you started here, what were your expectations of the role, in terms of being a designer and career?
Graduate:	Don't really know how to answer that, to be honest. I didn't really have expectations, per se. Yeah. I'm not really sure. [inaudible 00:03:34].
Interviewer:	No, it's fine. I just want to know how you feel, rather than … Yeah.
Graduate:	Yeah, okay. Yeah. I hadn't really expected anything of it. It's all been sort of taking everything as it's come, in a way.
Interviewer:	Cool. I assume that you're happy doing the work that you're doing, because you're here. But you seem fairly relaxed about it too.
Graduate:	Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I suppose it's sort of environment as well that plays a part in that. But yeah, it's never sort of highly pressurized, I suppose, in a way.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Cool. How is the role going? Is it how you imagined it would be?
Graduate:	I suppose the type of work, I'd say, is not necessarily what I'd have imagined before I came into a job, but not necessarily what I wouldn't have imagined of being here, in a way. But yeah, I suppose you sort of expect to be working along similar lines to things that you've done previously in uni, which I suppose is not always the case, because obviously it's quite … I'd say a quite contained atmosphere in a uni. You're sort of never really creating outward-facing work to quite a degree. There's a lot of self-initiated ideas and stuff like that, that maybe have less of a relevance in a business environment.
Interviewer:	Yeah. So there's been kind of the weird … well, not the weirdest thing, but probably the biggest difference between university and working … not necessarily here, but just in the design industry, just the reality of what clients and the expectations [crosstalk 00:05:38]-
Graduate:	Yeah, that sort of side of things.
Interviewer:	… business side of the … It's not just design, basically. There's several kind of [crosstalk 00:05:46] … Yeah. Yeah. Okay, cool.

Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	How have you found that being here, the actual agency itself, how are they helping you support and develop your learning as a designer?
Graduate:	I suppose just through getting experience of ... doing projects, and yeah, I suppose just learning through doing in a way. And then obviously people in more senior positions, and sort of seeing how they approach things. But yeah, I suppose the main vast of it is through doing things daily, and just slowly building up skills.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Is it the type of place where you can ask more senior people for help, or that they just kind of get on board and give you help and kind of ... or do you not feel that you need to do that?
Graduate:	I'd say it's sort of mixed, in a way. If there's anything that you'd ever need help on, you're always free to ask. I think everything ... where we're quite a small studio, everything's quite collaborative anyway. So yeah, you're always getting help from either peers, or just everyone in the studio in general is sort of all together on projects quite often.
Interviewer:	Cool. The nature of small studios, that you all have to kind of get on with it really, isn't it?
Graduate:	[crosstalk 00:07:22]. Everyone's got a role to play in the project. [crosstalk 00:07:26]-
Interviewer:	Yeah, and also they know when you're not pulling your weight or something.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	What skills have been most useful to you from university?
Graduate:	I suppose just sort of problem solving as a start, I suppose. There's quite a lot of work that we do here that's quite complex, so just the sort of process of how you approach a project from the start-
Interviewer:	So how you're going to work through the ...
Graduate:	Yeah, and problems around ... whether it's usability of things, or ... I suppose it's just that sort of design thinking mindset, in a way, that's most applicable. I'm not sure whether that's necessarily something that I learned in uni, but having quite a good grounding in digital and technology gives you quite a good understanding of how ... Because obviously, personally I work both on the side of design and development, so to have experience of the other side of things helps to inform the way you work-
Interviewer:	So you've got two perspectives on it.
Graduate:	... and design work. Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Cool. Has there been anything else, like [inaudible 00:08:49] personal skills or previous experiences that you've been able to draw on when you entered the design industry?
Graduate:	What from? University?
Interviewer:	Not from university, actually. The opposite.
Graduate:	Okay.

Interviewer:	Maybe it's … some people have had … not design experience, but something that's helped them. It could be a personal skill.
Graduate:	I don't know. I don't really know. I suppose from other jobs previously, just sort of getting on with things, I think, and all that. But yeah, I don't know where I could pinpoint [crosstalk 00:09:34].
Interviewer:	And your learning, and since you've left university, has that just entirely been based at work, or do you do things outside of work that contribute-
Graduate:	Yeah. I sort of carried on freelancing. And then also personal projects [inaudible 00:09:56]. But yeah, I think it's … Yeah, I've been trying to supplement any learning insight work with personal stuff as well. Yeah.
Interviewer:	Do you go to any design talks or exhibitions or things? Or is that not really your type of thing?
Graduate:	I try to as much as possible. I think probably more so sort of closer to coming out of uni, when I was still more in touch with people that I graduated with. Since then, people have moved away and moved out, so there's less of a group of us to go to things, and stuff.
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:10:46], yeah, where everyone is design-based.
Graduate:	Yeah, yeah. So obviously it's quite, yeah, difficult to go to those sort of things [crosstalk 00:10:57].
Interviewer:	Yeah, because I guess your social circle kind of changes, and not everyone wants to go to a design talk [crosstalk 00:11:02].
Graduate:	Yeah, not everyone's sort of … Yeah, in that sort of sphere, in a way.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Fair enough. I'm going to ask two different question. One's a kind of positive and a negative. Since you've been here, has there been any moments in your development as a designer, where you've thought, "I did that really well," or, "That was awesome," or something really positive?
Graduate:	[inaudible 00:11:34].
Interviewer:	No one ever does for something positive.
Graduate:	No. I suppose just sort of-
Interviewer:	Or [crosstalk 00:11:41] on reflection where you look back and went, "Oh, I can do that now."
Graduate:	Yeah, I suppose, yeah, again, it's that sort of across coming to an end of a project, I suppose, [inaudible 00:11:52] what's happened. Coming in, I suppose I never really had a massive understanding of user experience design. And in a way, you feel like you're sort of winging it when you're first starting. But then to actually get a few months into project that's all user-based and more about thinking about the logic, I suppose. And then to get to a point where you look back on ways that you've influenced something, that you can see the benefits of, I suppose.
Interviewer:	Yeah. I guess in hindsight, you can start to say, "Oh, actually I kind of know what I'm talking about now."
Graduate:	Yeah, and actually-
Interviewer:	Cool.

Graduate:	... learning in a way what I'm doing.
Interviewer:	Fair enough. Has there been any points where you've just gone, "Agh, this is just terrible." [inaudible 00:12:51] ... about ...
Graduate:	Reflection on what?
Interviewer:	Or just, yeah, work-based, designer-based, but yeah.
Graduate:	Yeah, probably. But yeah, I suppose that happens quite often, to be honest. But then I suppose that's all part of the process in a way. I think, yeah, it's quite useful to have those things along a project or anything that you're doing, to sort of look at that and know why it's not good, I suppose, and then use that to help improve.
Interviewer:	Yeah. So if you're going through something blindly and not noticing that things are going wrong, that's terrible. [crosstalk 00:13:33] But if you can use it to adjust yourself and keep you on course, that's a part of the job, really.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. This is a general question, not about you. It's just about, what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates?
Graduate:	I'd say advantages is definitely the, I suppose on both sides, it's quite temporary. So it is a good way to get a foot in and try different things. And yeah, to just be able to start to build up an experience of what a studio's like, and get a feel for the things that you want to aspire to do. But then I suppose on the bad side, you have to probably think that the pay is never going to be great for a temporary role, and yeah, or if there's any at all. I suppose in that way, how much are you putting in that they're benefiting from? I don't know.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so the value relationship is slightly biased.
Graduate:	Yeah. Yep. And obviously, yeah, if there's a paid thing that your internship that you're doing to just to sort of get that early experience, it's quite difficult to feel undervalued in that way, I suppose.
Interviewer:	I guess most people tend to do a couple of internships before they get a job, but there are people who seem to stretch that out for a long time. It's like, if you've been interning for over a year at various places, it's like, when do you stop ...
Graduate:	Yeah, I suppose that can be a negative as well, I suppose, is if that is a continuous string, and it's always sort of ... who's going to sign me up sort of thing-
Interviewer:	Yeah, I know.
Graduate:	... could be quite demoralizing, I suppose.
Interviewer:	Yeah. I don't think it's great for your expectations, if it goes that way. And that was all questions.
Graduate:	Okay, cool.
Interviewer:	So there you go.

INTERVIEW TWO: DA-AW

Interviewer: And this interview is just a follow up, really. It doesn't divert much from the last set of questions, really.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's just seeing how Josh and Callum have been going, and if there's really anything of interest that might've occurred. So since I last talked to you, how have they been doing in their roles?

Design Agency: Yeah. Both good. Continuing to work well as a team, building a working relationship. Doing a bit more R and D. Trying to think when you came in. When was it you came in?

Interviewer: March. Yeah, it was. It was March, yeah.

Design Agency: So, no huge amount's gonna have changed.

Interviewer: No.

Design Agency: But they have, I think, since you came in, initiated a project between them where they're working on a graphing tool.

Interviewer: Oh, cool.

Design Agency: It's sort of bringing coding into their workflow a bit more.

Interviewer: Right.

Design Agency: Off the back of needing to … not being able to find a tool that they need to create graphs, reusable graphs. So a single graph template that would then be populated with lots of different data.

Interviewer: And so they had to learn new skills to do that. [crosstalk 00:01:13]-

Design Agency: Well, they were looking into coding was of doing that. Illustrator's not particularly good for doing it and none of the other software packages that we looked into were particularly good either. So they started looking into coding something there, themselves. Which they're then gonna bring into the Dev team [inaudible 00:01:35] check it.

Interviewer: Essentially they've found a problem and they're sorting it out themselves.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: And going through that. And that means that they're just kind of developing their own learning in that sense-

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: … and kind of figuring it out for themselves.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Does it help that they've got each other to bounce ideas off-

Design Agency: Yeah, I think so. Definitely. Yeah. So they would initiate the notion of doing that and then they'd bring it up in a design review. We have design reviews every two

weeks. We have Dev reviews in between as well, which they're starting to attend as well.

Interviewer: Okay. So that's a new development [inaudible 00:02:14]-

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: And how are they finding the research and development stuff and and that-

Design Agency: Enjoyable, as far as I-

Interviewer: ... Huh?

Design Agency: As far as I know, enjoyable.

Interviewer: Yeah. Is it because it is another element to their role so it kinda gives them more ... not responsibility but a [crosstalk 00:02:31]-

Design Agency: Actually, possibly the opposite. More freedom cause you're...well the black mirror stuff. It is for a client but it's very exploratory in its nature. Its quite a loose brief.

Interviewer: Okay

Design Agency: I think it's quite nice to put some projects in between...more yeah, more rigid deadlines and rigid client direction and things like that.

Interviewer: Yeah so in a way it is actually...it can be harder for a younger designer because it's so loose...because they actually need to learn how to set their own boundaries and not...so are your expectations of Josh and Callum still being met then? In their roles?

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: And what type of support are they getting when they're doing...since I last talked to you but say for example, on the jobs that they're doing at the moment. Are they managing to do these on their own or do they get support? Do they ask for support?

Design Agency: They get support, yeah. They need...I think they need the support. They don't always need the support but it's useful to have the support. If it's a client project, they're always be Tash the producer who'll be basically checking everything that gets deliverables from what we said we would do. From my point of view, is it creatively in the right direction?

Interviewer: And do you think sometimes they can identify when they need support or you see that they need support? Or is it a combination of both?

Design Agency: We try and engineer enough review meetings into the process that if anything comes up.

Interviewer: Yeah

Design Agency: And also, getting them to post regularly so it might be that I'm keeping an eye on stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: But generally if they need help, they'll ask.

Interviewer:	And so, how are they supporting their own development. I know Josh mentioned something about a coding situation. So it sounded like he was kind of self-initiating his own development as well.
Design Agency:	Yeah. We're trying to encourage. Yeah [inaudible 00:04:59] visits. So they bought tickets to a few events and gone along and...i could probably tell you which ones. There's a whole series that have happened since you last came.
Interviewer:	Oh right. Cool.
Design Agency:	We're also looking into a coding course. Again I can't remember which one that was.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	With the help of Tom, who's our operations manager.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Design Agency:	He's not here today but he's...
Interviewer:	He's mentioned the trains were all...
Design Agency:	Yeah the trains. He just gave up eventually.
Interviewer:	I couldn't get any east today. Trains were a nightmare yesterday.
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	So are you as a company happy to financially support some of these extra things or...
Design Agency:	Yeah we'd encourage it.
Interviewer:	Yeah. So you're...
Design Agency:	Within reason.
Interviewer:	Not to fly to LA for a special thing or something.
Design Agency:	But yeah, no, absolutely.
Interviewer:	Could you tell me...have they? Has this been a particular positive moments where you've noticed they've done something quite interesting or really nice that you thought, oh that's really good. About either of them since we last talked?
Design Agency:	Since we last talked. I don't know, really. Lots of little things. I can't think of anything in particular. But just generally integrated into the studio well...
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	Yeah I guess so. I mean, it's more actually non-work things. You know, taking on, just making some updates to that wall just now.
Interviewer:	Yeah, yeah.
Design Agency:	That sort of thing, you know?
Interviewer:	So they're just nice to be around and...

Design Agency: Just more culturally...

Interviewer: Enthusiastic...

Design Agency: Yeah just some studio culture stuff.

Interviewer: And have there been any situations where you've had to possibly...I don't mean it in a negative way, but that you've had to curtail or kind of recalibrate or get them back on track at any point. Where things have not worked out so well?

Design Agency: Not since we last met, I don't think.

Interviewer: And how have applied works generally been approaching their learning and development over the last few months?

Design Agency: Uh, I'm trying to think if it was since we met, but we've started...I'm not sure I mentioned last time, but there was a third partner, Pete.

Interviewer: Yep, yeah.

Design Agency: He left and he was sort of, a people person. According to HR, that sort of undermines the [inaudible 00:07:41] a little bit. Since he left, Tom's come in and has helped Paul and I be a bit more grown up about that process.

Interviewer: Right

Design Agency: So we're doing our new reviews. Well actually, we're doing six month reviews and annual reviews.

Interviewer: Yeah...Josh mentioned he had the annual review.

Design Agency: That is happening...well we did the first one in April at the end of the financial year. Salary reviews and objectives and discussed a lot of that. Yeah creative development stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah without being too nosy. When you're saying objectives, are they design working objectives as well as personal or is it just...

Design Agency: All of those things.

Interviewer: So it's kind of...

Design Agency: Career objectives really. The way you want the role to go. They're both interested in coding.

Interviewer: Right

Design Agency: I think that's good. Design skills and yeah, trying to, I suppose identify where there's a gap in skills, and making sure that can be filled.

Interviewer: And so, they respond quite well to this annual review or did they find it helpful?

Design Agency: Josh was the first one.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Design Agency: I suppose it's the first proper series of reviews we've done where we've logged everything, set some objectives. And we're going to do another one in six months. But it's more of a mini review.

Interviewer:	And did you find out anything that you thought, oh that's interesting, I didn't now that? Or did you, was it quite perfunctory where you thought...
Design Agency:	It was all positive. Don't think it was anything particularly...i think it's just good to have those conversations or ask those questions even if there aren't answers to
Interviewer:	You know...
Design Agency:	To them. Not so much if you don't know the answer, just if...where do you want to be in three years.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	I have no idea. That's fine.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Or I'd like to be a senior designer, or actually I'd like to be a creative director. You know. We want to know about that.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	If that is the case. Actually at the moment, they're fairly new to their careers and you know, I think they're quite happy just...
Interviewer:	To be absorbing stuff...
Design Agency:	And learning.
Interviewer:	It seems fair enough.
Interviewer:	And how do you see their job roles develop, and maybe not necessarily long term in terms of years and years, but perhaps in the next year or so?
Design Agency:	I suppose its...I think we probably need to mention Brylee, who's on maternity leave.
Interviewer:	Right, yeah.
Design Agency:	Don't know if I mentioned that last time.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	She's our lead designer. And so at the moment, I'm creative director and they're both relatively inexperienced. There's a bit of a gap in the middle, so, actually Brylee and Josh haven't worked together.
Interviewer:	Right
Design Agency:	Callum and Bryan have worked together. So it'd be nice to get that team working. And I think they'll learn a lot for Brylee. They're perhaps not learning from...I'm giving them more of a general creative steer.
Interviewer:	Sure
Design Agency:	And strategic skills, I suppose.
Interviewer:	Do you think it's quite important to have the...almost experienced creative leader in place so that there's not a huge gap somewhere?

Design Agency: Yeah, I don't think there's a huge gap but if I'm not free enough to spend as much time as Brylee would on the design. It's design direction really.

Interviewer: Right, yeah.

Design Agency: And I think it would be great to have her back and see how that works. How they work as a team of three. And also at what point somebody comes in under them. At the moment, we're not quite busy enough. We are sort of keeping an eye on graduates this year, but right now, it's probably not quite...

Interviewer: Priority. Yeah.

Design Agency: Particularly because we don't know when Brylee will come back.

Interviewer: Right.

Design Agency: It will probably be another six months.

Interviewer: Just of bit of uncertainty there at the moment.

Interviewer: I might have actually asked this before. What skills of Callum and Josh's have actually been really useful maybe recently? Is it the coding and things that they're starting to take on?

Design Agency: I think, yeah, absorbing the way we work more than technical skills. Although technical skills are useful too. I mean, just look at the things Josh [inaudible 00:12:11] and Photoshop and stuff like that. But those skills, you can sort of, google them and you can kind of figure that stuff out. And they're quite good at doing that. They do, they'll generally, you know, research something.

Design Agency: But more to do with the way the process, the way we approach projects. Just instilling and reinforcing that at points. Making sure they're in the loop. We had a meeting this morning working for the Gates Foundation, which is what Callum's doing.

Interviewer: Yeah

Design Agency: I just called for a meeting a couple of hours this morning just so that everybody could be brought up to speed with where we are. We haven't really started any design work yet. Sort of editorial direction and concepts and things. So I just wanted to get everybody together.

Design Agency: Heres where we are. Prob be Callum working on it. Callum is working on it, but Josh might pick it up at some point. And even if he never works on it, its like everybody. That's why we have design reviews every two weeks. And I tell them what I've been doing as much as...

Interviewer: Sure

Design Agency: They tell me what they've been doing. Its quite important to do that regularly.

Interviewer: Yeah. And do you think that the importance is more in the small studio or a big studio, or it doesn't really make any difference? You should be part of...

Design Agency: What? The regularity of meetings or including everyone in all projects?

Interviewer: Including people and I think what you're talking about before, when you're talking about them becoming part of the team, as in their thinking they're part of the team.

Design Agency: That's important. I would suggest we've never been bigger than 15.

Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	At any one time but it is [inaudible 00:13:51] silos where you've no idea what somebody's working on.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	Even in a team of 10, you might have complete...
Interviewer:	Disjointed
Design Agency:	Yeah
Interviewer:	Kind of
Design Agency:	And I imagine that's a lot easier to happen in bigger companies. So that's really important to make sure the studio knows what's happening. In my own studio, I'm moving brands that, I won't tell you about them.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	So that 50 people in London, and studios in San Francisco and New York as well. And even, even years, 17 years ago, before I left, we had kind of big gatherings where everyone would, more like an evening event, and we'd have work and show.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	Its as much done for clients and things but...
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	But yeah, I think if we were 30 people, id certainly want that happening a bit more often. I don't think we need to at the moment because we're, we can meet every two weeks and there's only usually four or five people. So it's a bit more easier to manage.
Design Agency:	You know, a certain [inaudible 00:14:58] is important. Its quite easy to not realize if somebody doesn't know about like a piece of work
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	Or you know, something we've done in the past or...Yeah, it's quite important to make sure that you join the dots and give them people with background.
Interviewer:	Its amazing that someone can sit and next to someone and still not know what they're doing otherwise.
Design Agency:	My daughter interns at moving brands at the moment. On work experience.
Interviewer:	How old is she?
Design Agency:	She's 15.
Interviewer:	That's a pretty cool way to experience.
Design Agency:	And her friend Olivia's here now.
Interviewer:	Oh wow.

Design Agency: So they've been meeting for lunch.

Interviewer: Are they in your team?

Design Agency: Yeah [inaudible 00:15:38]

Interviewer: Crazy.

Design Agency: Yeah. What...that's ten, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yeah wow. That's quite scary.

Design Agency: They've done it four times before, I think.

Interviewer: And how did they find it?

Design Agency: Good, I hope.

Interviewer: Yeah

Design Agency: Yeah

Interviewer: That's cool. We've had some, it's mostly year twelves or when they're finished their GCSE's and their IB. They always, they look overwhelmed.

Design Agency: Tia's loving it. It's interesting that she's gone in and she's come out telling me about the studio. And she's gotta tote back and stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah

Design Agency: It's quite sweet.

Interviewer: So a she on...she's not on holiday as part of this school curriculum.

Design Agency: School curriculum. It's work experience week and they will have to find summer.

Interviewer: So it's just a week that they do.

Design Agency: Yeah

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: It's a shame its only a week.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Design Agency: I think two weeks would be better.

Interviewer: The couple of weeks would be really good.

Design Agency: You try and give everyone...Olivia's doing a bit of Gates research and she's doing some Black Mirror.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Trying to give her a bit of a spread of things. But not just leave her on her own.

Interviewer: No. It's hard to give them a full immersive experience in one week, I guess.

Design Agency: It's as much though experience of work as well as life experience Just sit in a meeting and seeing little things. Like Tia's been asking me how early do I turn up if I start at 10? What? Two or three minutes? She'd call me at three minutes and say, can I buzz now or should i wait another minute?

Design Agency: Just little things like that, like what shall i wear? When do I go for lunch? how long do i have for lunch?

Interviewer: if they say lunch is an hour, am I supposed to have an hour or am I supposed to come back before then? i think possibly some design graduates could do with some things like that.

Design Agency: Callum and Josh have no problem with that. they take an hour.

Interviewer: oh right.

Design Agency: they don't take any longer. they'll often go out together.

Interviewer: no i mean just even having any kind of work experience. some of the graduates ive talked to haven't done any work experience or they've been at university so...

Design Agency: Really?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: it just hasn't occurred so yeah, first internship or job has been the first time they've actually...

Design Agency: Yeah. The second year is the ideal time to do it.

Interviewer: Yeah. not all universities do. so it's quite crazy.

Design Agency: It's not necessarily the university's, although maybe it should be the universities responsibility.

Interviewer: I think a lot of them are outside of areas where you can easily feed them into the design industry. it's a lot harder for them. it think one of the graduates I talked to had never gone into a studio before she applied for jobs.

Design Agency: Yeah

Interviewer: So she just...

Design Agency: Pretty daunting, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yeah. if you could reflect on when, I know that Callum and Josh started at different times, but if you could reflect on when they both started individually? could you tell me how you think most of their learning and development has happened?

Design Agency: Fairly organically. you sort of absorb a lot. Josh is an incessant inquisitor. asking questions if he doesn't understand something. Or he wants to know, he'll just ask. He's not afraid to ask at all. Callum's perhaps a little less forthcoming.

Interviewer: How do you...Josh does ask so many questions and Callum is quieter. Do you think about that and try and approach them in two different ways or do you try and talk to Callum separately or kind of, like, ask him if he's okay. If he doesn't ask as many questions naturally, or is ...

Design Agency: I think the answers to those questions tend to come out of reviewing the work. Anyway, naturally.

Design Agency: Might perhaps be more efficient if... I don't know whether I need to encourage him to ask more questions. I think that there's been many instances where I wish he'd asked me that two days ago.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's just his different learning style.

Design Agency: Perhaps a little more subdued. Josh will just talk and talk and talk.

Interviewer: And when you say this, when we review the work, so that's part of your process of designing?

Design Agency: Yeah, well there's the regular design reviews. They happen every two weeks.

Interviewer: You talk about informal process ones.

Design Agency: There are project...so we'll have project meetings. Either sometimes with the client, sometimes internally. I don't know how...I don't have a strategy for how I do that.

Interviewer: It's an organic [inaudible 00:20:32]

Design Agency: I try to just, kind of, I guess not overwhelm them too much feedback. I try and keep it focused. Like here are five things you need to, rather than blurting and kind of a mind dump of stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah

Design Agency: Sometimes, I do do that.

Interviewer: They seem fine. So do you have any goals and aims for Callum and Josh? and are these discussed with them? I know you said you do the reviews. We'll say the annual review. But then I guess, do you have any goals and aims for them within Applied Works? In kind of a short term ish way. For the next year or something?

Design Agency: it's really continuing the progression of it. I don't really want to put too much because you know, we have asked the question. and we don't feel like we're doing a good job. So it's not...I think it's something we need to keep asking them. We do, it's more a studio progression and how they fit in to that rather than where do you want to be?

Design Agency: We do ask those questions but we are doing... Tom is initiating a few things where around the studio. The studio culture. The studio progression.

Interviewer: Yeah

Design Agency: Thing like which clients you'd like to be working for? How do we get in front of those clients? How can we be... what events should we be going to? Just more of where are we going as a business?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Design Agency: Than what's this role going to be? Because they are quite happy for now.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Coming to work, doing the work. And I think that's fine.

Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	You know. Ask me this time next year. I probably be, maybe say, yeah. Now's the time to start thinking.
Interviewer:	Yeah. That's fine. And so do you, and this is a general question and it's not about Callum and Josh or you know, design [inaudible 00:22:45]. Do you think the design industry have a responsibility towards recent graduates in any way?
Design Agency:	I think we have a responsibility to… I think it goes deeper than that. i think we have a responsibility to bring people into the industry from school. That's quite a scratch the surface with that question because it's not a particularly inclusive industry.
Design Agency:	That's extremely apparent, actually. In terms of the people you meet and people that come in. We're doing work with a design council at the moment and we have with them. The Arts Council around the cuts in funding and…
Interviewer:	Art and design and schools.
Design Agency:	For art and design and schools. The difficulty or perhaps not the acknowledgement of the importance of design in the wider to quote "4th Industrial Revolution".
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	And design's role in innovation and technology. It's a huge question so it's more our responsibility to that then it is a graduate coming to the industry. It's… you know about incubator and everything that's happened there.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	So Brock and Rowan, Chip's board. Don't know if Josh mentioned… I mentioned them last time, I think, didn't I?
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	So they've created this resin-free sheet material from potato waste. They were at the London Merrill entrepreneur's award. Final 10.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	They were beaten by a particularly good disposable sanitary towel product. But they were, I would say, properly placed second.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	Out of 10. Really, really impressive… what they're doing. And they are kind of the epitome of that potential. For what design graduates can be doing in the broader industry, in the broader kind of, from an ecological point of view, from a technological point of view. Yeah, so I think there's a responsibility there, and as I said, I don't know how, but there's definitely a need for more inclusive …
Interviewer:	Yeah
Design Agency:	Ethnically diverse design workforce. I think they have that. They have to crack that one. You can only imagine, the earlier, the younger…
Interviewer:	Definitely. I find that it is quite crazy in the, always in the news with the Brexit, and they're always talking about manufacturing industries. It's the creative industries

that are bigger than the manufacturing. Why are you not concentrating on that? Why, you know, it just gets sidelined.

Design Agency: It's undervalued. No question about it.

Interviewer: And you know I know, the government likes stem subjects, but there should be no … there should be no reason why art and design isn't important.

Design Agency: No. STEAM isn't.

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:26:05]

Design Agency: [inaudible 00:26:10]

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:26:10]

Design Agency: Unhelpful acronyms but…

Interviewer: That's just…

Design Agency: Design is a part of that.

Interviewer: It is

Design Agency: Should be a part of that.

Interviewer: It's frustrating. Cool. And that's all the questions that I have.

Design Agency: OK…

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD1-AW

Interviewer: Okay. That's all working. So, how's everything been going here since we last talked?

Graduate: Yeah. Fine, yeah. Great.

Interviewer: What month did you … It was March-

Graduate: March?

Interviewer: … I think, from memory. Yeah, it was probably about three months ago.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Maybe. [crosstalk 00:00:20]

Graduate: Yeah. Like I said, we've been quiet, doing more self initiated projects, along with a little bit of actual work.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: I think we've been doing a lot of comparing for projects, perspective work. I think yeah.

Interviewer: And what's that been like?

Graduate: It's been all right. We haven't really been … It hasn't really been me or Callum. It's not really been a design kind of job. It's been more of the admin, project management, scoping kind of stuff.

Interviewer: So slightly different than what you're used to, but kind of-

Graduate: Yeah, just helping out with a few assets, if anything. Like an image or two just to show some of what we look like.

Interviewer: So it's still quite an important part of the company that obviously you need to-

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So do you think your expectations of the role are still being met and you're happy with everything?

Graduate: Yeah. Definitely. Yeah, we've been expanding more. Since we've got more downtime, I've been able to learn more personal skills, more development work. Like last time, building upon that quite a lot. Even got a tutorial on Photoshop … nice work yesterday from Joe, which was good.

Interviewer: So when you say skills are they software skills or are they beyond software skills or sorts? Or-

Graduate: I would say they were a bit of software skills. I did do a project for design counsel which was quite editorial. And there was some - bit of crave in that direction with the illustrator. That's the kind of skills we learn a lot.

Interviewer: Cool. So, slightly diversifying in what you've done and you've been picking up new skills through different jobs.

Graduate: Yeah. With different projects, you learn different skills.

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Interviewer:	Cool. And do you think within your role is things developing, and what would be your next plans within the role?
Graduate:	I don't... I don't really know. I mean, it's like levels of ... basically if you look at like the designer's a career, it's just design junior, mid-way, lead, then head of design but then you don't really- It's not ever really a different role. It's just based on experience, and you get a bigger pay bracket for sure. But the role, strictly speaking, is the exact same so I don't really know. Probably just keep on doing what I'm doing and learning and stuff like that. Yeah.
Interviewer:	Fair enough. And how has applied work been helping support and develop your training role since I've last talked to you?
Graduate:	Well yeah with the self-initiated, with the Black Mirror projects, there's been a few what's called dev reviews which we've been sitting on with the dev team and chatting about some of the dev projects we've been doing, including the ones that I've been writing. Stuff on, talking about some of that stuff. And then we've been looking at doing training calls, so it's for more development style work. So we've mentioned it to Tom and I think he's going to follow up to Darren and Paul about it, stuff like that.
Interviewer:	Is that any specific type of training, or was it-
Graduate:	It's to do with Node.js, which is a JavaScript library. It's server-side stuff.
Interviewer:	Cool. Okay. Cause it's some software-
Graduate:	Coding, yeah, actually coding.
Interviewer:	But it's stuff like that. And ... how have you supported your own development since I last talked to you? What have you done yourself that you think has helped your learning and development?
Graduate:	... been watching a few more YouTube titles. Quite a lot. There's a good channel called The Coding Train, which is a really bad name. But that's got- it actually explains it really well, because it's mainly direct people who've done other [c 00:04:17] code, it's quite good. So having somewhat of an understanding of how it should work so I can understand a bit more.
Graduate:	Yeah, and I'm doing that a lot. I haven't been really busy cause it's getting closer to showtime and I move, so I haven't actually had a lot of time to do my own stuff.
Interviewer:	When you say it's showtime-
Graduate:	Yes, the degree showtime. So there's load of degree shows-
Interviewer:	You're gonna go to them.
Graduate:	Yes, yes. So, I went to King's Illustration last night. And there's the Kingston Graphics on Thursday, there's Winchester Graphics, LCT, there's those.
Interviewer:	And are you going because you're interested, or is there another reason?
Graduate:	Bit of both. I mean, I went to Kingston, so I knew people in the year below. So that's why I went to Illustration, and I'm going on Thursday cause my girlfriend's in that, yeah. But I mean, Winchester College Winchester. And then LCT, it's just interesting seeing them, and new designers. I've wanted to go for a while, and so, generally speaking, quite interesting seeing their work.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Cool.

Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And can you tell me something that's happened at work that you've felt really positive about, in terms of your own performance or development?
Graduate:	Yeah, well. When the design council site that we built for design school, when that was actually built, development-built, that was really positive, I'd say. I was quite impressed how it came out. I was quite happy that it was a real thing.
Interviewer:	So, was it that it was kind of like your project and it was out there, and you can-
Graduate:	Yeah, pretty much.
Interviewer:	-and you can look at it, and see it.
Graduate:	Yeah, cause some of the work we do we can't show people because it's for a pretend client. You can't really put it out there. This one is a piece that I could put out there and I can show people. So even with Dan and all that.
Interviewer:	Cool. And were the clients really happy as well? And-
Graduate:	Yeah, they seemed really happy.
Interviewer:	So it felt like something you'd started overseeing, and finished-
Graduate:	Yeah, pretty much.
Interviewer:	-and it was like a complete project that was-
Graduate:	And it got built as well. It was literal ... from conception to end.
Interviewer:	So about like you almost had complete ownership of it and-
Graduate:	In a way, yeah.
Interviewer:	I know with people being involved, but it's probably- was it one of the first things that you really felt was yours?
Graduate:	Yeah, I think it's the second thing, but yeah.
Interviewer:	And has there been something at work where you felt a bit less positive, or maybe a bit unsure about, or that hasn't gone so well since I last spoke to you, and you've reflected on that?
Graduate:	Not really. I would say we've been quite quiet. We haven't done loads and loads. So no, not really. Sorry.
Interviewer:	That's fine. It's good. And how do you feel about the way that applied works are helping you learn and develop your skills in this role?
Graduate:	Good. Well, fine, yeah. Nothing to complain about.
Interviewer:	And is-
Graduate:	Could be better than [less 00:07:34] jobs. Well, definitely better than non-design jobs.
Interviewer:	And is there anything you think that they could do, that you'd like them to do that would help you? Any more, anything else, or something further?

Graduate:	I've been trying to convince everyone that we should make a game. Cause there's a lot of other studios that are somewhat our competitors and they've been building games. And I've been really-
Interviewer:	Like and app game.
Graduate:	Yeah, like those two dudes, Monument Valley, said that they're bringing out a typography golfing game. I said we should make a game. Cause that'd be fun and I think we'd all learn a lot of different things.
Interviewer:	And what's the response been? Have they go ahead, but you take charge of it?
Graduate:	I don't think I'd be able to build that, so I've got to get the whole studio on board. I don't know, I feel like if I came along with a concept, they'd be a bit more open.
Graduate:	But there's another thing. We're working on a charts app. That's an R&D one. That's me and Colin building that. You've gotta be really positive about that. So I think you've gotta do one thing at a time.
Interviewer:	So maybe once you've finished that, you can-
Graduate:	Yeah, maybe when that's a success, then we can do the-
Interviewer:	You can push your concept further. That's cool. And-
Graduate:	This is really good.
Interviewer:	What is it?
Graduate:	It's goji berry and green tea.
Interviewer:	Oh, wow. Crazy.
Interviewer:	So, what type of learning structure do you think in the workplace would help you learn further, or are you not really thinking about that?
Graduate:	I don't really think about it. Off the top of my head, I don't think there would be one that would make us learn better. Cause it's not like we feel like we can't ask questions. I feel like if it was a massive corporation where there's a hundred people, then yeah, you need more structure for that. But we've got like 10 people. You really can just ask.
Interviewer:	And do you think that that's actually a benefit?
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely. I used to think that I'd- well, when I left [Juniors 00:09:40], I thought, oh I really want to work at Google, that'd be really great, oh, they do cool stuff. And since being here, the more I think about being- because I've obviously worked in big companies and stores and stuff, I was like, I don't want to go back to a big company. It's just not that good.
Interviewer:	I've talked to people who've worked in Google and Amazon and stuff. It's pretty crazy.
Graduate:	Really? Wow. I know a few people who work ... well, I know two people who work in Google, and they seem to like it, but they ... dunno. They never tell you anything more than that.
Interviewer:	It's not-
Graduate:	Yeah, you always wonder if they're lying.

Interviewer:	It's quite forlorn.
Interviewer:	So how do you imagine that you will develop your role further in terms of ... in the studio? How do you want it to develop further?
Graduate:	I mean, ideally on the same trajectory I'm going now. Which is getting better, I think. A bit more responsibility. Being... creative ideas and taking it more seriously, improve that thought process.
Graduate:	(silence)
Graduate:	Yeah. I think... yeah. That's pretty much, yeah, that'd be the best way.
Interviewer:	Yeah, fair enough. And what schools have turned out to be the most useful since you've been here that you've brought to this studio?
Graduate:	Well, I've got what everyone else has got, just skills that I learn and have brought into a place.
Interviewer:	Well, just things that, I don't know, maybe that people here find that you do particularly well, or-
Graduate:	Well, hm.
Interviewer:	It might not be a design skill, it might be something that you contribute to the company in a different way.
Graduate:	Maybe curiosity? That's a skill, I guess. I have some questions, questioning things, stuff like that. Chatting to people, just generally speaking. Go around going, what you doing? What you doing? What you doing? Being a bit like a five-year-old.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Fair enough. So, it's kind of like bringing your open-mindedness to the studio.
Graduate:	Yeah. Cause I mean everyone does problem solving, so I can't really claim that as my own.
Interviewer:	Sorry, there's something really ... making my throat go crazy.
Interviewer:	So, if you can reflect on when you first started here, and now, how do you feel most of your learning and development has occurred?
Graduate:	Through doing. Yeah, largely through doing.
Interviewer:	And have you enjoyed learning like that, or-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	-would you prefer to learn in a different way?
Graduate:	Yeah, no, definitely. No, it's the kind of ... you do it. At Kingston it's quite big on thinking ... They call it thinking through making. There's a lot of areas for that. So for [inaudible 00:12:47] it's the kind of way you sort of do it, like it, follow it.
Interviewer:	Sorry
Graduate:	That's alright.
Interviewer:	There's something ... really really irritating me. It's crazy.

Graduate: It's not hay fever, is it?

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:13:03] ... Are you happy learning like that, or would you prefer to learn in a different way? So you're talking about learning through doing, and thinking through making, and so-

Graduate: Yeah, yeah. So, that's how they taught you before, and that's kind of how I learned all the foundation at least. And I kind of did it anyway. It's kinda [inaudible 00:13:29]. Kinda charge head-on, right.

Interviewer: So it feels like that's the way it's always happened so you've been studying. And so it feels like a natural progression of that

Graduate: Yeah, I feel like it's just on my own time, learning [inaudible 00:13:43] as opposed to reading books and stuff. I can read books, but I don't know, I just don't take as much in and I get a bit frustrating. I feel like I can't actually do it.

Interviewer: And is there any other part of the job that you think you could- that sort of design learning. Is there any part of the job, so like client presentations, or ... dealing with clients, or any other types of roles that are involved with the job that aren't design based that you could learn about?

Graduate: Yeah, I think just kind of observing. Obviously kids watch their parents a lot and they learn that way, so I think observing, you learn a lot of how to interact with clients that way. ... And generally asking questions like, why are you doing that. Stuff like that.

Interviewer: Do you think that there's been someone here that you have felt has kind of mentored your or been a particular inspiration since you've been here, or do you think it's just everyone?

Graduate: Funny you use the word inspiration, [inaudible 00:14:56] I just don't think I've ever used that word. I think everyone kind of mentors everyone, even ... well, particularly, I've said Joe, Tash and Paul. Cause they're the people that are distinct pros. Clients and [inaudible 00:15:15] project manager, like. And they kind of teach different things in different ways.

Interviewer: Right. But generally having them about, they're the people that you're probably overlearning off mostly.

Graduate: Yeah. Largely. I mean, I think if you add ... if Briony was here and she wasn't on maternity leave, she'd definitely, probably be the top mentor. But because she's on maternity leave-

Interviewer: Yeah, she's not around. But there's plenty of other people to learn from anyway, so it's fine.

Interviewer: And so, do you have any work goals and aims for the future? But in your head do you have an idea of what you want to do?

Graduate: I don't really. I did say after a year I'd sit and think, it hasn't gotten to a year yet. But ... I think it's ... I think I know the type of studio I want to work out of, which is this one, where it combines digital and technology. And through working I've found more. So I've been reading up about the [Senate 00:16:10], and in every aspect they're quite similar to us. And they do a lot of cool stuff that I like, where as right now, I just think I'm gonna work at ... it'd just be continue being a designer, keep learning, and maybe start by next year at some point. But I think most designers do that, but it takes a lot of learning before you can do it.

Interviewer: Yeah, a lot of business stuff, isn't there.

Graduate: Yeah, there's a lot of admin stuff. I feel like, yeah. Especially there's a lot of stuff you can learn from being in a design studio, so doing [corner 00:16:41] design and stuff like that.

Interviewer: And do you think that's something that you're happy you've learnt since you've been working, or do you feel that that's something you could've learnt at university, or is it something you don't feel-

Graduate: No, you couldn't have done that in university at all. Even when you get projects for the studio, it's still not the same. And there's lots of words you use that they don't understand, and don't know and just things that why, why do you need to that, but you do need to do that because you're talking to people who aren't designers. You need to do it that way, because otherwise they're not gonna get it.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. And since I last talked to you and this time, has either of these interviews made you think about your learning in any way?

Graduate: ... Not in a mean way, but no.

Interviewer: That's fine.

Graduate: No, I mean, cause it's not like it's a problem or that's something to be fixed. I feel like if you can't do it now, it's like, eh, it's not really great, but, I'd probably be like, oh, yeah, actually, this could be better. But because it's pretty good, it's like I can't see ... I haven't really thought about it.

Interviewer: No, that's good.

Graduate: Happened with one of your reviewers, whether it was the following year or after, but they brought up the training costs around their review, but I can't remember for the life of me when that was.

Interviewer: And this annual review, do you think that is a useful thing?

Graduate: Yeah. I thought it was. I don't really like ... I get quite nervous around them, I don't know why. But I always feel like they're gonna fire me. Someone would've fired me beforehand, but you still get really nervous. But it was quite a good thing to know that you're not being shit, and you're doing the right job.

Interviewer: So even though it made you nervous, you managed to come out of it at the end, probably a little bit clearer about ... matching what you think with them is probably not as much difference as you believe that there is that the-

Graduate: Yeah, I think it was just a bit more of an understanding of-

Interviewer: Cool.

Graduate: -what I like doing. If it's a sign and [inaudible 00:18:42] and stuff like that I kinda want to get out. Similar to I guess how this conversation's going.

Interviewer: Cool. Do you think that the first year out of university is ... has it been for you quite an interesting time in terms of twist and turn and unexpectance, or has it been quite plain sailing and you've found it relatively easy?

Graduate: I think it's probably been easier than some people because some people didn't get a job right as quick as I did. But even though I got a job it still was not plain sailing at all. Cause there's still a million things could go wrong. There's just as much stuff I'll think about, and you don't have as much time to sort everything out as when you sort out your own life, cause once you get work, you need to plan around that and figure that out.

Interviewer:	Are you, in a way, looking forward to next ... the coming year because it will seem more stable in your head, or do you know?
Graduate:	I'd say I'm not worried at all. Yeah, I feel like it's gonna be fine.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Graduate:	I'm not worried. I don't think there's gonna be too many problems. I think it could be a bit more like what do I want to do kind of thing, chill out a bit.
Interviewer:	Definitely. And I know you've been to a few shows, but do you have any advice for graduates coming up, like new graduates? And what would you advise them about entering the design industry and leaving university now?
Graduate:	I think the biggest thing would be ... it's funny, because we were actually chatting about people getting jobs and how it's not impossible to get a design job. It might not be the one you want straight away, but it's not impossible. Cause you just got to talk to people, meet people. Just meet people. Someone will know someone, and they'll know someone. I got my ... I met a load of people through [tutors 00:20:39] knowing people. Just ask them about their email and email them. And then you go meet them, and you don't go, "Oh, can I have an internship?" "Yo, can I meet you and just chat about design and stuff like that?" And you might ask them about their firm and you get to know them and they go, "Oh, you should go chat with these people. This is an email, email this one for an internship and see if you can get one."
Graduate:	That's the best way. If you just sit at home emailing [inaudible 00:21:00], you'll never get through. I couldn't get any replies, but I got a job, so, clearly that isn't the right way to do it. It's not like I'm unhireable.
Interviewer:	So basically getting yourself out there in a friendly way, rather than-
Graduate:	Yeah, and be annoying as possible, but in the most friendly way.
Interviewer:	A friendly annoying person. Cool.
Interviewer:	And just one last question that isn't about you specifically, but do you feel that the design industry have got a sense of responsibility to help graduates when they're first out of university?
Graduate:	... I dunno. [inaudible 00:21:43] and you should kinda make it work for you. I feel like there's a responsibility not to rip them off, going back to the internship game. You can't take advantage of them, that's not fair, and you should treat them as normal people, as any employee you would have. But equally, I don't feel like they should be more like being [inaudible 00:22:02], you've gotta learn how to do those things on your own. Like you can't be [inaudible 00:22:07] and copy [inaudible 00:22:11] all your life.
Interviewer:	So what you were talking about before, you were going out and meeting people and doing stuff. That's something you've got up and done yourself and they also have [crosstalk 00:22:19]
Graduate:	Yeah, I know someone who doesn't do that. Doesn't really have a reason for why they don't do that, they just think that keeping emailing will do that, will work. Cause that is how you get a job in a store, you apply online and you get an interview. But it's not the same in design because everyone knows each others.
Interviewer:	So you think it's almost a two way thing, how both sides have got an equal responsibility to be decent people to each other.
Graduate:	Yeah.

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD2-AW

Interviewer: But how is everything been going since we last talked in your role?

Graduate: Yeah, well, I've really been enjoying it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Yeah, I supposed we've sort of come into a bit of time where we're freed up a bit more.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: And so can focus in a bit more on sort of R&D projects.

Interviewer: Yeah. And how are you finding that?

Graduate: Yeah, really fun. Its good to be able to sort of depend to things we're all sort of got invested interests in.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Some more...

Interviewer: Yeah, so does it feel that when you work on that you are more involved as in the company so to speak or the studio?

Graduate: Yeah, sort of. Yes, everyone sort of...

Interviewer: ...Chips in together.

Graduate: ...Chips in together.

Graduate: Yeah, just sort of interest wise more so invested in what's going on.

Interviewer: Okay, and so I guess that means your expectations of your role here are being met and you're happy in your role?

Graduate: Yeah. I suppose it's been quite good few months.

Interviewer: Cool. And how are you finding your roles developing? Is it [inaudible 00:01:17], or is more of the same or do feel [crosstalk 00:01:19]

Graduate: Yeah, I suppose its been pretty sort of similar.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: But yeah just with the sort of downtime there's maybe more time for sort of learning skills.

Interviewer: Yes.

Graduate: So as, I said before we've sort of both, me and Josh do both design and developing.

Interviewer: Cool.

Graduate: To have the time to sort of practice the developing side of it a bit more helps to...

Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	...sort of learn new bits about it.
Interviewer:	And do you enjoy doing that part of it? Is it some kind of route you would like to go further down?
Graduate:	Yeah, potentially. I'm sort of undecided, I still quite enjoy both sides of it.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Good to have a balance.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Interviewer:	And does it any applied work helping support you in that area that you want learn in or currently wanting to learn in? Are they helping you out?
Graduate:	Yes. I suppose it's quite independent at this point, but there's been sort of talk about potentially doing some courses and stuff like that.
Interviewer:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Are you allowed to learn it at work as an independent venture but you have got time at work to do that and then [crosstalk 00:02:42]
Graduate:	Yes, sort of. Maybe more through practically doing something...
Interviewer:	Right.
Graduate:	...rather than set time to do sort of my own thing.
Interviewer:	So its through work that you get the opportunity to learn it?
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	And then they're happy for you to kind of learn and take the little time...
Graduate:	Little time out, yes.
Interviewer:	Work your way through it,
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	If it's a new type of approach or something.
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Interviewer:	And so, is there anything you've done yourself that's helped support your learning in development since I've last talked to you? And when these things happen? New skills you learned.
Graduate:	Probably not necessarily. I suppose its just sort of supplementing whatever I do here with in work, outside of work as well.
Interviewer:	Yes.

Interviewer:	Joe said you have been on some talks or some no, have you been on some talks or something?
Graduate:	Yes. InDesign, industry stuff I guess.
Graduate:	Yeah we've been to a few sort of talks after work, and stuff. Just from, so with other creatives. And going to exhibitions a bit more.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And do you find that, you don't really classify them as learning, you just class it as just being generally interested?
Graduate:	Yeah, I suppose it's just keeping in touch with everything else that's going on.
Interviewer:	And do you think it's important as a designer to be involved in, well, looking at what other people are doing?
Graduate:	Yeah, I think so, to some degree. It's always, without trying to let things influence your own way of working too much.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Just sort of what you go over in Uni.
Interviewer:	Yeah, yeah.
Graduate:	But, yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Interviewer:	And could you tell me something positive that's happened at work in the last couple of months since I've last talked to you, when you've done something that you felt really good about in terms of perhaps, delivering a job, or, something work-wise that has been positive?
Graduate:	Yeah, I suppose.
Graduate:	Just sort of finishing a few projects up before we started was really good, to just have a closing point with things that had been going on for quite a while. And then also, within the sort of R&D work, we've been doing some of the outcomes from that, has been really good to sort of reach and surprising in a way, that we've managed to get quite far with it.
Graduate:	And being relative rookies.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And do you find that type of work interesting, and an unusual departure from what you were doing? Is it...
Graduate:	Yeah, it's more explorative. Especially at the start. I suppose the bit I enjoyed is that there's quite a few ideas bubbling around, but then getting to a place where you find something that would be really good, and it gets to a place where you can present that in a way that everyone else is on board with.
Interviewer:	Yeah, sure.
Graduate:	It's been quite good.

Interviewer:	It's almost like having missed boundaries to really...
Graduate:	Yeah, where there's less time restraints and restrictions. You've got a day here and there you can maybe try something that you're not succeeding in the end. But if you do, then there's a bit of a payoff with it.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so sometimes it's worth while.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Has there been any moments, oh, that didn't go well. Next time I might do it like this.
Graduate:	I suppose only had a period a while back where I went back to my old Uni, and did a workshop there, as well as a talk to some students. And then went back and did some crits. I suppose, just looking back on that, was a bit at the end of it, had not really set that up in the right way.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so you were kind of critiquing what you'd done? And thought...
Graduate:	Yeah, what I'd done and there was maybe, needed a bit more preparation.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Would you do it again?
Graduate:	Yeah, probably. Not sure I enjoyed one side of it more than the other.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Critiquing other people's work was a lot easier than trying to run a workshop with everyone, running around, and some not wanting to be there, basically.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Oh, yeah. I guess it makes you realize how full-on it must be for tutors though.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	How do you feel about the way Applied Works are helping you learn and develop skills on the job?
Graduate:	Good. I think there's no restrictions from being able to go and try something.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And when we're quite small, it's always sort of a bit of a case of mucking in to get something done. Yeah, I think, on the whole, it's not like you're ever prevented from doing something, because you're not trusted or anything like that, so.
Interviewer:	And do you feel that you would be able to, pretty much within reason, be asked to be able to get on with something if you wanted to do it?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yep. So it doesn't feel like you're restricted in any way whatsoever, really.
Graduate:	No, not that there's any sort of thing you couldn't ask help for, or...
Interviewer:	Yeah.

Interviewer:	And you're just happy kind of asking help if you need it?
Graduate:	Yeah. Yeah.
Interviewer:	Is there anything else that could be done, or that you think you could learn. Like, any instructions put in place that might help you learn more, or are you...
Graduate:	Not really that I can think of, I suppose. Again, it's sort of just due to scale.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Of the size that we are, there's not endless amount of people with time to help you learn things.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	No, nothing I could say.
Interviewer:	Yeah, you're happy.
Interviewer:	And, how do you imagine, you develop your role further here over time?
Graduate:	Good question. I've not massively thought about it. To be honest, obviously, just having sort of progression. More senior role over time. Just more responsibility and more trusting your own decisions, I suppose.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	I've not got a direct aim at this point.
Interviewer:	Do you think perhaps the reason why you haven't thought about it is because the amount of time that you've been out of university and the amount of time that you've been in the role, it's not really the type of thing that you even think about because you're concentrating on other, just learning, and doing the role, it's quite immersive.
Graduate:	Yeah, to a degree, yeah. I mean, just starting, to a degree.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	In something like this. I suppose slightly as well, so it's being able to, like where I do stuff on my own anyway.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	It's maybe about seeing, thought about more of a future, really. Could I do things myself. Always at the studio.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And have there been any skill that you have used recently, which have been really useful within Applied Works? And it doesn't necessarily have to be design skills.
Graduate:	Not really sure, to be honest. In what, sort of...?
Interviewer:	So it might be you've discovered you're really good at presenting, or, that you feel like you've learned some new skills and that's actually been really useful, or you've built upon skills. It's just.

Graduate:	Okay.
Graduate:	I suppose it's like, looking at stuff from the end user perspective of becoming more comfortable. And that's something I've noticed when I did my own stuff, like lend on experiences and things that I've done here. It's always have that focus of, how is it going to be used in the end.
Interviewer:	And is that something that possibly, you haven't done in the past? Because at university, you don't really need to, and perhaps being in a design agency has made you bring that into focus more?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Graduate:	I think it's definitely more of a priority, because you're working on a real world thing as opposed to a project in uni can be quite, just in the sphere of uni.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	In a way, that it never really has much reach outside of, reach outside of that. Yeah, I'd suppose that would be one thing I'd be critical of courses lack having that focus.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Speaker 3:	Would you guys like tea?
Interviewer:	Oh, no, I'm fine, thank you.
Graduate:	I'm alright, Tish.
Interviewer:	If you reflect on when you first started here, to now, how do you think most of your learning and developing has happened?
Graduate:	Probably in the same way I mentioned, just through being given jobs, and getting on with things. Learning by doing, really.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And how's that kind of made you feel when you're doing it? Does it feel normal, do you feel like there's been times when you've felt really good about it?
Graduate:	Yeah, I suppose so. To always be given the trust to go for things, and to get on with it. I suppose it's, been quite easy doing that through...
Interviewer:	Your work beforehand.
Graduate:	Works before.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And so, what are your goals and aims in the future, work-wise? That you mentioned you were talking about...sorry.
Graduate:	Improving skills, yeah, on that sort of developing side of things, being more competent to do larger projects, maybe.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And to, maybe take on more responsibility on that side of things. Just through, sort of learning more skills.

Interviewer: Since you've been here, has it kind of brought into focus what you like about design, or any area about design that you really like, you know. And always, maybe, focus what you don't want to do in design…

Graduate: Yeah, yeah. I think getting into an actual job allows you to, well, I suppose it forces you into doing both things. What you do like, and you don't like. So you learn through that. What your preferences are, and then aspirations, learning more of what you do like.

Interviewer: And, here's a general question.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the design industry has a responsibility to recent graduates at all?

Graduate: In what way?

Interviewer: Any way.

Graduate: The should have, or…

Interviewer: Well, some people might say they don't, but yeah, no, I guess I'm just wondering what your opinion is. Do you think they should have a responsibility?

Graduate: Yeah, sort of, to a degree. I think if you're in a position of power in a way of owning a studio, or just being in a job to be able to take things like that, to be able to give back to the university courses and stuff like that, any way you can.

Graduate: But also, not, I think to a certain degree. Because as a designer yourself, you have to go on the right to be able to get a good job. I don't think it should be sort of handout system, but.

Interviewer: Cool. And do you have any advice for graduates, for the graduates who are graduating now?

Graduate: Now.

Interviewer: Yep.

Graduate: I suppose. For starting out, would be, just make an effort to reach out to people. Because I think, definitely in this industry, people are happy to help you if you show willing.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: And then also, just do the things that you maybe don't enjoy, as well as you can. Because then that shows that you're competent and you can be trusted with more things.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Cool. And that was it.

Graduate: Oh, easy.

INTERVIEW ONE: DA-BB

Interviewer: Okay. I'll start with the actual questions for the research. How did you find Lydia, and how did her role come about at Baxter & Bailey?

Design Agency: We saw the need to boost the design results within the studio. At that point, we had two full-time designers, and took the decision to seek another. We knew that that was a junior designer. We were sufficiently busy enough to need it and saw the need to invest in that more for the longer term. The way in which we found Lydia was through a series of tasks around recruitment. We advertised the position on our website and via social media. We also tend to email our network or a selection of our network to link them back to the job advertisement. We put the job on a number of different other platforms or websites. One which we use is called the design jobs board-

Interviewer: Through Represents.

Design Agency: Represents design jobs board, which gets well looked at. A number of other blogs, FormFiftyFive springs to mind. We didn't advertise it in Design Week likely due to cost. It self-publicized really. It's Nice That is another place, actually it's their job spot which is called If You Could. That kind of means really, like self-initiated with a bit of investment in advertisements, but crucially not through recruitment agents.

Interviewer: Yes, yeah. Do you find that because of the type of places you're advertising, that you get a huge number of applicants, or do you find that ...

Design Agency: I would say the junior designer role would be the one where we've seen the largest amount of applications as opposed to say mid-weight or senior or project manager for example. The swell of interest would be in the younger design crowd, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Why did you choose Lydia?

Design Agency: I think that's largely down to a good body of work in the portfolio, but crucially a great personality, that we could see a cultural fit with the culture that we're trying to create as a studio. I always kind of say that a good designer is able to think and execute work and craft work above anything else, for them to be thoughtful and creative, but also it's important that it's in alignment with our values, which are purpose, substance and open mindedness, and Lydia ticks those boxes.

Interviewer: Okay. How is Lydia going? Is it how you imagined it to be? How long has she been working here so far?

Design Agency: Less than a year. I think Lydia started in June of this year and she's a graduate designer. What you might expect with that level of experience are the things that Lydia had. Keen interest in the design world, desire to do well and get on, contribute to the studio and the work. There's an ongoing process of feedback and appraisal, which we'll work on the areas of skills and competencies that develop over time, and there's a process in place to kind of help that. It's early days I guess but one step at a time and we'll see how things develop.

Interviewer: Did you think about taking her on as a work placement before offering her the role or were you very confident that you were just going to give her an interior designer role?

Design Agency: Sure. Part of the idea behind the student placement scheme is that ... Yes, please, Laurie.

Interviewer: No thank you.

Design Agency: Part of the idea behind the student placement scheme is that we will get to see more young graduate designers than we otherwise would, and there'll be some, we interview them, so there'll be some good and some perhaps less good, hopefully some brilliant. They're all interviewed prior to that part anyway. In theory, they should be all over in quality.

When it came to recruit for a junior designer role, we knew that that was a position, so we advertised it for a full-time role. We didn't, the placement scheme was in its real infancy then anyway. There is a logic there that says in theory should we need another junior designer in the future, the first place we might think is, I wonder if XYZ person has now got a job, and if not, maybe we can go back to them and say, "Look, there's a position here."

I think even whilst we might kind of go back and offer somebody a position, the likelihood is that we probably advertised the position and encouraged that person to apply for it. It's such an important thing for a studio of this size to recruit someone, that the process that you would go through, I think you have to give yourself the best chance of finding the very best person you can.

Interviewer: Yeah, and then you're getting people who are proactive coming to you as well.

Design Agency: Exactly. I think we'd do it that way. We'd probably advertise it and encourage anybody that we knew that had perhaps been to the studio to apply.

Interviewer: Yeah, but then open it out to the wider world.

Design Agency: I think so, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, cool. In terms of, I know Lydia only started in June, how do you see Baxter & Bailey as supporting and developing Lydia's learning? Obviously she is a recent graduate and this is, I don't think it's her first job or placement, but she is obviously developing and learning constantly. How do you feel the agency, or have you got any specific plan for developing her learning as a designer?

Design Agency: Everybody that's employed here has a more formal platform for appraisal and development. Obviously there's a three month appraisal and then an annual appraisal. Every appraisal we set between three and five key goals for areas of improvement, and they can vary massively from technical to creative to time management and all sorts of things. Each person has, because we're so small, the ability to come to Matt or myself and we would, we split that responsibility depending on the person.

We don't have a formal program of training and development, but we have done some training. This year we did some training around presentation skills for example, which we did as an entire team actually, rather than on an individual basis. There are other areas where we've identified the needs for individual support and improvement where we've invested in that. That's something that we're developing at the moment actually is a more formalized program of training and development. There's a fair degree of learning on the job, and there's a fair degree of working through issues with your direct report if you like from the design team largely, but basically it's into Matt as the exec creative director. That can be tackled on a project-by-project ...

Interviewer: So it's almost, it's learning that occurs which is not necessarily thought out but as you go, you're making adjustments and moving with the job or specific requirements that need tweaking, so somebody might be mentoring Lydia through a certain passage of work or something, and that's the kind of informal learning that's happening.

Design Agency: Yeah, it is broadly speaking. I think that's largely how a lot of design studios do.

Interviewer: It is. Do you think that there's anything beyond what you've described that you could facilitate learning in terms of graduate learning? I know that a lot of design agencies you kind of learn on the job, you learn through the experience of working and someone giving you tips along the way. Do you think there's a need for anything further in terms of learning in a design agency for graduates?

Design Agency: I mean, lots of things are relate back to budget and money, don't they? I think it'd be really, well, budget and money and commitments to projects, resources. There's a combination of factors whereby I think, to put in place a more robust training and development program would be really good. It's quite ambitious for us to do that in any kind of substantial level, but it's something that I think we like to work towards.

Over and above what we do now, if I could wave a magic wand and budget and resource weren't an issue, I think I would identify the range of different training development programs that might be of use, for example from technical and software skills to project management to creative development and inspirational stuff to interpersonal skills. I'd identify all of them, and then identify, put external partners that may be able to help and support us in all of those areas and establish those contacts, and then at any given time based on appraisal, match up a person with a training module and program with a particular person or agency.

That's the sort of system of training and development that might be more appropriate or affordable or realistic for a ...

Interviewer: For a larger agency.

Design Agency: For a larger agency, say like a 300 million when we're about 25 people. That becomes a little bit more important and doable. For us right now, it's less realistic but it's something I would aspire to.

Interviewer: Yes. Basically it needs to be appropriate for, it's almost for the size of the agency.

Design Agency: I think the size and scale of the agency, because as an agency grows and gets larger, there's more HR to do basically. It's very easy to lose sight of what everybody's doing and how everybody's doing, whereas right now with just the six of us, it's a little bit more straightforward.

Interviewer: Sure, yeah. It's something that you can do.

Design Agency: I think we manage it reasonably well. It would be nice to do more definitely, but it's not something that I'm overly concerned with. I think we're a kind of productive, happy team.

Interviewer: This is kind of the juxtaposition between a large agency where they can afford to do all the things possibly that you're talking about, whereas a smaller agency can be more personable maybe, although there's not specific areas that they could be training in or more tailor it with a bigger budget, but you can be available more because it's smaller.

Design Agency: Yeah. We definitely, there's more availability. We're all right here in this room. Yeah. It's a bit more of a familial feel if you like.

Interviewer: Okay. How has Lydia supported her own development since she's been here? Do you see this?

Design Agency: Here? I think there's a few things. One was to ask about a reading list within the first month of being here, which I thought was good. Healthy interest in industry events, specifically typography which is an area of passion for Lydia, but she's been to a number of events in Brighton or in London. I know that she has extracurricular interest in sign writing and painting, which is also really great to see. Asking questions, which is ...

Interviewer: It's important.

Design Agency: Which is a very important part of the landing process.

Interviewer: Do some of these extracurricular activities and interest in other areas of design, were they some of the things that when you interviewed her, were they things that stood out as-

Design Agency: That's a good question, that. I wouldn't say necessarily directly or specifically, but there's something that you can kind of, you can gauge from talking to somebody, that there's more going on than just any one thing. I think we've got a sense that there was more to life and a broader outlook and that's one of our values is open mindedness, to be single track focus on the world revolves around design is I think the wrong approach. It's the stuff that happens outside that provides the inspiration.

Interviewer: Cool. It doesn't always necessarily need to be completely design focused-

Design Agency: No, I think that's unhealthy. I genuinely think that's unhealthy. I think some of the most boring people that I've met have been the single track of design ...

Interviewer: The design nerds.

Design Agency: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Who can't leave the building.

Design Agency: Can't look beyond it, which is, it's a tragedy.

Interviewer: Oh no. Okay. That's good. In terms of Lydia's skill set, what has been useful when she arrived that you found you were really impressed with or has been a real help to Baxter & Bailey? What have you noticed as a recent graduate that she might need some training in those areas, kind of for the skill set good and bad?

Design Agency: It's perhaps a little early to say. I think that definitely slightly more bolder courageous leaps, which is quite often, you don't always find that with junior designers, but quite often it's that ability to have the idea in the first place, which is obviously a bit of a prerequisite as a designer, but then have the creative courage to just leap off and dive in and develop the potential of that idea and to do that, people do it in different ways, but to do that with no preconceptions kind of approach is really good I think. It kind of just gets a splurge out there, but that's quite difficult for young designers to do, because it's a little bit like ...

Interviewer: Fear factor.

Design Agency: Yeah, fear factor, worrying about whether it's going to be any good or what the feedback or criticism is, or the difference between a poorly drawn sketch and a beautifully executed sketch. It doesn't make the idea any less valid, and that's one thing we really have to try and nurture, is there's nothing to be afraid of here.

Interviewer: It's okay to make mistakes.

Design Agency: Yeah, particularly, thinking is good, it'll shine through, and then your ability to express it in a sketch, in words, you know, power of dance, whatever, is absolutely fine. I think that's something to work on.

                  Then another area of course and it comes with time is attention to detail and craft, that sort of pursuit of perfection thing, which is, or understanding the difference between the task and the potential within that task is another area that I think is ...

Interviewer: Yeah. That will only come with time and experience do you think?

Design Agency: Time, experience, confidence, the ability to jump off the diving board and not worry about necessarily how you're going to land.

Interviewer: Just do a big belly flop.

Design Agency: Yeah, it's all of that stuff.

Interviewer: Because one day you won't. Okay, that's cool. I think we've vaguely covered this, but in terms of Lydia's learning, you've mentioned that most of it takes place in the workplace and the mentor training course. What other types of places does Lydia's learning take place? I mean I think we've probably covered most of it, so I'm talking about workplace external, other things that she does which is I think a lot of repeat.

Design Agency: Yeah. Obviously there's the day-to-day studio life. There's also social side to this studio, which is not to be underrepresented, underestimated rather. I think agency culture can often be forged in the pub to some extent. We're not massive on that, but we do occasionally socialize, team drinks or team lunches for example. We have a Monday morning meeting every Monday for about half an hour, which is a no agenda meeting, which I think also helps build out conversations about other people's interests and things that are happening in the world, so that's quite interesting. Then there's local and London-based largely design events we've mentioned, which we will support and encourage people to go on and get a little bit of training.

We have a system of, there's always a manager for everybody, but what we don't have is a kind of official mentoring scheme. It's also something that we've maybe discussed from directors down. That might be just an area to look at, but we don't do it currently. The question then being, are those mentors within this building or are they external mentors is always a consideration.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Again, I think it's maybe down to you know, it feels like-

Interviewer: Time and budgets.

Design Agency: Yeah, a little bit.

Interviewer: That's fair enough. I'm going to ask, it's not supposed to be finding negatives in these few questions. Since Lydia's been here, has there been some major positives or something that she's done where you go, "Wow, that was really good"? On the flip side, I'm going to ask you the opposite, which is where you went, "Hmm, how can I help you more?"

Design Agency: Yeah. There's definitely been some ups and downs. I think on the positive side, it's that ability to dive in and give it a go in one or two instances, specific projects where there's been more of an opportunity to shine and that stood out. I think perhaps on the not so good is the confidence thing is a thing, like the belief in yourself is really important. Probably the ability to do something, check it yourself, ask somebody else to check it, check it again and then send it, that kind of processes ensuring that you're not exposed in any way. I have this phrase which is if you feel a little bit exposed by anything, it could be that niggling feeling that something's just not-

Interviewer: You've not quite done it right.

Design Agency: Yeah. It could be anything. It could be like it's been a bit long since I've responded to that person's inquiry or question or it could be that particular design element is bothering you and you haven't done anything about it. It's the ability to say, I'm not going to put this off, I'm going to throw myself into it and do it.

Another good phrase is that idea of good enough isn't. It's only good enough when you deem it to be really right. That philosophy around it'll do is not really the right one for a designer to have. You need that real energy and doggedness to make it just-

Interviewer: Definitely. At these points, obviously it sounds like, you've mentioned that you've talked about how Lydia could keep going or to turn it around or to enhance it, but if you see her in these situations, how do you ... How do you support her or maybe help her identify that something's not going right?

Design Agency: This would be largely Matt or maybe even more typically Rory or Emma, more senior designers that support Lydia more on a day-to-day basis. I would of thought that a lot of it is kind of at the source in a way. You hit a barrier, and you flag it. I think there's also an ability to say, you know, it might be something to do with resourcing or workload, the ability to say, actually I'm not sure how all of this is going to necessarily get done within this time period. Again, we've got to try to encourage designers at every level to flag that early so we plan every week to iron out the issues. I think a lot of it is at the point of need.

Interviewer: Self awareness.

Design Agency: Yeah, and self awareness. I think the whole process of appraisals and that continual conversation around development really help understand what the mid-term goals are as opposed to the day-to-day challenges, which as they're dealt with contribute to an improvement overall. We've seen that happen with Emma. Emma joined us, she's our mid-weight designer, she joined us at the very beginning, and we've just seen that journey of progression.

Interviewer: Sure. I would imagine that there's an element where you almost have to self-check yourself while you're working, but the appraisals give you an opportunity to perhaps when someone isn't as aware or they discussion might be more helpful in terms of opening that kind of dialogue about what went wrong, what went right, and what you can do. The ability to be self-motivated and to self-learn is obviously a day-to-day skill that they need.

Design Agency: Absolutely, proactive self-determination is how you'll get on I think in this industry. Without that, you-

Interviewer: Tend to languish a little bit.

Design Agency: Yeah, I think so. Inertia will set in. The two things that I really focus on are these things around focus and awareness, focus being anything between what I am doing this year, what am I doing today, and in the task, being really alert of the things you're actually trying to do, trying to achieve. The awareness thing is what's going on around that and elsewhere in the studio or elsewhere in the client's world that might have an effect.

Again, it can be really practical things, or it can be anything from the client's just not around next week because they're at a conference or something, so it's a really low level practical thing to have an awareness of, maybe stakeholders within the client team, something happening that you're thinking actually there's tremors here. Of course for a junior designer to take on both extremes is too much to ask, but that's why we're a team and levels of seniority can take on different aspects of that awareness. Good communication between us means that anyone can pick things up or have that awareness, and if they bring that to the rest of the team, that can only strengthen the ability to resolve it.

Interviewer: With that having a whole package, because quite often a graduate will come to a job or a workplace and they might have a stronger design, but say when you talk about dealing with clients, have you let Lydia in gently with things like that or kind of built up the other skills that might not come so easily to a recent graduate?

Design Agency: I think from the very, very outset, we want our young designers to have a degree of client contact as soon as possible, and Lydia's definitely got that. She's not going out and presenting work on her own just at the moment, but the sooner we get there the better. We want that to happen as soon as possible. There's a kind of journey of progression. Some people go really, really quick, some people go really, really slow. There's people that progress as you might expect really. I've seen all forms of that [inaudible 28:31]-

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, no, that's fine, and also just because they're going a bit slower than you might expect, it doesn't necessarily mean they're doing it badly.

Design Agency: They may be doing it better.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: What I have experienced is that people that perhaps show real creativity and flair and the ability to present well can accelerate much quicker in agencies, but quite often what's been missing is other competencies around management and time management, it's that creative maverick thing without-

Interviewer: I think we've all met someone like that.

Design Agency: Yeah. Again, it's back to big agencies and smaller agencies. Big agencies, you can have a few of those that just set the room on fire, alight and everybody loves. Therein lies the creative superstar that gets away with not washing up their tea cup.

Interviewer: I know what you mean. Yeah, I guess that's why you need a right fit for your team, isn't it?

Design Agency: Yeah. Different companies are different. I think what we advocate for here is strong skills and competencies across the board for everyone so that everybody is acting with a level of great creativity, but also great professionalism.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think in a small agency having someone who not necessarily is getting away with certain things, you're all in it together, so people really notice people's pulling, shift weight around the studio-

Design Agency: I think it's dangerous to have that culture of our creative superstar that gets special treatment and everybody just thinks he's wonderful but gets away with murder on every other front basically. I can see the value in it when he's the team and the cast of characters, so I get it, but I don't think it's for us.

Interviewer: Okay. That's cool. Right. There's just a few little questions to wrap up. In terms of internships, and I'm not talking about all work placements in terms of, not talking specifically about Lydia, I'm just talking about in general. Do you see advantages and disadvantages about graduates leaving universities and doing internships into the design industry?

Design Agency: To do placements at all?

Interviewer: At all, really, or even specifically to experience-

Design Agency: That's a really good question. I'm glad you asked that. I have a bit of a bee in my bonnet about, I don't like the word internships full stop. That's just a personal thing. I do have a bee in my bonnet a little bit about our industry and many other industries as well, this idea that, it's like the media industry is terrible for it isn't it, the idea of the runner being ... because nobody really runs around anymore, running to get lattes rather than ferrying Betamax videos around Soho. That idea of the intern and people's perception, I think there's a real danger there. It's just having somebody around, like a dogsbody or something like that, that kind of mentality.

I think that definitely exists, and I think quite often these internships are not paid, they can essentially be like an employee without being any employed paid or without any kind of, I think it's real murky waters at one end of the spectrum. I do have a bit of a, you said our interns or we've got two or three interns, you immediately want to interrogate what is that and how do you organize that and how are you investing in that. I think you can quite expose people quite quickly.

However at the other end of the scale, when we decided to do this, which we've only been doing for 10 months or so, actually six or seven months in real practice was we identified tutors at all of the best colleges in the UK, we wrote to them personally with an old-fashioned letter with a poster to put up on their pin board advertising the fact that we were going to launch this scheme. We followed all of those up. As a result, we're starting to build relationships with those tutors and universities and as students come through, hopefully they go on to say good things about having done it. We organize it in the right way, and we advertised it, it was a paid placement with an actual figure on it, 200 pounds per week. It was a genuine bonafide opportunity for people, you could see it for what it was.

I think this idea that there's a lack of transparency around that, is it a young person as a student or as a graduate, you could be sitting in a interview-like situation talking about an internship going away with a possibility of maybe that turning into something at some point in the future, but without any clarity of a when, for how long, how am I going to be paid, how am I going to be looked after. None of those things are discussed. They're just kind of like, "We'll call you if and when." It's very slack I think.

Interviewer: Yes. Especially when you're dealing with someone like a graduate who is unsure of how the industry works and kind of quite a difficult transition time between university where they understood what was going on and where they're entering a new world where they don't have any idea really how it works.

Design Agency: No.

Interviewer: They might have some inkling.

Design Agency: Yeah. I think there has to be some good advocacy in our industry around doing this and doing it properly. Calling out those agencies, small and large, are essentially exploiting young people. Just that just needs to be I think no longer something that's not talked about. It should be seen for what it is. It's like the same debate goes on around creative pitching. That's run and run and run.

Interviewer: Yes.

Design Agency: Yeah, no, I think it's time to be really clear. As soon as it becomes the law, then there's a dividing line, but as we know what stuff in and outside of the law is a lot of gray area there.

Interviewer: Murky, murky. Very murky. Okay, I think that is really, that's it.

Design Agency: Good. I hope it was useful.

Interviewer: No, it was really useful. I'm just going to ... It's always-

Interviewer: Right. Okay, It's working. Right, so I've just got a series of questions, and if you've got really short answers, that's fine. If you want to talk about it further, that's also fine.

Graduate: Okay, no worries.

Interviewer: So, how did this role come about, and describe the process that you went through to get it.

Graduate: So, I saw the job advertised on It's Nice, that jobs board. I'd been looking through them regularly, cause I'd been interning for about nine months since graduation. I saw this opportunity, so I applied with a selection of my work, answered a couple of questions, I think yes, they asked us the answers to, was invited to interview. Came down once, then had a second interview about the job. Moved down here.

Interviewer: Cool. It was exciting to move to Brighton.

Graduate: It is. I love the place now.

Interviewer: Cool. There's a lot going on. You've been here since June haven't you?

Graduate: Yes since then.

Interviewer: When you left, or when graduated university, did you imagine this was going to be your career path in terms of where you're at now, how you got there, or did you imagine that it would be a bit different?

Graduate: I think I did imagine it would kind of go like this, and if I were to take work, I'd end up in London. Which, didn't end up happening. I think the interning process took a lot longer than I expected it to, so I interned at five or six studios. I think you are always hoping for it to happen a little bit quicker than that. It's obviously not the case, just a lot about timing. But yeah that's really when it did happen.

Interviewer: Just hoping it ends. When you were in other internship roles, did you know they were just internship roles, or were you hoping that they could turn into a role?

Graduate: So, they were all slightly different. Some of the early ones I knew they were just experience, but that was okay, that was what I wanted. I was trying to figure out what type of studio I wanted to get into as well. For the other ones, there was a job available, but then I would realized that that wasn't the right place for me and be done.

Interviewer: So you got offered roles, but you turned them down.

Graduate: I got offered one role and didn't end up taking it. There were a few potential ones, but mixes with the studios so they kind of fell through and stuff. Yeah.

Interviewer: You feel like you've found the right place now, and you know ...

Graduate: Yeah. I'm glad I went through that process and tried quite a few of those studios and different studio settings, like sizes, and I'm really happy with the size and the social aspect here as well. I think it's going really well.

Interviewer: So even though you felt like you took longer to find the job you wanted, actually that process definitely helped you pinpoint what you really wanted to do.

Graduate: Yes, looking back it was definitely essential. [crosstalk 00:03:04]

Interviewer: Did that feel quite strange, like what's going to happen next?

Graduate:	Yeah, just because it's just a very unsettling time. You've got no sense of permanency. So there I was in London for 9 months, I didn't really ever live there. I was like sofa surfing, and living in Airbnb's, and not really moved, hadn't moved my stuff there. Just like living out of a suitcase. So it's kind of just a bit unsettling.
Interviewer:	So your personal life was kind of just a bit-
Graduate:	On hold slightly
Interviewer:	Yeah, I understand. So, what were your expectations of this role when you started? When you started, what were you hoping it was going to be?
Graduate:	I was hoping to be in a setting with really experienced designers who were really passionate about design. It was their love, not just their job. I was really hoping to like be mentored by that and learn from that. Which has definitely been the case.
Interviewer:	That's good.
Graduate:	And, a place for me to do really good work that had purpose to it, and I wasn't just designing [inaudible 00:04:02] packaging and stuff like that. [crosstalk 00:04:04] So, I can't do this for the rest of my life.
Interviewer:	Right. So, you think this experience has helped you?
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	When you're here, what I don't want is this. Okay. So your expectations have been met at this point?
Graduate:	Absolutely.
Interviewer:	I'm not saying that should change but … And as the role of junior designer here also how you imagined? I hear feeling like the introduction to work, and your level of work you are doing is being supported, and you're moving …
Graduate:	Absolutely.
Interviewer:	… through the process so that you will build on that and become a middle weight, and things.
Graduate:	Absolutely. I feel like I've been interested in the full responsibility, an opportunity to grow and I can see myself already improving, developing from where I was from six months ago. But, I just left that up to flounder on my own, and there's always the support if I need it. But, it is nice to be involved in the concept stage and everything, not treated like you were when you were an intern or a workplace -
Interviewer:	So, there's a different feeling between being an intern and a junior designer?
Graduate:	Absolutely. Yes.
Interviewer:	So, do you feel that you're given more responsibility as a junior designer, and also you're more part of the team?
Graduate:	Yeah, you feel more's expected from you in a good way, and the permanency of it obviously really helps you to integrate into the team, and the last placement I was at, I was there three months, so I really felt a part of the team but obviously not actually being part of the team.
Interviewer:	You knew you were leaving, so it couldn't go any further.

Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Okay. And … how has Baxter and Bailey helped support and develop your learning? Cause I know you mentioned that you are obviously learning and a lot of that sounds like it's through your own self-motivation, but how has the agency helping you progress your learning, as well?
Graduate:	So, the senior designers, Will and Emma, spend a lot of time with me, really helping me when I need it, and that's really appreciated. And then, after my initial review I had my probation, we sat with Matt, and talked a lot about what sort of points I could work on and help with those as well and support and guidance, which is really good. Also, I've done that presentation training. That was an interesting and fun experience.
Interviewer:	Was that externally, or -
Graduate:	That was as a team, an LAMDA trained actor came and we had to do a workshop with us, which was different.
Interviewer:	So it was, yeah, using different skills and things, [crosstalk 00:06:39] so it's almost being taken out of your comfort zone, doing [crosstalk 00:06:46], but also for everyone, I imagine, not just you.
	And so when you work on projects, and you mentioned working, do you work as a team, so you don't get left on a job on your own, or …
Graduate:	So, it depends on the project, but at the initial stage we all definitely work on, and there's 2 of us on one particular project. So, kind of brainstorm concepts, and construe interactions, and … depending on the particular one, I might take on one part of it and take responsibility do another part, but like [inaudible 00:07:13] has always said to … it's his responsibility to get that project out the door, and that kind of thing. As a designer with ambition, I want to play an active role in the project. I'm obviously not just going to sit back and just leave it [crosstalk 00:07:26] I really want to make sure that I'm lifting that team.
Interviewer:	An important part of the team, yes. So, basically, you're … got your own responsibility, within a job, and every time you do something, you can expand that responsibility, so hopefully, one day, you'll be running the job yourself. So, it's kind of a progressional thing.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. And, how do you think your learning in the agency could be developed further? And this is not a negative, it's just what we'd like to happen that you think would help you further.
Graduate:	Um … that's a good question, actually … so, more recently, I've asked to see on particular jobs, because I knew they would help me to develop, so I guess that's one thing that's happening already. So, one aspect to forming these projects is producing guidelines, and that's something I've never done as an intern. I just don't need to do it when you're[crosstalk 00:08:25]. So, I kind of, asked to have a spot on those, with guidance of Rory really supporting me, so that's something that's really gonna help me a lot and, thinking forward to when I'm on the journey to junior designer, to presenting things like that again. That's something I'd like to develop a little bit further, cause the workshop we did was really great and really insightful … but, that's something that I know that I would want to develop before I do that [crosstalk 00:08:53]
Interviewer:	So, you could do some mock presentations.
Graduate:	Yeah.

Interviewer:	With your team, or ... Do something that isn't exactly client facing before you start doing it.
Graduate:	Absolutely, yeah.
Interviewer:	Or, do you go along and watch people do presentations?
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	So you're kind of learning through almost watching [crosstalk 00:09:16] more experienced people and things ... yeah. And what's going to be most useful to you since you've started here? I bet your previous experience or university or personal life has helped you. So basically, what have you brought to agency that you've found has actually been really useful that maybe wasn't here, or you needed to use?
Graduate:	Um ... sorry, so, I want to have the question right, what have I brought that the studio didn't have?
Interviewer:	No, so basically what skills have been most useful to you that you've brought with you, so -
Graduate:	Right. Okay.
Interviewer:	I mean, you know, is it like software skills, personal skills, or is it something that happened at university that you went, "Ah! I knew that from university."
Graduate:	Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Extra things, I guess. So, the software is invaluable. I ... If you can kind of get where [inaudible 00:10:20] as an intern, then when you get [crosstalk 00:10:22] Not get in everyone's way. Organizational skills and timekeeping is something that I really had to learn in university.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Graduate:	I'm glad I did, because I'd be wondering around on my hands. And, I guess the attitude of learning. I've always, always been open to learning something, and just making use of the resources around you. [inaudible 00:10:48] trying [crosstalk 00:10:49]. Yeah, making sure you're always ... trying to take in new information.
Interviewer:	Sure. And is there anything when you arrived that you went, Oh! This is ... I mean, you just kind of ... Not freaked out about it, just went, I just really don't know what's going on, I don't know what to do!
Graduate:	I guess the whole client side of it was quite new to me, because the agency - A lot of my internships were bigger than this, but not massive agencies. But, we had a [inaudible 00:11:20] manager who had been there for a long time, and they kind of knew the clients, and I didn't have to do any of that. So, kind of learning the right rapport with clients and the appropriate [inaudible 00:11:32]
Interviewer:	So, kind of client people skills, and ...
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. And, I know you're ... a lot of your learning is taking place on the workplace ... In the workplace, sorry, but is there any other places that you're learning as part of this job?
Graduate:	Mm-hmm
Interviewer:	... Or, for the role that you're doing?

Graduate:	Um, so there was a few changes outside of ... Work, that I ... I'm trying to take part in, I hope to at some point. Financially, is the issue with that [crosstalk 00:12:09] So, the [inaudible 00:12:11] course I've accepted to this summer, and ...
Interviewer:	Cool.
Graduate:	In Paris, that I would, hopefully, like to go to, but its very expensive, so I unfortunately I couldn't go to that, and one in London as well
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	So, I'm always looking for opportunities to extend my learning, but that's totally fine, I think. [crosstalk 00:12:25] from work and although it's design-related ... not [inaudible 00:12:32] would be [crosstalk 00:12:35]
Interviewer:	Is it creating your own type faces, or is it?
Graduate:	So, yeah, one of them was type design course, and we were going to actually create type pieces from scratch, which is where I need to be.
Interviewer:	That would be great.
	Okay, so you've kind of got workplace-related interests that link up with your job, but not necessarily directly [crosstalk 00:12:55] And you've
Graduate:	And I go to a lot of like design talks and that kind of thing, kinda keeps me inspired, and -
Interviewer:	Yeah
Graduate:	Related topics, that kind of thing.
Interviewer:	And do you ... Because you went to university, not in Brighton, and do you keep in touch with your other graduate ... Yeah, the other graduates, and I mean, I guess they're probably scattered all over the place now, but do you socialize, even through social media, and on ... Network together, or kind of let each other know about what you're doing?
Graduate:	Yeah, so, I have quite a lot of my close-knit friends from university live in London now, so we see each other quite regularly, go up and down and visit each other. They're all in [inaudible 00:13:39] now as well, and [inaudible 00:13:45] wider group, course of 136 people, so I don't know everyone personally, but I've got quite a few of them on Facebook.
Interviewer:	And do you think that that's going to come in handy in the future, to have design industry contacts, and -
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	I mean, that's not the reason you keep in touch with them. But, in the future, obviously you'll be, you know, I do now, lots of [inaudible 00:14:10] about jobs,
Graduate:	Absolutely, yeah.
Interviewer:	After we talked about our own thing, it's quite useful indirectly as a network support group.
Graduate:	Yeah, and I've met people in industry now through them as well, so the designers at their studio, and when at the same design event, I will introduce people, too.

Interviewer:	Yeah. Cool. And, could you tell me major positives so far in your role here? Somethings happened where you felt really good about yourself, where you felt proud of yourself? Or you had a eureka moment?
Graduate:	I guess … We were developing a presentation for a client, and … It was a little bit more me to finalize the development of it, and throw in some extra ideas and that kind of thing, with a little bit less support, so that felt like quite a good moment to come up with some fresh ideas from me and kind of be left to be [crosstalk 00:15:12] development and to present to them this morning, so if it wasn't done [crosstalk 00:15:14]
Interviewer:	Yeah, it was your responsibility.
Graduate:	Yes, that was quite satisfying to feel like I really contributed in the matter and really helped in the studio.
Interviewer:	Yeah. And has there been a point since you've been here where you're just like, "oh, no, that's not … That's not how it's supposed to have gone."
	And, you know, what type of situations are they in? Are they in areas where you're less confident and/or how do you overcome those moments[crosstalk 00:15:42]
Graduate:	So one of the areas I'm working on is to be more critical with the initial concept of the project, but people, I have learned, have brought terrible ideas to the table, like sometimes you just have to, don't you? And, so I guess there's been moments where [inaudible 00:15:58] I can't get out of this, this needs to be done with the deadline, and I can't get it done. So, in these moments, I've talked to Rory, and other people, and just removed myself from the situation quite a bit, and taken a walk, and got away from it, and got back there, not stay frozen brain.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so you've identified that if you're in a situation like that other people are here to help you out [crosstalk 00:16:25] rather than just going into yourself because the situation's not going to go away.
Graduate:	Exactly
Interviewer:	Okay, cool.
	This is not relevant cause you are in a permanent role. So, this is a general question about the design industry, which is … Because you have interned and you've probably got lots of friends that have, what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internage and what are your general thoughts about internships?
Graduate:	Um … I kind of accept that it's a necessary role, because when you graduate, you don't have the instant experience to allow you to be trusted to be a permanent designer. So, I think it definitely has to happen. I think it could be kind of more enforced in university courses, so a requirement for course, and especially do them earlier on.
Interviewer:	Easier to do placements while at university?
Graduate:	I mean, a lot of people do do that anyway, but I think if it was more of a requirement, then [crosstalk 00:17:35]
Interviewer:	So it was self-initiated, rather than the university -
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	- taking control of it, or making it -

Graduate:	Exactly.
Interviewer:	- a requirement to -
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	A degree.
Graduate:	Yeah. I think if you just ... Cause I didn't intern until I graduated.
Interviewer:	Right.
Graduate:	And I [crosstalk 00:17:52] what's required of me, and what's expected of me here, so I think if you did that in second year, and actually having talked to people in the industry, they're not expecting a whole lot from you second year. You're not going to be given anything like, this needs to go out to a client, so there shouldn't be so much fear around it; it's a bit more open and transparent. I think the transition would be easier, and the interning itself is very low-paid, and it should be paid, but very low-paid. I kind of felt that I had to come to London cause that's where the jobs were, but couldn't really afford to be here.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Graduate:	It took a lot of gut just being here, and having to live in other people's houses, [crosstalk 00:18:40] have to set yourself down here, which is also a choice, I guess you could live out of the city. A lot of opportunities were in London.
Interviewer:	Yeah
Graduate:	And, with interns not being paid very much, it's quite hard sloughing it sometimes.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. So, did a lot of people in your year, did they come down to London to undo some of the things to you?
Graduate:	I'd say about 30, maybe 36 came down [crosstalk 00:19:10]
Interviewer:	It's a quite high percentage when you think about the overall year.
Graduate:	Yeah, a lot of us [inaudible 00:19:13] scattered to Manchester,
Interviewer:	Sheffield and, yeah
Graduate:	[crosstalk 00:19:18] just back home to kind of not [crosstalk 00:19:21]
Interviewer:	I guess some people couldn't do what you did, even though it was still quite difficult for you to do it with lack of money and ... The situation moving to London and things so, do you consider yourself kind of lucky to have got it?
Graduate:	Absolutely. I had rely on a lot of help from my family, and I wouldn't have been able to do that without them.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	So, I feel very, yeah, very lucky to have been in [inaudible 00:19:52] got a lot of experience and still be in contact with those people, as well.
Interviewer:	Sure. Cool.
	And one last question: What would have helped you with the fact that you left and that transition between university and your first job? What's been the hardest thing

to deal with, with the whole transition from university to working in the design industry?

Graduate: Um ... I think it's just the pressure of performing in your role within this setting, cause I think design is kind of [inaudible 00:20:43] so it's like you're expected to do really great if you accept a lot of hours on demand, whereas [crosstalk 00:20:51] since you're not as always [inaudible 00:20:54] and -

Interviewer: So is that the reality of applying skills that you used at university but within a workplace environment?

Graduate: Yeah, absolutely. [crosstalk 00:21:05] you have a lot more freedom at university. You can work when it suits you best, and there will be deadlines, they're a lot longer than they are here. So it's adapting your [crosstalk 00:21:20] industry. It's quite interesting.

Interviewer: Do you think, that when you were at university, you mentioned it could have been more helpful if you had more knowledge about what a design studio was like. Do you think that at university, you should have had more ... There should have been more responsibility on the university to make you aware of what work was like, or do you think [crosstalk 00:21:48]

Graduate: [crosstalk 00:21:48] That's more of a general comment I guess, because our university did have a lot of talks [inaudible 00:21:54] and the chance to visit studios, a few of those things. So, I felt like that I had ... I felt like a new part of the hand that actually worked in that situation, [crosstalk 00:22:05]I think it's actually something that my university's not doing, so [crosstalk 00:22:10] Yeah, we definitely had opportunity to gain that knowledge, but if that was [inaudible 00:22:19] everyone, I think that would be very helpful.

Interviewer: So, it was still a shock, though.

Graduate: [crosstalk 00:22:24] When you actually sit down, its like, oh, I actually work here now.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:22:29] It seems like this uni is begun for you, as in it's not kind of, not in that freaking out stage now.

Graduate: No, not anymore.

Interviewer: Okay, that was all the questions actually. [crosstalk 00:22:41]

Was there anything else that you wanted to add to your experience, or?

Graduate: No, I don't think so. I think that's it!

Interviewer: That's cool.

INTERVIEW TWO: DA-BB

Interviewer: All right that's working too. All right so a lot of the questions will be kind of covering pretty similar ground. It's really just seeing if anythings' changed or shifted in the relationship of Lydia's job and how she's developing really. So it's more just to see how she's progressing or if anything has happened since we spoke last that is of interest to talk about. So my first question is just how has Lydia been developing in her role since December? I know it's of a short time frame but.

Design Agency: I can't remember the last time we spoke. It was probably-

Interviewer: It was mid-December or even near the end of December.

Design Agency: I think for a junior designer progress can be made in short bursts and then periods are a bit more challenging. So I think overall this is a massive kind of positive thing so tackling visual identity guidelines for the first time and a key part of the documentation process in a branding program is something that it's been helping with much more confidently and kind of owned so that's been really good a positive thing. I think also actually just it might be worth mentioning is that one project, in particular, it's not like it's not going well.

But it's come with a number of kind of challenges and twists and turns let's say largely from the clients side which has meant that it's quite easy to become unsettled as a result of challenging feedback or change of heart or a warble on when the investment [will put you 00:02:15] in a roll out of some creative work. When it comes to it there is a confidency in that and some of these issues we've faced with our office and rather with one of our projects. And that can sometimes be quite crushing for a young designer who's invested with certain tears in it but Lydia has really taken it onboard and been very grown up about it. And it's part of the life of a designer really.

Interviewer: Yeah yeah definitely.

Design Agency: Not everything sees the light of day and we're together put into a case forward a case to work out when faced with some of those issues. But yeah, it's a grown up's ability to take these things with an open mind and broad shoulders as opposed to kind of really deflate or frustrate.

Interviewer: That's good so that answers the next question as well which is are your expectations of Lydia's role still being met? So although she appears to be having quite an interesting time in terms of her job. Are your expectations of Lydia responding to the last month been are you happy with that?

Design Agency: Yeah absolutely. I think that's a good question. I think that the short answer is yes and I don't know if I have mentioned previously. But we have a process of an annual appraisal and for anyone, that's joined the company recently a kind of three-month review. Whereby we sort of try and that goals that are ... Well, it could be a range of things kind of need to happen or stretched goals that are kind of things that definitely should aspire to conquer or seek to conquer and we're at a point where Lydia is still within the first year of her time here.

So that's the kind of ongoing process but at that first annual year review, we'll be reviewing the kind of goals that we set and setting some new ones as well. But I think that overall it's a really really great progress for some of that stuff. Although [inaudible 00:05:14] number of graduate placements is in the first real kind of [schedule 00:05:21] her design career.

Interviewer: So you're going to wait till the first year to do the first appraisal or would you do a interim one or something in between?

Design Agency: So how we do it here is we ... Obviously, there is an employment then we do a three month review to set the goals and then regular [snapshots 00:05:42] in Lydia's case with Matt. That's the kind of point in person as creative director. But there is a lot of ongoing day to day practical support and help from well both Rory and Ellen on any given project to just kind of support with that extra level of find a critical feedback a constructive feedback as well as practical support guidance help if something is challenging, there is also someone to go to. But Matt is the kind of designated appraisal.

Interviewer: So there is a person specifically in charge of that for Lydia?

Design Agency: Yes yes.

Interviewer: So this whole experience of it. This client in particular and or the project sorry. That's been generally something you felt has been a positive and a negative experience in a way that you can obviously, Lydia has reacted in a positive way. But the situation could have been not necessarily overwhelmingly positive. So I was just going to ask you about positive and negative experiences but that really is probably what has been that for Lydia in the last month really, hasn't it? This client with the twists and turns and challenges of that.

Design Agency: I think thinking about it that would be possibly the main instance yeah that I can think of where the kind of day to day kind of engaging with whatever a respective designer gives [generation 00:07:41] or design development or here is some of the kind of more delivery end things. That's okay and brief to brief project to project that changes that it's different with every single thing you did.

But when you hit a kind of a bump in the road or some slightly more kind of challenging feedback, it's more of a question of how you deal with that your maturity and that's to be able to as frustrating as it might be kind of deal with it in a measured way in fashionable way and in a kind of constructive way that enables you to kind of move forward and be less reactionary and everything is broken and you know. Because quite often you just you can work your way through these things.

Interviewer: So the type of support Lydia has been getting when these events happen could you describe those? I know you might have touched on this already but.

Design Agency: Sorry. Could you just repeat the question?

Interviewer: So in these situations. Say what we've just been talking about with the client, the job, and when Lydia is going through these events what type of support is she getting? Does she come to you guys? Does she try and deal with it on her own?

Design Agency: I think well you've been here so you appreciate this that the truth of it is that there is nowhere to escape. It's a small room with seven people in it 10 to eight people. If something isn't quite right and isn't being vocalized. It's quite easily spotable. I think we've got a good culture here. People being able and willing to kind of shout off if they need help. You can delegate up as well as down. You can ask for support in any direction and that's the culture that we are nurturing and the one that we want to carry on with more difficult as you get a little bit bigger in size but we're small enough perhaps to be absolutely be manageable.

So I think the way that these things are dealt with are at the source really as in when things occur and that could be due in the course of a working day. It might be something that is niggling or bothering somebody that it might actually be at the end of the day or at the beginning of the day. But I think that if there are any kind of issues or challenges get aired and dealt with pretty efficiently and if they didn't, then I certainly don't know about that and would want to ... You can't force this in any way but it's a cultural thing. It's about ensuring that you kind of have a culture and an understanding that allows things to be vocalized and like I said that can be in any direction really.

	So yeah, I think things are raised and dealt with. [crosstalk 00:11:33] in the name. If there is something a bit more fundamental HR-related then clearly that needs to be dealt with in a slightly different way. And I would be the person to come to with something a bit more challenging on a either a professional or personal level.
Interviewer:	And that obviously can be done in a more private manner rather than?
Design Agency:	Yeah, of course.
Interviewer:	So yeah, I guess that-
Design Agency:	Offline.
Interviewer:	So basically what you're saying is people in the agency are open to dealing with things and by talking to Lydia in a way that you're imagining people should talk to you as well which is open honest and engaged and things. So it encourages her to also kind of be able talk like that as well. So it's not seeing that's something is out of place.
Design Agency:	But I think that's a fair summary. If you do and like sort of like what the kind of structure of this small design agency is. Matt and I are the leaders of it. We're the directors, the owners, the people steering the direction but the culture that we've adopted and promoted is a nonhierarchical one. But clearly, there needs to be some good leadership, good management for that in itself to be successful.
Interviewer:	Yeah definitely. If you say one thing and do another. So how has Lydia supported her own development during these events as well? So I know that you've helped but.
Design Agency:	Good question. That's a good question for her.
Interviewer:	She might not bring up the same job though but yeah. You've probably noticed what she's done and she might see different things than what you see.
Design Agency:	I'd be very interested to hear her answer on that. Nothing hugely kind of tangible or sort of visible for me. Actually, Lydia on one front is proactively going to industry events. That's a good example I think and yeah yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. No worries.
Design Agency:	I'm sort of a …
Interviewer:	That's okay. If you can't think of anything else it's fine. It should just be what you kind of initially-
Design Agency:	Yeah, what's on my mind.
Interviewer:	Yeah definitely. So you did talk a bit about kind of the studio culture and things like that. But why have you let Lydia develop her role at Baxter and Bailey the way that you are developing it or you're guiding her through this development? Do you know why you've chosen this way to have her learn on the job?
Design Agency:	Yeah, a good question. That ties into how does one develop and grow as a designer at Baxter and Bailey, and I think the open collaborative and respectful culture that we have is definitely important. We're guided by the principles of purpose so I think for your job to have purpose for you for the people that you're doing it for. It might sound obvious, but I think that there is lots of people that don't particularly have a great sense of purpose in their job or careers that they're doing.

The second is substance which is it needs to kind of have some rigor and great and intellectual substance to it that might impact the world in some way in a positive or impact as well as our clients and the people that we work with. And the third one which is a kind of new one that we're trying to dial up a little bit is percepted. So if we've got people with purpose that are intelligent and do work with substance then for them to be able to draw out [inside 00:16:27] and be percepted and deliver something back that's insightful as real value. That's the thing.

So they are the qualities the values that we try and live by or try to [agenda 00:16:42] and in all of that there is lot of emphasis around self-motivation and taking on as much as you can take on in order to develop with the kind of the people and the experience of those around you that given that set of kind of attitudes of qualities that will allow you to flourish and develop and advance further. So I think there is definitely a spirit of push yourself and go for it. There is a support network and sufficient experience around you to do it.

So I'd like to think that people would develop quickly here and within the realms of what we do. But even as an agency, Matt and I are pushing ourselves to do work that we've never done. More three dimensional projects and interior or other elements of design so we're pushing our practice as well. So I think it's not just that we're kind of asking people to do something that we're not doing ourselves.

Interviewer: And I know that probably you and Matt have this quite clear in your own mind. But is this something that you talk about with the other people that work with you so that they also know or is it something that you believe is?

Design Agency: It's something that we've always done and perhaps increasingly so. So at this point where there is just a few more people here now. Literally, just a few though not [relatively 00:18:34].

Interviewer: A home.

Design Agency: That Matt and I had an away day prior to Christmas. We discussed a number of things around how the team might develop and more about culture, the value structure and all of that stuff. We've put some kind of skeleton plan in place that's a work in progress. A part of that process is very much about embedding a little bit more of that shared understanding in amongst everyone. I think our feeling is that it's kind of there but there is nothing wrong with some good communication around it to ensure that it's there and it's there. I think people like it. They kind of bond with it.

Interviewer: Yeah definitely.

Design Agency: Because I think if it's shared in a combined way then the impact and opportunity and rewards that might come as a result of being that way will be really worthwhile for everyone.

Interviewer: It becomes shared and inclusive rather than a bit more like a hierarchy where someone at the top has got a vision and imposes on other people.

Design Agency: No, it's quite the opposite.

Interviewer: So how do you imagine Lydia would develop further in the next few months based on kind of what you've seen in the past? How do you imagine the future and immediate future really?

Design Agency: Well, there is a number of ways to answer that. One is in terms of what you might expect. One is in terms of what you might like the reality and another one is going to be more like what you might hope for and dream of. So there is different ways to answer it but I think there is solid progress building on the skills and exposure to them sort of riddle world and what it's like to be working in the design studio I

see. But that's the crooks of it and sounds a bit silly to be doing a bit more of the same but a bit more confidently and then being brave enough to take things if not [inaudible 00:21:21] for.

And I think that the scariest bit for any designer I think other than the stretch around multiple deadlines or delivery and that kind of anxiety around how I'm going to get all of this done. But again, the support network around should be able to manage that with good planning. But I think the most difficult thing is with staring at a brief whether it's a really challenging and difficult brief or a really lovely inspiring one is staring at a blank sheet of paper or a black canvass and thinking its down to me to populate this in some way. And all the best design solutions that I've ever been involved with have been collaborative and have been able to go from a starting point where you're putting our days into the ring into the hat if you like in a way that's kind of confident that you're doing that from your curiosity or intellect or ability.

And not worrying too much about whether it's the right or the wrong answer. So we're working on a project at the moment where four people in the studio designers are all working a little bit together a little independently on ideas generation for a brand development program and copywriter is working off site is also working a little bit independently but a little bit asking some questions here and there. And we're just going to end up with all sorts of thoughts and lines of inquiry from different minds and different end goals but I'm confident. I've done it so many times but it will lead to some really good discussion and debate and it's at that point that the creative director will help to kind of bring some ideas together and facilitate a discussion about how things might start to [convalesce 00:23:39] and that's the design process in action.

But I think the younger design. Not all but some really thrive in that vacuum of nothingness and just clear that stuff but they tend to be fewer and further between I think and most of them end up in like advertising. So it [inaudible 00:24:05] bit more really that well but designers can be really sort of and we can get introvert at times and not particularly kind of outweigh in there. Let me tell you what I think. I think that I wish more designers were like that and-

Interviewer: You gave me the opposite fact I need.

Design Agency: It's a balance of course between wanting to ensure that people know what's inside your head and to feel that you've got a valuable contribution to make. But imagine the amount of times where designers have wanted to say something and haven't but they could have absolutely changed the course of a conversation and that I would encourage them to absolutely do that rather than go in and think I should I would have said that.

Interviewer: Yeah definitely.

Design Agency: So maybe that's one thing that could be really good to develop so that sort of confidence in meeting your point of view.

Interviewer: A confidence of voice and view and yeah. Sorry, just writing that down. And just lastly. It's not really a work question. But have there been any outside influences that have affected Lydia role at Baxter and Bailey unduly?

Design Agency: Well, a little bit of training. [started 00:25:52] some presentation training so that's an outside influence but it was was desired. Is that what you mean that kind of thing?

Interviewer: Yeah, it could be anything. I'm like really thinking of anything from the outside world it could be.

Design Agency: Well, in design related or [present 00:26:13] development, I would day the presentation training that we did. Industry events both here in Brighton and in London. Do you know what? In a funny way, the City of Brighton generally and

what it means to live in a city like this with clean air and a view and a good kind of culture and counter culture. Brighton has go its own kind of mojo really and I think that's really underestimated there as a young creator. And as much as like London is a brilliant I think inspiring place and [inaudible 00:27:11] it can be quite [inaudible 00:27:15] as well. Anecdotally here, I was looking at a universal run things the other day and looking at student satisfaction and all the stuff around curriculum and experience in all of that.

But when it came student satisfaction, all of the London universities that were scoring quite highly in effects were quite significantly lower on student satisfaction. I was thinking surely that can't be still really that old ones in universities have like teachers that people don't like. Nonacademic staff that they don't get on with. So i was thinking what can that possibly be and the only conclusion I could draw of itis that they're probably a bit [inaudible 00:28:06]. They're probably a bit more tired.

Interviewer: Yeah definitely.

Design Agency: And it was an interesting observation and so-

Interviewer: I think geography have-

Design Agency: Living in place like Brighton. I think it's good.

Interviewer: I think it's because you can actually get around. A lot of the universities in London are very disjointed and you can go to a lecture and you're just in the middle of a work area. There is no kind of cohesive campus for a lot of universities in London either. So yo often feel like you're not really part of it.

Design Agency: There is so many great things about London that really sort of counter balance that but I think there is a lot to be said for feeling like-

Interviewer: Part of something.

Design Agency: You've got a bit of space and the ability to think and go for a walk on the beach or go for a walk in the hills. You know these things ar so good.

Interviewer: Well, that was all the questions actually so yeah you're done.

Design Agency: Great.

Interviewer: The only other thing I was going to ask was obviously if we could do a third one at some point but that will be in a couple of months again because I want to obviously be able to give it some space. Otherwise, you'll probably end up giving me the same answers. But again, it would probably be very similar to the similar questions. But I don't want it to be the last one. I can just email you with that.

Design Agency: I don't know. Do we have that one in the dairy? I can't recall.

Interviewer: No, what I'll do is I'll email you with the kind of an approximate time frame and you'll let me know what date and time works for you and I'll just work in with you again so that [inaudible 00:29:45] be like cool. Thank you so much.

Design Agency: Well, that's great. Well, it's been nice to speak to you again. Are you going to contact Lydia just now? I can she is-

Interviewer: Well, she said 10:30 but just whenever if she's ready beforehand and wants to get it out of the way she can go for it but otherwise.

Design Agency: I see she's actually in a meeting at the moment so maybe just stick to what you agreed.

Interviewer: Yeah, I was going to say I'll stick to 10:30 it's fine. I'll catch up on some other stuff. Thanks so much.

Design Agency: All right lovely to speak to you. Let me speak to you in a month or so or something like that.

Interviewer: Yeah, great thanks. Cheers. Thanks so much.

Design Agency: I want to hear from you about [crosstalk 00:30:22].

Interviewer: Yeah fine. I'll drop you an email. Thank you, Dom. Bye.

Design Agency: Take care. Bye-bye.

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD-BB

Interviewer: 00:07   So how's everything been going since we last talked in December? In terms of your role at Baxter and Bailey?

Graduate: 00:13   Yeah. Really well, December feels so long ago now, that's how I feel like it's um, I'm definitely more confident in my role, things are a bit more second nature and just being more relaxed and allowing me to develop more and the pressure or stress initially coming into the role. Yeah, its coming together.

Interviewer: 00:47   So are your expectations of your role still being met on a day to day basis?

Graduate: 00:47   Yeah definitely. I've been given a chance to work on some really great projects. And my voice is really heard on them. I'm having greater interaction with clients, I feel like I've been given in a bit more responsibility as far as thats concerned.

Interviewer: 01:16   Could you, this is a bit more anecdotal, but are you able to tell me a positive experience at work since the last interview that you felt has been a positive thing for you?

Graduate: 01:30   Sure. There's been many, I'm trying to think of any specific ones.

Interviewer: 01:34   it could be a series of small things. That could be one big thing. I mean it doesn't need to be, it's not a set thing.

Interviewer: 01:42   I guess I'm working on my first set of brand guidelines for the company. Thats something I've never really have to do so as a university student or as an intern to work. So having the opportunity to complete one with some support but that was more of a solo effect, that was really good.

Interviewer: 02:02   Yeah. And did you find it was quite difficult or did you quite enjoy the challenge and...

Graduate: 02:09   Yeah, the nature of the challenge in a slightly different type of thinking that was needed for some of the concepts and design problems has been more thorough and kinda a bit more covering your bases and its been good to do both types of thinking.

Interviewer: 02:27   Yeah. And is that something you obviously didn't, you said you didn't do at university and do you think that...

Graduate: 02:35   Yeah, it's a lot more ideas driven in concept and the concept stage I guess at university and you never have to realize any of your ideas necessarily because it's not going to work...

Interviewer: 02:35   How that actually is executed in industry? Right?

Graduate: 02:50   So kind of coming to terms with the reality of people using work you design is really, really good to grapple with.

Interviewer: 03:02   Ok, cool, so its a real world application. Yeah. Do you think it's something that would be helpful if you had learned that at university or do you think it's not something that should be the role of university?

Graduate: 03:16   Um I think that would've been good to maybe have a bit more knowledge about. But I don't know if we should have been taught it, because it's something, definitely, um, kind of comes when you get to industry. I think university should focus more on your ideas really and helping that creative thinking to be programmed for thinking, so I don't think it's necessary.

Interviewer:	03:40	Cool. And has something happened since I last talked to you that you felt a little less positive about where you thought - I'm not quite sure what's going on here. I need help, or I don't feel good about this or something like that?
Graduate:	04:00	There perhaps have been a few occasions where I've not been quite as methodical in the way I've been working, so I kind of got to the end and realized I should've done it more thoroughly but nothing, nothing major, but just to be aware to be reversed in where design and keep up to this standard I need to be in the industry, but no nothing disastrous has happened.
Interviewer:	04:25	Do you think it's probably only with hindsight that you noticed that was doing anything wrong? It was only afterwards you thought 'oh actually!'...
Graduate:	04:25	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	04:39	So in a way you're kind of looking back and thinking I could have improved that and how can I improve that for next time? So a little bit of hindsight and reflection is helping you kind of adjust your learning?
Graduate:	04:39	Absolutely, yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	05:03	And what type of support are you getting when you were experiencing kind of positives and negatives or just your general working day when things are going well or not so well?
Graduate:	05:17	I can always call on anyone in the studio to chat to on a project and get some feedback if I'm at a dead end. I've got Rory and Emma who are senior designers here, who are really, really quite useful at just talking through stuff. Sometimes they give you a bit more confidence and bit more um, they just give you a wider perspective. It can get very tunnel vision and then because you've been thinking about it for so long. So it's good to have people around you to kind of collaborate and discuss. And so that's always there and always feel I can go and make use of these people when I need to, which is great.
Interviewer:	05:55	So you feel comfortable doing that. It's not something that you're uncomfortable doing?
Graduate:	05:58	No, I mean it definitely was when I first started is a bit hard to do because you're scared that your idea is going to be rubbish or, it's not really important, but I'm now seven months into my role, it's a lot easier doing this. I see by being involved its really helpful.
Interviewer:	06:18	Have you become more open to approaching them since I last saw you? Or are you feeling like...
Graduate:	06:25	Definitely more open to it and I'd say it's, um, it's a really important, valuable part and you don't utilise that resource your doing yourself and the studio a disservice really, you need to challenge it.
Interviewer:	06:44	OK. How do you feel just in a general way about the way that Baxter and Bailey are helping you learn and develop skills on the job at the moment?
Graduate:	06:56	I think that overall it's been good and they've given us opportunities to do specific things like in the past we've done the presentation training, that kind of thing. And I've had a real, I feel a really valuable role in lots of projects recently. So don't feel kind of just um, like intern level of, now I'm treated with respect as a designer, so that's really having to develop, um, being like in, deeper projects, which is great. Um, the only thing I think I will ask at some point is to have, have um, more of a smaller project that can kind of tackle a bit on my own, lead a bit more. Which Matt has mentioned in the past that he will like to give me a project like that to kind of run a little bit more. So, but it's just about when the opportunity comes along. So, and at some point I think

because that would be a great thing to have to take the lead on it and run something on my own and that would really help my development.

Interviewer: 08:00   Do you think that's something that you could take on sooner rather than later? Or do you feel that actually...?

Graduate: 08:11   Uh no I think definitely sooner rather than later. We've had a project recently that Matt said he would've liked to have given me to run. Um, it was just the project was very small, so to turn around in time and kind of run it, um, of himself, which was quite, really good for him, I was a bit jealous of the opportunity, Matt was like, we'd like to give you an opportunity like that at some point to really get to grips with it, so, um. Yes. I'm going to have to have a word you've reminded me to do it.

Interviewer: 08:39   It's good that you are going to ask him about. Some people are too scared. Yeah, that's good, good news. And how do you imagine your role should develop in the next few months? I'd say in the next kind of one month to two months, possibly three months. How are you imagining your role progressing?

Graduate: 09:00   Um, short term. I think three months, maybe more of the same but more, um, ensuring that that I'm more brave and confident and vocal with my ideas. I'm just coming into the role a little bit more. Um, so kind of do a lot of the same thing it's going to do, but I'm not being hesitant to share my ideas even if I don't think it's ultimately the way we go. I'm just making sure that my first instinct is to be a brave with it rather then to kind of protect it and protect yourself. So I guess just nothing dramatic in terms of I'll be doing this by this point, but just, yeah, really coming into the role a little bit more and feel more stronger and confident in it guess.

Interviewer: 09:54   Yep. So do you think that that's a combination of when you're saying brave and confident, is that a combination of your personality and also your design skills or do you see it as being um, more one side or the other?

Graduate: 10:10   I think it's definitely a combination of both. So, um, on one side definitely my personality is to be quite reserved and introverted. So to push myself to be like, no, no, this is important, you believe in this idea and it should be heard. And then on the other side too concerned about it. Not too many skills in terms of, technically designing, but more the way that you think about assignments, but I'm conscious that you're constantly evolving and I'm like, just constantly taking in new ideas and I'm kind of expanding your sphere of influence I guess.

Interviewer: 10:57   Yeah. And how do you think you have supported yourself in getting a further so far since I last talked to you? I mean, you've talked about how you've had help from other team members and people within the agency, but how do you think you've personally supported yourself?

Graduate: 11:21   That's very good question. Um, commit your time to something when it's needed, stay a bit later sometimes and really working on something that's definitely been helpful. Yeah... I don't know how to answer this question...

Interviewer: 11:44   Thats ok, there's no right answer or wrong answer.

Graduate: 11:46   Yeah, I think, yeah, just to not letting anything get in the way of asking for help is important. My hope is yeah,

Interviewer: 11:54   It is important to be honest. That's all the questions. I've got some questions. So, um, yeah, to be honest, I use it as I see it, a lot of it is kind of um, going over the same things and probably when I check in with dom about the next time it'll be more of the same to be honest. I'm not expecting huge ground breaking answers into leaps, but um, it's just tracking that kind of that short term a change. So it's all helpful, but yeah, thank you so much. I was going to email Dom later today to try and book in a third and a third and final interview.

Um, so ideally it probably will be in about six to eight weeks, so I'm sure he'll do liaise with you. Thank you very much for that and have a good day. Cheers. Bye.

INTERVIEW THREE: DA-BB

Interviewer: Since I last spoke to you-

Design Agency: Well, I think all is good. Yeah?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: I'm just trying to kind of clasp my mind back to the question that you asked last time, really, and where we got to with that. How much time has passed, a couple of months?

Interviewer: I think it was the first of February from my notes. It's probably close to two months, but not quite.

Design Agency: Right, yeah. Obviously, that's like a significant amount of time. But, in the [inaudible 00:00:41] of things, it's a small amount of time.

Interviewer: Definitely.

Design Agency: It's perhaps a little bit difficult to describe any kind of big shifts, I guess. As a result of being busy ... And we're all busy. It's perhaps a little bit more of a longer period-

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely.

Design Agency: -That you would measure against, really.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:01:15]

Design Agency: One thing that comes is that we've got a project for a charity, actually, who worked with storytelling for your people. They were kind of workshops all over the country. And [Lydia's 00:01:37] sort of saw ownership over that with some oversight from Matt, which I think is a really good and positive thing because it's a [inaudible 00:01:50]. It can kind of take thoughtful ownership over, really.

Interviewer: Sure, such as stiffing up into the rather than assisting, she is taking ownership for something.

Design Agency: Yeah, in the appropriate way. Yeah, where it's still kind of physical and ability to support and help. But at the same time, the degree of freedom, and autonomy, and making new markets ... I think that's a quite positive thing, I think, in development terms. Because, it can build on that.

Interviewer: Yeah. If that means that your expectations of Lydia and her role of being [inaudible 00:02:40] because you're giving her more responsibility.

Design Agency: Yeah, absolutely. If you look at it in terms of expectations, then yeah. That would fit absolutely well with that. The other thing that I can sort of revolt on that is perhaps linked to this ... We've been doing a little bit of work across the board with a team from directors ... Everybody, basically, including directors state clear rules and responsibilities and development cause for everybody. That's something that we're currently doing and discussing individually, but also collectively as a team. I've got a team meeting tomorrow afternoon to kind of go through some of that stuff and continue to ... We're really clear about what it is that we are doing and focused on that, but also not sure that kind of support of why the team is, well, in any direction. I mean, that's not directly linked to Lydia, but it's-

Interviewer: A wider ...

Design Agency: It will have a ... Yeah. It has an implication, a factor to her as an individual, but to his own, collectively.

Interviewer:	Sure. I guess that my next question is what type of support is Lydia getting, but that's a wider implication. Is there anything specifically that you're doing to support Lydia as a junior designer?
Design Agency:	Yeah. We've had a number of one to ones. That's happened with ... At least, it was two of the team here. [Rory is kinda Lydia's media go-to on a day-to-day, but that's work related. In creative terms, and technical terms, and essentially it's all support whenever it's needed. And that can be on [inaudible 00:04:59] basis, but I know there's been discussions about having a regular capture. Nothing that's firmly diarist. I do that with [Sophie our project manager. I have a regular catch-up, but I know that there's something that Rory led here, discussing about a more regular checking, if you like, an informal cup of coffee type level check-in about how things are going and whether things are okay.
Interviewer:	It's not that they have a specific meeting to catch up, but they often in communication with ideas go backwards and forwards so that it's more regular but more informal.
Design Agency:	Yes, that's right.
Interviewer:	Alright, cool. I just wanted to ask, probably looking at it from the point where Lydia started at. That's for if I need to now. What do you think of Lydia's skills? What turned out to be some of the more useful things that she's [inaudible 00:06:03]? This can be a quite broad, from her personality to very specific design skills or complimentary skills.
Design Agency:	I think often above anything, kind of like an energy ... One of the things that we've discussed together is just allowing that perch of strength and personality to come out. Because, it's quite hard sometimes. You're a creative individual. You maybe have an outwards confidence about that, or you might be more of an introvert, different kind of personalities. But sometimes I see you can get the almost kind of split, which is quite outward going in terms of personality. But, when it comes to creative work and expressing that little bit can be reserved. It's just about trying to encourage the foremost of that personality to come out for anything that you do, which is a difficult thing sometimes to achieve. Worth striving for, and I think worth just kind of constantly reminding that ... Be true to yourself, really.
Interviewer:	Yeah, cool. Have you reflect on when she started again to now? Could you tell me how you feel her learning has developed and possibly how you feel with ... You supported this [inaudible 00:07:53]. I know that she started much earlier than when I did the first interview. If you take it as a timeline and you look along that, how do you feel her learning as developed and how have you helped her on that journey?
Design Agency:	I think that this will be [inaudible 00:08:20]. It's got huge in a matter of time. But within that time, I think it's kinda absolute. But again, study development, I think that we have supported an individual a great level throughout that period. I think that we'll continue to build on that, basically, I think over the covered months and years. And quite often what happens is you can axil point hit a stride, and then there's no turning back.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. In terms of a timeline, when do you feel ... How do you expect when Lydia ... You kind of think, "Oh, she's not a junior designer anymore." What type of timeline would you be thinking of?
Design Agency:	It's still cool to say that because I think it ultimately just comes down to any given individual, and it can accelerate anybody. Typically, somewhere between 24 months, 36 months from the start would be a good, I think, kinda still broad brush stroke. Like I said, that can change. I've been in situations where the junior designer in role even get off to a shakey start sometimes. And the times it's really going great and then falls apart at the end. It can go in all different ways. I think that things are good with progress, but it's ... An acceleration at that would be great, but is there no pressure for that? I think that the most important thing is to

feel fulfilled by the work that actually means something to you as an individual and contribution to the team and business, to feel like a valued car at that. As long as there's talent, support, that development can happen in a structured way, but also with a little bit of a push in the right way. You'll get to where you need to be because ultimately, all of these things come down to the individual. Ultimately ...

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Sorry. Your goals and aims for Lydia in the future, have you discussed these with her?

Design Agency: We have, yes. I think that the thing I wrap myself, for example, around creativity is just to be braver with that, and be a little bit more courageous, and ... This is all confidence but also just the ability to go for it and not be ashamed. Not ashamed, but afraid rather, with that. The idea of taking great responsibility for project work and greater interaction with clients, particularly. That can be on a day-to-day project level. I forward an email, but it can equally be presentations.

Design Agency: Lydia's coming to a photography workshop next week with a client, with me, to Breadstone. her five day shoot. She's also gonna art direct that shoot for five days in a row. These are the kind of opportunities that I openly know. I think that it's a good time to do that. It might be a learning curve there, but that's good. That's what's required, to try and just begin to allow more responsibility to happen. And I don't mean just me, but perhaps a more senior people in the team to kind of let go. I wouldn't say let go completely, but let go enough to allow things to happen.

Interviewer: Slowly-

Design Agency: My talk would be more quickly. I think just like anything, you try and keep some kind of sort of support structure there to allow things to happen as they should in the leeway and freedom of autonomy to pick your road. Like I said, at some point something happens and then you find it.

Interviewer: The magic. It all clicks into place.

Design Agency: In theory, yeah.

Interviewer: I was just wondering ... I know I've asked this question probably every time, but do you have a positive experience that's happened to Lydia since I last talked to a [inaudible 00:14:44]? And also something we have thought, "Oh, we could work on that."?

Design Agency: I think that they, yeah, can do both of those. I think what the positive side to that, I would say, ownership of the best project. It's not something I'm directly involved in, actually. But these two publications, they're for a charity goin really well. In fact, just this morning Lydia was telling me about some really positive feedback that she had from the client, and that's just really nice to hear, not only because the project's going well. I'm sort of seeing that. Clearly, things are going well, but it's kind of direct as well, which is great. Positively report that positivity to the members of the team.

Interviewer: Can you see her when she's positive like that? Do you see a change in how she is for maybe the rest of the day? Do you notice anything change slightly?

Design Agency: Yeah, sure. I think that's human nature, isn't it? You get some self-positive reaction in a good feeling feedback. That carries you forward, whether it's for a day, a week, or a month. In some ways, it kind of takes a little bit of bad news or [inaudible 00:16:25].

Interviewer: Yeah. Some people have thick skin. I never get that.

Design Agency: That happens in design all the time, good days and bad days. Hopefully more good days than bad days. There are ups and downs, and there are difficult things to address and discuss and navigate. But, that's still part of the fun of it, really. But,

of course, that could feel very different. I think it could feel very different when you're a little bit less experienced. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think that obviously you have got more experience. And you're more comfortable with the people that you work with. You're obviously a founder, I think. You probably could deal with it in a slightly different way.

Design Agency: Yeah, yeah. On the more difficult side of things, I think the project that we're working on … The nature of the process has shifted. [inaudible 00:17:41] have shifted, several times. There's a little bit of drip feed in terms of the communication, so back and forth. Again, this all happens a lot where projects can just go … As a result of a more protractive process along the tail in attempt to deliver such a … The heat can go at them a little bit, and it's like a little bit of inertia sets in. It's all really, really good learning, actually, because they do happen. We've done a good job, I think, of trying to rebuild not only focus, but energy into … Because, the work itself. This is the thing. You kind of show it to somebody fresh. I think they would be knocked out by it, but somehow in the process … It's like painting or whatever that the artist hates because they spent three years doing it and everyone else is, "Oh, it's brilliant. Incredible" And they kind of go and hate it.

Interviewer: Yeah. The kind of torture of getting to that point was [crosstalk 00:18:58].

Design Agency: And again, that's a common thing. But, it's certainly the case with this particular project, and we're overcoming it and for good reason because it's really brilliant work. We'll get a great result at the end. But, that perhaps taking a little bit more advice and support from the [inaudible 00:19:25] people. They're out just to help go, "Do you know what? This isn't broken. This is still great." It's just that getting there has been harder.

Interviewer: So it's always got learning. Learning to deal with the situation has been … it's not so much about the creative in this sense. It's more about the situation at hand.

Design Agency: It's the process, yeah. Again, if you start to look at … If you needed job descriptions and midway and senior job descriptions, as you go up the ranks as it were, these are the kind of things that absolutely solidly within them. The ability to kind of navigate and deal, and instead be patient, stay cool-headed, manage the situation, good communication … That stuff kind of comes in to be able to-

Interviewer: Yeah, deal.

Design Agency: -Deal with that, really.

Interviewer: Yeah. And probably the last question today is, how is taking part in this series of interviews make you think about learning and development for a junior designers? How has it made you think about that process [inaudible 00:20:51]?

Design Agency: I suppose it's helped. I haven't really given that a great deal of thought. I think we do okay here in terms of the structure and process that we have in place. We thought a little bit of a [inaudible 00:21:13] maybe, for that. And we found our own style and approach in doing it. But, the most important point is that we do actually do it. I think that there's many business of our size or smaller that just … It is just like turning up and getting over things. The idea of any kind of training and development or [inaudible 00:21:41] process is kind of dealt with when it happens. I think we're okay at it. These conversations and chats that we've had over the last period and months of perhaps an opportunity to step out and reflect and say, "What actually are we?" You know? "Why are we doing this?" In a good way. Yeah. I guess that being good bookmarks in the diary just to kind of return to the conversation.

Interviewer: Sure. Actually, I did have one more question. Sorry.

Design Agency: No, go.

Interviewer:	Do you feel that the design agency, whether they're small, medium, or large, have a responsibility to graduates when they enter the design industry to help learn and develop?
Design Agency:	Yeah, I think they do, in a way. You can look at that in different ways. One of them, you couldn't even look at it and say, "Is it a legal responsibility?" We've got an employment contract. A lot of that employment contract is the kind of nuts and bolts of employment and employment love. But, it's slick to a job description. And in that job description, there are promises on both sides. There's a description of what the job is, and any individuals commitment to [inaudible 00:23:22]. And our job descriptions are written like this. What could you expect from us and those around you? That's also promising you the direction.
Design Agency:	Although that isn't written into contract, it is link to contract because the contracts says somewhere along the line, legal speak or whatever, that you'll fulfill the job description. And the job description sort of says, "Well, this is what it is." But, it's a two way promise. That's the thing. Yes. I think agencies absolutely have a responsibility to develop their people. I think we do that. I think those that don't are missing a trip, really. It's just that it might have people on the payroll that are doing really great work. But, if they don't feel valued, and respected, and developed, then they'll probably not stick around for too long. That's my hunch. Whereas, I think that the whole point of what we're trying to do is invest in people and offer them longer term, really. For them, but also for the health for the business as well.
Interviewer:	So you do see Lydia as a long-term employee?
Design Agency:	Sure, yeah.
Interviewer:	That's the [crosstalk 00:24:55]-
Design Agency:	That would be the intention with anyone that we recruited, yeah. And of course, this does exist. We're not a business. There is gonna just try and fill vacancies to fulfill work. It's quite the opportunity. To get to the top of the seat here, when there's not that many, maybe seven, maybe one or two more in the future ... To be recruited into this is a two-way commitment. It's not just because we got busy. If we got busy, we might lean on freelance or our network of talent that isn't in full-time employment. The full time is here. See, very much is a drag, really. In a real, close-knit team that works hard, communicates well, does great work that means something to them as a positive impact for the people that we're doing it for, which probably speak in a good ease, not bad ease. And that's it, to be a part of that. It's hopefully a good thing.
Interviewer:	It is. Cool. Well, that's all the questions I actually have for the interview, to be honest.
Design Agency:	Yeah, no worries. Does this conclude ...

INTERVIEW THREE: GRAD-BB

Graduate: I am just going to grab my note books from the house.

Interviewer: Sure.

Graduate: How are you?

Interviewer: I'm good. Thank you. How are you?

Graduate: Really, good thank you.

Interviewer: All right? It's recording. Sorry. Okay. Right. Just tell me when you're ready.

Graduate: Yeah. All good to go.

Interviewer: Okay. Cool. So I know a lot the questions are going to cover the same ground as I explained last time just so I've got a narrative a journey. So how has your role been going since we last spoke in February?

Graduate: It's been going really well, it's a … I guess not a lots happened. But it's seeing …. it feels like a lot has happened since we last spoke. It's been a little period of fun things, but more challenging, but that was really useful to help me to learn and grow. And last couple of weeks, especially I feel like it's been quite a dramatic in corporate shifts, like a bit improvement and I can feel myself taking more ownership of things. And sort of go hand signal just to talk with my hands.

Interviewer: I do the same thing.

Graduate: Yeah, feeling myself take bit more responsibility of mind growth and development as well and be a bit more intentional about that, which has been really good.

Interviewer: And does that feel like you … when you feel that does it feel like you … actively feel like you're improving and moving forward as well?

Graduate: Absolutely, yeah, I think when you first come into the role and still get to grips with and so now I feel like embedded in a bit more settled, it's been really good to kind of take stock and yeah intentionally look at a place I can improve and develop and grow.

Interviewer: Is that because when you started you were taking stock of so many different types of things, i.e. the people around you, the environment, the work, how to file systems, I mean. And then now that you're familiar with all these things that you don't have to think about that so much. And although I'm not saying it weren't concentrating on your work before, but it feels that's the thing that you can fully concentrate on, rather than so many other things all around you.

Graduate: I think that's a very, yeah, very fair to say and a good point. I had experience from interning quite a lot, but it's far different coming to the studio permanently, I am going to be in and you're getting used to so many different things. And it's nice to have a bit more head space and for you to really focus on the work I'm doing now, which is good.

Interviewer: So I guess that means your expectations of your role is still being met.

Graduate: Absolutely.

Interviewer: And possibly exceeded.

Graduate: Yeah, there's been so much support. And when I've had times where I feel I am pressured or stress been able to chat to people in the studio, she's been really

helpful getting that perspective when they were nice situations to doing a designer and just seeing if there's any cons that can support me in particular. But I think yeah, just feeling embedded in the studio now. And really being able to hopefully approach my role with the intent it needs is been great.

Interviewer: So do you feel like you are really part of the team now?

Graduate: Yeah, I do. And so it's really supportive student environment to be in and everyone's ... if you need help, there's always someone there and know that you can ask anyone for help is ... sometimes you don't bother people, but I'm just not thinking of it anymore and just knowing that everyone is there to help and support is really valuable.

Interviewer: Cool. So I'm going to ask you the same question I asked you the last two times can you tell me about something positive that's happened in the last month or six weeks since we last spoke. And something where you felt a bit more ... we thought, Oh, I had a problem or I need to fix that or something.

Graduate: And just start with the first if you like. And so I've been working on a project and for charity here which has been an opportunity for me to have a bit more sole ownership over it and which has been a really great experience and that's has gone really, really well. It's still had a lot of pressures and the first presentation had less time pressures attached to it. And that's the opportunity to be stressed by a situation, but I think I have tried to approach it in a different, handle in a different way than I would have done in the past. And you can see for it reflects with some very successful presentation, clients really happy with it and the resulting went from then on, it's been really great to work and we can't wait to get feedback from it. So that's been a really good experience.

Interviewer: Great.

Graduate: And then I guess in a less successful ... the project before that I was working on and was quite a put down and a lot of stops and starts within the process.

Interviewer: Was this the one we were working on before when I talk to you.

Graduate: I think it probably was, it's be going for a long time now and it can have a lot of new processes in that situation as well so outreach photo shoot for that which was has been very well. And but there was just new things like interacting with a photographer and knowing how the process after the photo shoot goes and how that's only handles something I've never done before. So I think a lot of pressure myself, which ... to get to do a good job at the shoot and to make sure that the result in work was best it could be and I was just putting a lot of pressure on myself to.

Graduate: Obviously, bring out a really good result from at the end of it, and I'm sure the person at the shoot has got a bit too much pressure on myself, got a bit too stressed and things were out of my control that I couldn't see the photos weren't coming back when I needed them too, things like that. I should separating what you can't control, you can't control and just managing the situation with a bit more poised and not flapping about I guess.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. And when you felt you were under this pressure and you were feeling you weren't quite sure what to do next. Did you internalize that or did you share that?

Graduate: I definitely internalized that for too long now, which is the part of the conversation I had with Rory he is the senior designer, we spoke had a little coffee about in a few weeks after which is really helpful to see rather than worrying about the whole situation. Just ask him for help sooner or later to clarify the situation and would have been helpful and asking for help when I needed it. And which is some things I applied to the next project where it did go successfully the same. Good thing again, we had time pressures after we get to the [inaudible 00:07:16] turn and the

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clients come to the studio and instead of reacting that situation with stress, I just ask for help when I needed it and it went really smoothly I would say. It's been a big massive learning curve. I think I feel already that I am benefiting from having that experience.

Interviewer: Cool. The next question I was going to ask which was how do you feel the way Baxter and Bailey are helping you learn and develop? It feels like they are really supportive and it's sometimes that you possibly just need to ask for help earlier. I'm not saying always, but in the next situation, you do. And so actually they are helping and support you then, it's just that you need to maintain communication and when to ask.

Graduate: Absolutely. Yeah, it's a very supportive environment and I haven't been left just to tackle things on my own. When I have been it's been appropriate and its really helped me to grow. And so, yes, definitely, definitely supportive.

Interviewer: Great. So what skills ... But I'm going to ask you about when you started, not from the first interview. When you started and until now in that timeline, what skills have turned out to be the most useful to you in the design agency.

Graduate: I think the most valuable skills are communication and all the design you can learn and you can improve and you can build upon and clearly communicating any issues or problems will teach us about project to spend the rest valuable thing. It's nice to know I need to develop upon fun and hopefully get better at the end and certain that's the biggest thing, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. And also in that timeline of when he first started at Baxter and Bailey to now. Could you tell me how you feel your own learning and development has happened if you kind of think about the first day compared to now . Do you see any similarities in yourself or as a junior designer, or do you feel you've gone straight up on a learning curve, have you ... your own development I guess.

Graduate: Yeah, and I think the biggest thing for me is confidence and creative bravery is something I definitely now I need to improve on. And there's still lots of that linger. I think definitely from starting to now feels like so long ago and I do feel like I've actually improved when I started. And still have to see how well it goes which I am keen to be more intentional about going forward. Say that probably the one thing that's still a little bit more consistent and needs to be eradicated, but this process isn't really happening over night so.

Interviewer: So you don't really have ... when you look back and see yourself when you started. Do you recognize kind of person, a little bit-

Graduate: I'm starting not to, which is a good thing-

Interviewer: ... the junior designer which you were.

Graduate: Yeah, it's funny, isn't it?

Interviewer: And what are your goals and aims for the future? In terms of being a designer, sorry - not generally!

Graduate: So we've been having some charts internally here as well recently about our roles and responsibilities and chip in really helpful and I say had a chat with Rory, the senior designer a little bit about my development as well. And so I'm kind of paying more attention about my development and looking to what the next step is to becoming a midway and time scope for that. And that's the thing I hope to improve quite quickly and also don't want to make mistake of putting too much pressure on myself to screw myself whatever I have to do. But it's been really good to actually have these discussions and the guys have provided me for clear job spec for the for a middle way designer, so I can see how where I need to progress to get there.

Interviewer:	So that's quite transparent in the-
Graduate:	Yeah, yeah, it's really helpful. And glad this has been brought up, when it has been brought for off the kind of Just I guess glad as a junior and making a point to be active for further development it's a very positive thing, I think.
Interviewer:	Yeah, it's just I know that Don mentioned Rory quite a bit and so have you and I guess he is the person that's been there for you to support your development, the most. It sounds like how would you describe him has he influenced ... do you look up to him? Has he influenced you?
Graduate:	Yeah, absolutely. And it's just a really good opportunity to be part of this team of people such as Rory and Emma who are just really incredible designers and it's kind of a privilege to be in a situation where can learn from them. So definitely look up to both of them but Rory especially is someone who's extremely good at his job and very consistent way around it. And thinks is everything he puts his hands to. And so it's really valuable to have someone to talk to, and I know how [inaudible 00:12:32] concerned about anything. And yes since we had a little chat as well between the two of us outside of the studio and it's just even more obvious that I can go to him and I shouldn't feel concerned about doing so. So it's great.
Interviewer:	Great. And sorry miss my questions ... Do you feel that the design industry have a responsibility to recent graduates like yourself entering the design industry and helping them develop and support them in the early careers.
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely. I think if you show that you're willing and you've got that drive and commitment to work in the studio I mean much into one. I think it's really important that both you and the team have the same attitude towards your development that you're bringing, you've got to learn their also supporting you as well. And if I felt like that wasn't a support for me to develop it will be a lot harder. I think that ... Yeah, I definitely think there is a bit personal space then it's definitely being met in the studio, it's really evident, yeah.
Interviewer:	And has taking part in this series of interviews may do you think about your learning and development and how this should happen.
Graduate:	Yeah, absolutely. It kind of coincided with a lot of discussions about which is probably helpful got a little content for you. Yeah, but has really made me think. And yeah, just not sort of glide through and just learn things slowly just being way more attention and spreading yourself into situations where you have to learn a bit quicker.
Interviewer:	Cool and anything else that you have to say about being a recent graduate and entering the design industry as you have done. Would you have any advice for other graduates.
Graduate:	Any advice? Oh, to say to you 100% apply yourself to the studio you're in. And I'm ready to share you're willing to listen and take an experience from people around you. And that's the thing I found so valuable here is that there's just so much experience and knowledge in the room, so you should really take advantage of that and that was someone just listen to it and not think they know everything already because they certainly don't.
Interviewer:	Okay. I think that I have asked all the questions I need to. It's really good. Thank you so much for taking part.
Graduate:	No problem.
Interviewer:	It sounds like you're doing a really good job. Thanks for Bailey and really supportive of you. And I think that you're in a great position and yeah you're landed on your feet and-

Graduate:	Certainly have. Yeah.
Interviewer:	It's not just luck. Yeah, it sounds like they value you highly and yeah it's great. So I'm good luck for the future.
Graduate:	Thank you very much it's great to talk to you.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. Thank you for talking to me. I mentioned to Don about the timeline of the work and stuff. So I say I'd get in touch in the future, obviously.
Graduate:	Yeah, it would be great.
Interviewer:	And talking takes quite a long time. It's probably every year away from me to do all of that.
Graduate:	Wow.
Interviewer:	Yeah, I will drop an email when anything's closer to being published and things.
Graduate:	Yes, that's sound great.
Interviewer:	Great.
Graduate:	Good luck with all the writing and bunch of reading it.
Interviewer:	It would be quite drive. Yeah, yeah. It'll take a while. But thank you so much for taking part. I really appreciate it.
Graduate:	No problem at all.
Interviewer:	Thanks so much Olivia. Bye.

INTERVIEW ONE: DA-COM

Interviewer: So, how did you find Jess and how did she offer an internship?

Design Agency: I think she sent in a little mailer PDF, which was really nice. Like a sort of DL format.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Just I think that level of intuition was kind of impressive, because we just kept PDFs from people most of the time.

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: With Dear Sir/Madam ...

Interviewer: (laughs) Yes. So ...

Design Agency: Kind of language, so if anybody- It doesn't take much, but is someone sends in something like that, it sort of grabs our attention and we look into it. Get them in and have a chat.

Interviewer: Yeah, cool. And I know Jess has only been here for a month, but of an internship position, are your expectations being met?

Design Agency: Yeah, definitely. Yeah.

Interviewer: Sorry. And what do you expect of Jess while she's here in terms of her contribution to the team?

Design Agency: Yeah, I would say the main thing is just being eager, I guess, because there's a lot of things we can teach or they can learn along the way, like Photoshop, Illustrator, skills like that, but if they show that they're passionate or into it from the start, then that's always a good place. We've had a few interns who come in and they're quite ... They feel like they're already above what position they're in, which is kind of off-putting. So I guess, someone who's just willing to learn. Yeah. And understands the role, I guess, is good. Because it's not always going to be the most amazing projects in the studio. Everyone in the studio has to do boring tasks now and again.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: So having that expectation is-

Interviewer: Just understanding that.

Design Agency: -is good, yeah, because we've all gone through it ourselves.

Interviewer: Differently.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: I guess that is the next question. How can Jess make a positive impact while she's here? It's just being all those things again, so.

Design Agency: Yeah, exactly. And then there's small things as well, like turn up on time, because of guests. Being punctual, it just shows that you're sort of, again, eager and willing to put in the shift.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: I think a lot of the studios we've worked at before have been quite unfair with, not just interns, but employees, making them work late and things. We sort of, everyone leaves here at six.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: But, you just- When (laughs) I'm tied up.

Interviewer: So, overall, yeah.

Design Agency: You don't want people to turn up like 10 o'clock and they say their phone didn't go off or something, a few times, and you start to feel like they're not really into the cause.

Interviewer: Yeah. So basically, your sort of work ethic here, and although you expect people to work hard, the pushback is that you're here on time, you can go on time …

Design Agency: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

Interviewer: Treat your job as if it's a job.

Design Agency: We try to keep people fairly sticking to the same, and that's …

Interviewer: Yeah, it's a two way street.

Design Agency: Yeah, exactly, I think.

Interviewer: And what type of things would you do to help Jess learn and support her development while she's here?

Design Agency: For example, there's the project she's working on at the minute. She'll be in from the start of the process, like with the brief, presenting ideas to the client, taking on feedback, developing it further, and then I guess, delivering it at the end.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Design Agency: So I guess that would show her the process and how quick things have to be done and how responsive you have to be.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: So I guess there's learning in that. And then there's- We have her doing another, a smaller, sort of easier task, which is just updating some artwork with a new design, based on a design that's already been done.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Design Agency: I guess I'll show how to artwork things, get them set up for printers, and then specking materials and things, so there'll be that side of things as well.

Interviewer: Does someone walk her through these processes- not minute by minute, but is someone there to kind of be on hand to kind of guide her?

Design Agency: Yeah, well I think, for that first project that I mentioned, a Senior designer is working on that. He usually does the project she's working on, so he's sending the stuff that she's been working on to the client, taking on feedback, and then just passing it on, walking her through it.

Interviewer: Of course.

Design Agency: Now, [inaudible 00:05:28], that was a project I used to do, which- I'll just sit with her and explain why things need to be a certain way, and how we setup artwork-

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: -and all that kind of stuff, so.

Interviewer: So it would be a gradually drip-feed of, kind of responsibility increasing over time. So she's not necessarily talking to clients directly now, but eventually-

Design Agency: Yeah, no.

Interviewer: -that may or may not happen.

Design Agency: Yeah. I mean, that happens quite quickly, I think, with us anyway. We don't go through a project manager and stuff? Maybe I'll switch with interns, but maybe. It depends on the client, I think. If we've got a really close relationship with a client, we're happy to just let them get in touch or send things on.

Interviewer: Yeah. So it's more intuitive about the relationships that you have with clients and what- okay.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: And- Sorry, none of these are really applicable. Is there anything that's happened so far, since Jess has been here, where you're thought, "That's really cool. That's a really good thing you've done?" It might not necessarily be insight-based, it could be communication-based, or something you thought, "That shows real promise."

Design Agency: Yeah. That's a good question. I've not been so involved with the major things. [inaudible 00:07:02] you can ask, but I couldn't answer that. Again, it just goes back to the question earlier about just being keen and-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: -showing initiative and ... I think, I wouldn't be surprised if something did happen that I thought, "That's [crosstalk 00:07:22], oh, that's cool," or whatever, but ...

Interviewer: Yeah. Cool. Okay.

Design Agency: I can't answer it. I'm sorry.

Interviewer: Okay. So, no, that's okay. I'm pretty sure that- If there's another point, that means something hasn't gone so well in someone's head to kind of talk to her.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: And I'm not in a negative way, I don't mean that, but you know, sometimes you learn from your mistakes, which is ... Has anything like that happened?

Design Agency: Yeah. I mean, to be honest, I'm just happy if things go ...

Interviewer: Well.

Design Agency: Well, yeah.

Interviewer: (laughs) Yeah.

Design Agency: Do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: So it's like, your though process with that client is on track, I guess that's …

Interviewer: Enough.

Design Agency: That's a good, yeah.

Interviewer: (laughs)

Design Agency: That's what you come for.

Interviewer: Do you- I know that you've taken on interns in the past and you've said that it has lead to a job. What would take this opportunity for Jess as an intern to turn into a permanent role? What are the kind of factors behind it that would … ?

Design Agency: I think a lot of this stuff sits down to timing and luck.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Design Agency: 'Cause I guess, as a business, you just not to be in the position.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: I mean, sometimes you have people come in that just aren't the right time, and they of on and do great by themselves and go somewhere else.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: But if you took on everybody …

Interviewer: (laughs)

Design Agency: You and I [crosstalk 00:08:42] recording, yeah. So I think a lot of it's down, mostly, to the talent and, how keen you are and how well you get on with everyone in the studio, and how well you fit it, but then the sort of last thing's just about timing.

Interviewer: Yeah, sure. So probably to get an internship in the first place, you would have passed the first test-

Design Agency: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: -Which is, "You've got the skill and the talent."

Design Agency: We don't tend to take anyone as an intern-

Interviewer: Just for the sake of it.

Design Agency: -who we wouldn't take on afterwards, yeah.

Interviewer: So, you've already- it is kind of like a stage to the situations occurring, so,

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates? Not necessarily from your point of view as an agency owner, but just generally as graduates.

Design Agency: The bad- Sorry, what's the start of the question? The bad bits and the …

Interviewer: Advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates.

Design Agency: The advantages are- It just gives them a taste of the real world. When you're a student, you probably don't understand what it's like out there. You think you'll be doing great work all the time.

Interviewer: (laughs)

Design Agency: Even now when you've sort of been doin' it- Take 10 years, whatever, you find you've still gotta do a lot of mundane, boring ...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: You don't want to do. So, I guess-

Interviewer: So it's that real [crosstalk 00:10:28]

Design Agency: I guess if you went around to different studios, you might get a slight different taste of how different agencies would do it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: I don't wanna place freelance ... I find that quite interesting, and I guess I didn't do that many internships, but when you freelance, you get to see how other studios are run.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: And sort of take it's piece with what you like about it or don't like and apply it to your own process. I'd say the disadvantages in general, probably would be, some studios would take on interns just for the sake of it, and you feel like you're just part of the process, that you're in-and-out, and you don't feel like you might have a chance ...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: ... because there's someone else coming at the end of your time. So I guess that might be a bit demoralizing, if you don't feel like there's anything at the end of it for you. And I guess your response would be maybe, if a studio wouldn't pay you to be an intern, which I feel would be unfair.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: But I think in general, the advantages probably outweigh the disadvantages. I don't know anybody who's has really bad experiences at internships.

Interviewer: No.

Design Agency: Even ones that go a little bit wrong can be educational-

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. (laughs)

Design Agency: -in a certain way.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think that clarifies the mind with some [inaudible 00:12:15].

Design Agency: Yeah, it might bring them down to earth a little bit or ...

Interviewer: (laughs) Yeah, no. Definitely.

Design Agency: Because I guess you need to remember that you might be doing this job for a year or so, you have to make sure it's right for you as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, sure. What do you think is an important aspect of graduates leaving University and entering the Design Industry? What advice do you think is most important for those graduates who are trying to break into the industries?

Design Agency: I'd say maybe think about design as a service industry more than a creative industry. Kinda think … that would be a good start.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: 'Cause I think that's how we approach what we do. Here, just a service, and if we can squeeze some creativity into it … that's nice, but …

Interviewer: (laughs) yeah, well you seem to be doing very well.

Design Agency: Yeah, but we don't- The designers we like the most just sort of feel like old-fashioned graphic designers who are doing a job rather than some creative ego trying to impose what they do on businesses.

Interviewer: Like a doctrine.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: So, I would say that, really.

Interviewer: And do you think that, in terms of graduates learning in a workplace, what would you say is really important?

Design Agency: To learn when they're in this sort of-

Interviewer: Say, if you're in this studio, how do you, what do you think is a really important thing that- because obviously they need to learn to get better. What do you think is a really useful thing for a studio to impart on them, or … ?

Design Agency: I would say … yeah, the process of working on a project like we've been doing with Jess, taking the brief on and working on it, taking feedback, and seeing the job through. But then, other things as well that you might not learn in college. I remember, when I started out, it was the first time we had been introduced to things like paper- like swatch books in-studio, printing techniques … which I feel is not really taught at college, you sit in front of the computer most of the time, but aren't really interested in just going into studios and looking at swatch books and things?

Interviewer: Yeah. So it's more real world things.

Design Agency: Yeah, real world things. I'm trying to think if there's anything I could impart on a … I mean, come back to the service thing as well. To stop what you're thinking.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's good.

Design Agency: I think that's all I can think of there.

Interviewer: That's all.

Design Agency: Great.

Interviewer: Questions. (laughs)

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD-COM

Interviewer: They're all quite general questions. Nothing too taxing. How did this role come about at Commission, and could you describe the process you took to get it?

Graduate: Okay. This one, actually, was a little different to other, another internship I applied to whereas I actually sent them a physical portfolio, which I hadn't done before.

Interviewer: That was the first time you'd done it.

Graduate: Yeah, but I just felt like I was a print-based designer, and I wanted something to, was a bit more me, a bit more stand-out-ish. Yeah, the portfolio, got a reply. That was it.

Interviewer: It reflected what you actually do as a designer.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Have you done internships before?

Graduate: Yes. I did one other, this side of graduation, in, is it Finsbury Park? Near Highbury. For two months.

Interviewer: You were there for two months?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. How long have you been here? It's not very long, is it?

Graduate: No, I've only been here for, it's coming up to a month, so on the 1st, it will be a month, coming up to.

Interviewer: You're going to stay for three months, all that? Okay. Did you imagine that when you graduating, this is how you would enter the design industry? No.

Graduate: Absolutely not. I think the problem with Uni is, you're definitely in your own little bubble, but when coming out, you kind of expect, obviously with teachers hyping you up and stuff, you think it wouldn't be as hard as it is to actually get something. I do feel like it is a lot slower of a process than I thought it was going to be.

Interviewer: Sure.

Graduate: Considering I'm, it's almost a year now. This is my second internship, so I think in my mind, while I was still at Uni, I thought it'd be a lot easier, a lot quicker than this.

Interviewer: Sure. Are you relatively happy the way it is turning out?

Graduate: Yeah, absolutely. I think it's really exciting when you do get responses and replies. It's going well.

Interviewer: Cool. Do you get a lot of dead ends?

Graduate: Oh, no replies, yeah.

Interviewer: How does it feel when that happens, or do you just expect it because there's so many?

Graduate: This is kind of why I did the printed one, because with the emails, it was just one in over ten, I would get replied from. I think at first, it was probably a little disheartening, but then you just-

Interviewer:	Take it on the chin.
Graduate:	Exactly.
Interviewer:	Kind of just figure out that's normal.
Graduate:	Yep.
Interviewer:	Cool. What were your expectations of this internship before you started?
Graduate:	I wasn't sure. I think just to, the last internship I did was only two guys, so it's very me coming in and it didn't feel massively permanent. It was like, "You can work when you want," and things like that. Straight away, this stood out because just the organization of it. I think my expectations weren't how organized and professional it was.
Interviewer:	With this one.
Graduate:	Comparing it to the last one, yeah. It's been a really nice change.
Interviewer:	In a good way?
Graduate:	Yeah. I think so.
Interviewer:	With the last one, you might think, "Is this normal?"
Graduate:	Yeah, exactly.
Interviewer:	Or am I missing something?
Graduate:	Yes. I was really, I ended up getting quite confused, because it was just so casual whereas this one, I do like the organization and the professionalism.
Interviewer:	Okay. How is the role going, since you've started?
Graduate:	I think it's going okay.
Interviewer:	I do see. I'm looking from your point of view, not probably from what you think other people think of you. How do you think you're doing in the role?
Graduate:	I think I'm doing alright. Yeah, we have some fun experience with a client earlier in the week where they completely changed their mind about the work.
Interviewer:	Classic clients.
Graduate:	But you know, just taking that on board and keep working. I think [inaudible 00:04:45].
Interviewer:	Good. How is, how are people here helping you learn on the job?
Graduate:	They obviously, if there's any kind of concern or thing I didn't know, I can easily get help on what. The other day, I was making these Illustrator files and realized I had set it up wrong. I had almost a massive tutorial on Illustrator for an hour, which is kind of what you need, I think. Again, didn't get it at the last one, because it was just two guys. It was all very rushed, and I just had to do it. Whereas this one, I feel like, got a lot of potential to actually learn shortcuts and things.
Interviewer:	I guess you're also learning how to do things correctly?

Graduate:	Exactly.
Interviewer:	Or at least in a practice type of way rather than just winging it?
Graduate:	Exactly, yeah. I'm doing it the right way, I feel like.
Interviewer:	Does that make you feel more confident, actually, even though sometimes it might arise from something that was a mistake?
Graduate:	Yeah, no, exactly. I think [inaudible 00:05:49] here, they're like, "Don't be afraid of making mistakes and things like that." I think it can be a bit intimidating to make mistakes, but in the long run, it's so educational and, yeah. I quite like making mistakes. Just not the massive mistake.
Interviewer:	Ones that you can learn from. How do you think, this is not a negative thing, but how do you think it could be? How could you be supported to develop and learn more here? Just from your own point of view?
Graduate:	I think that's hard, considering I've only been here for three weeks. How could I learn more? I'm really not sure yet. I think that is going to come with doing more projects. At the moment, I've only been doing one set project at the moment. I feel like maybe I could, maybe more demonstrations of potentially.
Interviewer:	Do you think it's just actually time and inexperience? What skills have been most useful since you left University, in your internships?
Graduate:	Definitely my typography has changed massively, because although Brighton was a fantastic Uni, they were very much all concepts and ideas, which obviously is very, very important. Actually, when it came to the technical side of it as in setting type and typesetting, all that stuff, they didn't teach massive amounts. Particularly here, I feel like at Brighton, we didn't learn a lot about Illustrator or creating icons and logos, which is basically what I've done here at the moment. That's all very new skills, which I think is useful, especially freelance. Everyone seems to want logos.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. It's quite a big part of it. Have there been any skills that you've taken from University that have actually been really good?
Graduate:	Probably the whole concepts and ideas thing. I think that really helps, to think of it more out of the box. Brighton did that really well, and probably just work ethic as well. It's just the process I go through. Yeah, the processes.
Interviewer:	Cool. Have you done anything to support your own development since you have graduated?
Graduate:	As in what I've?
Interviewer:	Yeah, your development as a designer or being a designer in the design industry. It could be, it doesn't need to be anything. It doesn't necessarily need to be design-specific, but it might be something that you've taken on board.
Graduate:	I try and do little side projects or things for friends. When I did have unemployed stages, that really helped me keeping up with my mental creativity. I do a lot of free [inaudible 00:09:14]. I kind of like go and to scout out for magazines and rare books and things like that. I think non-design related, definitely in general, just sending all the emails to studios was a great practice. I would try to talk to people online. I think since Uni, actually, you're in this lovely little bubble where you go to Uni every day. You do your work, and you go home and [inaudible 00:09:42] that freedom and everything. I think probably the biggest change is suddenly becoming self-critical and, yeah, doing everything. It's been good.

Interviewer:	Cool. That's good. Has your learning taken place in other areas? Have you done any external courses? Have you gone to talks and seminars?
Graduate:	I haven't yet, but I'm always on the lookout to do so. I think now I'm living in London, because I was previously for a few days, commuting from Reading. I've got more time in the evenings, and I've got the weekends here. I think hopefully, I'll start getting back into, I definitely want to go to some talks. I'm thinking about doing maybe some printing courses in the summer, things like Story Imprint, which I've never really done before.
Interviewer:	Cool. Is it North Road? They do an amazing course. They do, I sent my husband there. He did a big poster, like a typographic. It looked a little bit old. [inaudible 00:10:55] and everything, so it was really cool.
Graduate:	That is so cool.
Interviewer:	If you want to do something like that, that's probably one of the best places to go, I reckon. It's expensive, but it's fun.
Graduate:	They're all expensive. It's a shame.
Interviewer:	Could you tell me a major positive since you graduated so far, to do with your design career?
Graduate:	A major positive.
Interviewer:	Where you felt like you really made a big stride or learned something where you thought-
Graduate:	Getting this internship was a good turning point, really, because it was definitely, going into design right now, and really positive strong start. I'd say, again, getting this internship.
Interviewer:	Cool. Is there any low point that you've had since graduating?
Graduate:	Yeah, probably after my first internship. Then it was really close to Christmas, and I got no replies. Yeah, because something you just kind of crash. It feels like the holidays, after working for two months, and then suddenly not doing anything, it's hard to actually-
Interviewer:	There's nowhere to go to afterwards.
Graduate:	That was probably, yeah.
Interviewer:	That was to do with how you felt, within yourself? It's not a specific design thing. It was actually how psychologically you felt?
Graduate:	Definitely. I think it is really funny. I think it potentially is good if you don't go back home after Uni, but being back at home after Uni is like an adult stuck in the house.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	It is weird, and I live in the middle of nowhere, so it was quite isolated area. A lot of my friends are still at Uni. I think, yeah, a lot of the down points since graduating were not design-related, but did affect my work ethic and design, really.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Can I just ask a slight question? How did you support yourself in London when you, have you only moved to London when you've got an internship?
Graduate:	Yeah.

Interviewer:	Okay, cool. It's not like some people who are in London from elsewhere looking for internships.
Graduate:	Exactly.
Interviewer:	Having an internship has given you the opportunity to move over.
Graduate:	Exactly. And this internship does pay really, really amazingly, which I'm so grateful for. I don't think I would have been able to move to London if I didn't get the pay I was. It just makes the whole thing, the whole experience a lot more fun, not having to commute.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Graduate:	I was getting up at 6:00 am, to get to here for 9:00.
Interviewer:	Yeah, it's hard work. You're tired before you even get here, I guess.
Graduate:	Exactly, yeah. Then I think just before I started, what helped was I did a bit of freelance work in my local area, which a guy was paying me quite well for. That was just saved up to rent somewhere here.
Interviewer:	Cool, that's good. Do you see this internship opportunity as turning into a permanent role?
Graduate:	I think it's a bit too early to tell. I would love it to, yeah, but also I think what I've learned as well since graduating is that it's a lot more complicated than just doing an internship and getting a job. You've got to have the right amount of work to make it worth it, the money and everything like that. I would love it to, actually, become permanent, because I like it here, but we'll see.
Interviewer:	Cool. Could you tell me what you like about it here? Is it, what are the elements that make you like it?
Graduate:	I think massively, again, the organization. I think it's just so motivating that there's set times. We've got to be in by 9:20, start work at 9:30. I think that really, really helped with work ethic, the amount of work I'm able to do. Yeah, this project I'm doing at the moment is very much a lot of my own work. I think some places where you just fill in text and things like that, it could feel a bit downhearted. I think I feel like I'm actually-
Interviewer:	Contributing?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Sorry. That's really annoying, my throat. What do you see as advantages and disadvantages of doing internships?
Graduate:	Disadvantages are definitely, it can be the pay. I see myself quite lucky, but my first one was only £250 a month, which didn't cover even my travel. I've got a lot of friends who are in the same position where they're getting unpaid internships, but it's kind of, at Uni, you were told, "Don't accept them," but suddenly, now you've graduated and no one else is really replying. You are pressured to take these opportunities. I think a lot of people do struggle with the pay with interns. I think that's the main thing.
Interviewer:	And what about positives?
Graduate:	Positives, I feel like there's a lot less pressure to kind of learn on the job, if you know. I think if I went straight into a junior designer position, I'd feel a lot more

pressure not to make mistakes or to kind of be good, really, whereas in an internship, you just kind of get to grow a little more.

Interviewer: Cool. The last question is, you have mentioned some of your other friends that you were at University with, but generally, what are your classmates doing that you keep in touch with? Are they interning, working?

Graduate: Some of them have got junior designer positions. I think a lot of them, when I did catch up with them in a massive group, actually, a lot of people were doing something they didn't want to do. I know a couple people went straight into positions, but have now quit this time. I know people who are just starting to get in touch with designs, so yeah.

Interviewer: It's a mixed bag, really.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. Have any of them had to, have they not been able to enter the design industry because of where they live, or when you talk about being isolated?

Graduate: No one I know well, but I have heard that one girl who was pretty bright and she was great, but she lives on the outskirts of Bristol, and I don't think she's found anywhere yet. I do think, actually, people further away from London, so my friend is traveling from Oxford just to intern for part-time, unpaid. He's had to quit that, because he's not been able to afford it. I think a lot, yeah. There are some people outside London that are struggling to do that, or just I know one of my closest friends, he went into a printing job straight out of Uni. He doesn't like it. He wants to move elsewhere, but now, it's that point where he hasn't actually got anything else in his portfolio. I think he's struggling to find somewhere else now.

Interviewer: Yeah, doing that. Cool, okay. That was all the questions.

INTERVIEW TWO: DA-COM

Interviewer   How has Jess been developing in her role since February?

Design Agency   She has been doing great, really fitting in. Some people struggle with how we approach projects but Jess is keen to get involved and learn.

Interviewer   Are your expectations of Jess's role still being met?

Design Agency   Yes

Interviewer   What type of support is Jess getting when these events take place?

Design Agency   We've been making sure Jess has plenty of time on tasks. Most of the work we have to do is at breakneck speed and you can't expect someone straight out of college to keep up. Hopefully what she learns on those projects with more time will help her when it comes to helping out on something a big more hectic.

Interviewer   How has Jess supported her own development in after these events?

Design Agency   Just trying things out. You always learn more from trying things out and failing that not at all.

Interviewer   Could you tell me a positive experience of Jess at work since the last interview?

Design Agency   We had a project that kicked off and Jess was the first one to start looking at it. She did some great research and put together some great mood boards that helped the team get into the project quicker when they became free to work on it.

Interviewer   Could you tell me something you felt less positive experience at work since the last interview?

Design Agency   I think the above again is a good example of this. It was great that she put together some references that challenged what the project could be.

Interviewer   How has Commission help Jess learn and develop during these experiences?

Design Agency   I think she's probably understood more how we work and how we like to approach projects.

Interviewer   How do you see Commission develop her role further?

Design Agency   More responsibility on projects I think. Everyone gets involved so there's no hiding.

Interviewer   Of Jess's skills, which turned out to be the most useful to Commission?

Design Agency   Is work ethic a skill? She always offers to help out even if she's already worked a bit later.

Interviewer   If you reflect on when Jess started at Commission to now; could you tell me how you feel her learning and development has happened?

Design Agency   I think her practical skills have improved – Photoshop, InDesign etc.

Interviewer   What are your goals and aims for Jess in the future? Are these discussed with Jess?

Design Agency   It would be good to give her a project to start on her own and she what she can bring to it. We haven't discussed this with Jess yet; it will probably come up when the right thing comes along.

Interviewer   Do you feel that the design industry have a responsibility to graduates in their early career learning?

Design Agency   Yeah, I think so. To be honest college doesn't really prepare them for the real world and the responsibility gets passed onto the places they first work or do internships. I think it needs to be a two way street. Studios need to give graduates more time and graduates need to be more willing to learn and understand that the real education begins when they start working.

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD-COM

Interviewer: Cool. How's everything been going since we last talked?

Graduate: Yeah, really good. It's only gotten better.

Interviewer: Oh cool.

Graduate: It's been so much fun.

Interviewer: So you're definitely happy you took it on.

Graduate: Oh absolutely, yeah. Best thing I've done so far.

Interviewer: Oh wicked. In terms of all your other internships and work experience.

Graduate: Definitely. It's just been so professional, and yeah, just yeah everything's been really professional.

Interviewer: So are you finishing up your internship this week, or are you gonna...

Graduate: I'm staying on, for another three months I believe. And then it's kind of... I think from the chat it's three months of almost like freelance in [inaudible 00:00:46] studio and it's a probation period. And we'll see what actually happens after that.

Interviewer: Cool. That's really good, so I'm not trying to be nosy, but does that mean you're kind of getting paid more a freelance rate now?

Graduate: I think so, yeah. A new pay, in some aspects...

Interviewer: So basically, they're really happy with you. They're gonna extend it and...

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: I guess in the long term, you're hoping that it will turn into something more full time?

Graduate: Yeah, potentially, yeah. It seems positive at the moment.

Interviewer: Cool. Yeah, so they obviously are really happy with you, if they're offering you that.

Graduate: Yeah!

Interviewer: And so, I guess that means your expectations of the role are being met. Because you're wanting to stay on.

Graduate: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: So in terms of developing the role further, the next plans are that you're going to do this three month kind of half work experience, kind of freelance it, and then you're going to ... next step will be discussed in three months I guess?

Graduate: Yeah, discussion, I guess that completely obviously a lot can happen in three months. So, I don't think I wanna confirm anything at the moment, when so much can happen. But, yeah, potentially, we'll talk again in another three months.

Graduate: I think what's really impressed me is this almost promotion in some sense. Because it's so easy probably for a studio just "oh yeah we want to extend your internship, keep you at the same pay, and kind of ...

Graduate:	If it was at less pay, obviously I'd be struggling right now, I'd be like, "Oh, do I..."
Interviewer:	Can you afford to keep going?
Graduate:	Exactly. So it's quite nice, this recognition that I've done the actual internship, and now this is kind of like the next thing, the next step. So it feels very progressive.
Interviewer:	I guess it also means that you are clear yourself, about what is happening rather than feeling like you're being strung along?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	So that means the professional aspect is still high, as well, that you're feeling with that agency.
Interviewer:	So how have they been helping you support and develop your learning through this three months?
Graduate:	Everything! So, there's a lot of things that I never really knew before, that they've been teaching me along the way. So a lot of it is just like kind of doing the work. When I get stuck, then ask for help, they kinda appointed a senior designer to act like my mentor, which has been fantastic, because it means I can actually go to him, or any problems, he's the one who's briefing me, and explaining, and critiquing my work. So it's kind of a really steady thing with that, which is really nice. And then the two directors themselves are helping me kind of just, be more professional about the work. So it's always like finalizing, and making sure everything's come out right. Yeah, it's been really good.
Interviewer:	So there's clear signposts along the way when you're working, that you know what to do next, who to ask. There's a sign off point, and so...
Graduate:	Yeah, actually I've known exactly what I've been doing everyday. And when I've got to finish it by, so it's pretty clear instructions, which has been really helpful.
Interviewer:	So there is an element of forward planning as well within the agency that you're in the loop of.
Graduate:	Yeah, and the Project Manager, Alice, is really great as well. She sorts it all out, I think. All the projects.
Interviewer:	And in terms of this mentor person, was that someone that has just taken it on themselves? Or was assigned to you? Was it specified, or has it just happened naturally?
Graduate:	I think the directors may have had a play. I think they wanted Ian to have this, now kinda mentoring type role in his job. So it was the very first project, he briefed me on that. And I think it's just kind of stuck throughout the three months. I know that they were saying in my review that they placed Ian next to the Junior Designer, Tom, for that same reason, in the sense that Ian can help along the way.
Interviewer:	So that seating arrangement has worked.
Graduate:	Yeah, I think so.
Interviewer:	Cool. And have you done anything yourself, that you have done to support your own learning and development during this time?
Graduate:	Yeah. So it didn't work out as well, but basically I had to make these visuals and I've never done visuals before, like how to make a button look as if it's there in front of me, I do not know. But they were helping me loads, but I still wasn't really getting it. So at home, I would do tutorial videos. Problem is, on those videos,

	nowhere really does what Commission does. So I found it really hard to learn, specifically how to do it. Purely because what they do is really niche and doesn't really get talked about on YouTube.
Interviewer:	No, I guess the tutorial videos always quite... they're quite funny subjects as well.
Graduate:	But saying that, obviously I kind of voiced that I had no idea how to do these visuals, and one of the designers, Carol, sat down with me and kind of went through it when I had a presentation due and things like that. So they have been so much help.
Interviewer:	Yeah, it's not like they went, "Ugh, you really should know how to do this." They were quite happy to go, "Well what we do in our own unique way is this, this, and this."
Graduate:	Yeah. I think I will try and continue maybe learning more tutorials. Especially about Photoshop which I haven't already done much on. But it's also finding the time.
Interviewer:	So do you think that your own learning and development is mostly based around software skills? Or is it beyond there?
Graduate:	It is beyond at the moment. I definitely know just so much more, in terms of thinking in a way, because obviously all my projects before this have been so personal, so it's been my own decision, whereas now working for a client I think what I've learned most also is working for that client and their needs and what they expect. Also, art working was a big one. Comparing files to final print. So that's kind of my task there, I've got to do a lot of that today.
Graduate:	But yeah, I think not just technical software, but just in general ... the whole package.
Interviewer:	The whole package when you're working for a client and things.
Graduate:	I was just saying to a friend actually, she was a bit confused what I actually did in graphic design, so I was trying to explain the difference between Uni and internship. And the way she got it was like, you learn to drive a car at uni, and then you get to this internship and they're like, "Right, now you need to start learning how to drive a bus." And it's just like... "what?"
Graduate:	It's just so much more
Interviewer:	Yeah, there is. It sounds like the whole experience has been generally very positive. But what would you say has been kind of a stand-out positive moment since we ...
Graduate:	Stand-out positive... I think there was a point where I felt like I got put in a lot of responsibility. We'd been given this really big project that everyone's really busy on so I've also been taking on some of the lower ones. And I feel like that moment I had like a lot of responsibility, I had like three projects on the go that I was all doing work for. I think that was a really... I really enjoyed what I was doing. I am enjoying what I'm doing now; I'm still getting to [inaudible 00:08:15]
Graduate:	So I think it was just kind of when I last saw you, I was still doing that one project. It was probably that transitioning to several projects that really...
Interviewer:	Where you're starting to juggle a workload and things.
Graduate:	It made me feel definitely like I was more like, really involved now.
Interviewer:	And have there been any moments where you thought... not a negative moment, but something where you thought, "That isn't going so well," and you've alsmost ...

Graduate:	Yeah, so I think there was one moment where I was about to start these visuals, and I think it was one of those weird weeks. It was either suddenly gotten really busy or went quiet, I couldn't remember. But it felt slightly as if I was left to my own devices on that one. But, obviously after a couple days, they had a look at my work, and explained what I could do to make it better and it was absolutely fine. But it was probably just doing those visuals.
Interviewer:	Yeah, and it's not like anyone gets angry or annoyed at that stage. It's just that they just take you aside and say, "A better way of doing it would be this, or that, or ..."
Graduate:	Yeah, exactly. They've said this before of another issue I had as well, where obviously they can't blame me for not knowing anything to begin with. So this is all just now, learning and ... Yeah, it's been great.
Interviewer:	And how do you feel in general, the way everyone at Commission is helping you learn and develop your skills on the job?
Graduate:	How do I ...?
Interviewer:	Feel about it.
Graduate:	Oh, it's great, yeah. There's quite a fast pace. Obviously, they've all been working years ahead of me, and I almost wanna keep up, but can't, because I'm behind. But they've been so great and so helpful , and I really like that everyone helps. Like even from the junior designer to the directors. Someone has commented or kind of been, "Oh, you can do it this way." It's been really great.
Interviewer:	It sounds like everything's going really well. But do you think that ... is there anything else that you'd like them to help you out with, or support you with?
Graduate:	I'm not sure, to be honest. I feel maybe at times, well, I can't fault them on this, but it's those situations where I'll do the work, and then they say, "Oh, you could do this, and do it this way." And I'm like, if I knew that at the beginning... So it's kind of the timing. But also, they obviously can't read my mind. They don't know what I don't know. And I don't know what I could know. So some of the situations where I've got to do it first, and then realize that I've done wrong, and then I've got to redo it.
Interviewer:	So it's almost learning from your mistakes. But it only is in hindsight that you can do that.
Graduate:	Yeah, so if there was a way to do it beforehand. That would be ... so much quicker. But this is the only way it can work.
Interviewer:	No, no, it's funny. And, oh I guess you've already answered this, but it's "How do you imagine that you'll develop your role further while you're at Commission?" But you've already been over that. There is a plan.
Interviewer:	What about the skills that you've brought to Commission. What have been most useful in terms of how long you've been there. I mean, is it design skills, things that you've learned at University? What have you brought to them?
Graduate:	I think a lot of the good thing about what you learn at Uni is all ideas. So I feel, in design-wise, I feel yeah that's what I've brought to the projects in the sense that I've obviously come up with the ideas, they critique them, develop them, kind of carry on from there. So I feel like those are probably the biggest contributions I had and just in general, I think although it's not design work, just helping around the studio as well... makes you slightly, not un-disposable, but less disposable I guess. No, everyone's says they NEED your help.
Interviewer:	It's that part of fitting into the team, and becoming indispensable really.

Graduate:	Yeah, exactly.
Interviewer:	And also, being someone that they would want to have in the studio.
Graduate:	Just kind of contribute everywhere.
Interviewer:	If you could reflect on when you first started, to now. Could you tell me how you feel, your overall learning and development has improved?
Graduate:	Yeah. So most of all my technical development has. I feel I'm getting to know the softwares a bit more. I feel like work-wise, just maybe I haven't seen the developments yet, but definitely realizing my mistakes, and then applying them to the next work I do, so I'm not making the same mistakes I feel. So, in general, I feel like I have come a massive way, technically, on the work.
Interviewer:	And what are your goals and aims for the future, in terms of probably this role, and how are you hoping it will pan out?
Graduate:	Well, to get a job would be… a permanent one would be amazing. But I think for the next few months while I'm in this kind of freelance position, is just to be maybe more outgoing with my ideas as well. Just kind of, I found that I would do the working, kind of copying what they've already done, and it's almost been like, "Yeah, that's good, but also can you do something completely different that we haven't done yet?"
Graduate:	So it's kind of just doing a whole range of experimentation… be more outgoing with my ideas. I feel a lot with production and packaging, they're quite big on that, but I've never really done any of that before. So I feel, I think my goal would be to get more of an understanding, so when we do get more projects coming up and we need to talk about ideas, I'll be able to contribute more to those production ideas.
Interviewer:	So you'd feel more confident in your contributing to …
Graduate:	I feel like I just don't know anything about …
Interviewer:	Yeah, it's quite a specialized area. Sounds quite intense.
Interviewer:	I know that we've done this interview and the previous one, but has it made you think about learning, or put that on your radar about… has it changed your opinion of what maybe you would expect, or has it made you think a little bit more about it?
Graduate:	I think it's made me think a bit more about it. And I think it's made me notice it. You know, notice well actually I am learning. In comparison to other internships, I did still learn a lot, but nothing to this scale of learning. No it's been really great, and I'm kind of, yeah I've noticed that a lot more, or I've learned to kind of bring up the topic maybe that like, "Oh, could you teach me how to do these things," and stuff like that.
Interviewer:	Just keeping it in the back of your mind.
Interviewer:	And do you feel that the design industry as a whole, not specifically Commission, should have more responsibility or have some responsibility towards recent design graduates? And what should that be?
Graduate:	I think I might be biased now, because I find that actually to be fair, a lot of my friends have found it hard to get these internships as well. So it's only actually now where I've been obviously a graduate for a year, that me and my friends are finally kind of settling down in positions and jobs and things like that. So I do feel that the industry needs to take some more responsibility, maybe getting people out there. However, I think it's more Uni responsibility. I feel like particular at Uni, they didn't

give us that introduction into the industry. I think they needed more visiting lectures, or more workshops for studio to kind of break that ice, and kind of get those networking connections already in, before you graduate.

Interviewer: Okay, so that link to industry wasn't very strong.

Graduate: No. Although, I guess the industry can't do too much about it. They're hiring who they can at the time. There's so many packed into rows at Uni, I feel like, although there is obviously that [inaudible 00:17:20] I think they should try and make that happen more definitely.

Interviewer: I can't remember, did I ask you. Did you do a placement when you were at University, or did you...

Interviewer: Was that in your second year?

Graduate: I did a month one, based on a specific project that I kind of did a [inaudible 00:17:37].

Interviewer: But you didn't feel that really helped you, in terms of going forward after.

Graduate: No, well, I think that one was particularly funny, because I didn't see myself working there. I feel...

Interviewer: It was an extension of University work.

Graduate: Exactly yeah. So I feel like it would be more beneficial with these workshops because also I feel you have those workshops , also to be yourself and do your own work, so hopefully it would

Graduate: You know, if someone in the industry came and liked your work, that's a lot more positive than to say, me doing a specific work, [inaudible 00:18:13] and only being able to do that one thing. I'm hearing other Unis at the moment, do a lot more workshops and have speakers in, so I feel it is happening some places. But I think ...

Interviewer: Yeah, I think there is a mixture. So do you think that first year after graduation is probably the year where everything's quite crazy for a graduate, because everyone's almost scrabbling around. And that's what you found with your friends as well.

Graduate: Yeah, I think it was definitely a weird year. I feel the times when you're unemployed, time is literally going so slowly, you think, "Oh god, I'm never gonna find somewhere." And then as soon as you do, it suddenly all speeds up and flies by. But yeah, I think emotions in general are very weird, up and down.

Interviewer: And so, most of your friends are feeling a bit more settled now ...

Graduate: I think so, yeah. I guess there've been a couple which had two jobs very early on, and now've only just kind of like, "Actually I don't wanna do this anymore." So I think it's very like half-and-half, almost. The people who did have luck in the start have kind of now dropped out of that, and then the people who haven't been have finally found some luck.

Interviewer: So it's mixed fortunes.

Graduate: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: I imagine it's quite spot on. So do you have any advice for this year's graduates, who're about to finish?

Graduate: Oh! Definitely keep applying, and try not to get disheartened by all the 'nos,' although that is so hard, I know it. But also be ambitious. The reason I got Commission was because I sent them a printed portfolio, which I feel stood out to them, because they hadn't had that for awhile. So I think if you, I was really unhappy with just sending emails all the time, so I think if they did feel that way, maybe they should think of a new way to grab someone's attention.

Graduate: Maybe do a printed portfolio.

Interviewer: Basically, do something personal.

Interviewer: Cool. And that's all the questions I have.

Interviewer: Okay. How did you find Joe, and how did his role come about?

Design Agency: We have a general program for interns where we either advertise in a couple places or we have some links with some colleges, so we've got kind of a bit of a link with Falmouth.

Interviewer: Yup.

Design Agency: Which is where he was.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Came from. And a couple of the more junior designers run that kind of process.

Interviewer: Right.

Design Agency: So they interviewed him and found him.

Interviewer: And if they come from Falmouth themselves...and that's where then they come from [crosstalk 00:00:36]

Design Agency: Actually one of them has. Yeah. For some reason, we've always, well, because of that we've always tend to have a bit of a link.

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: And we've actually, as long as I've been here we've always had a designer that did their course at Falmouth.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: So yeah, it's not a particularly conscious thing.

Interviewer: No.

Design Agency: But it's because they would then take interest and then go to the portfolio show or that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: So yeah, that is one place, Norwich is another.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Where we tend to get people from.

Interviewer: Cool. So do people from Dragon Ridge go out to portfolio shows or D&AD New Blood or something like that?

Design Agency: Well, we do. And actually that's something we're trying to really reinvigorate again a bit, more properly.

Interviewer: Yeah, it comes in flows I guess.

Design Agency: Basically,-

Interviewer:

Design Agency: it depends who's in the studio, there have been people that have been really good at doing that.

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: And have been much more active. So for instance, with Falmouth, we used to have two people that started here as interns that actually carried on here and graduated up to seniors.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: We've had quite a few people that have done that actually.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: And they would make more of an effort to carry that on too, when Falmouth in their second year, do a studio tour they come here.

Interviewer: Okay.

Design Agency: While it's a lot for the other studios. It's fallen off the radar a little bit and in fact I had a meeting yesterday with the guys just to kind of go like, how can we do this a bit better?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Design Agency: And do it properly and a bit more focused. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So it's kind of when you've got the manpower resources-[crosstalk 00:02:06]

Design Agency: Well, it is-

Interviewer: And interest.

Design Agency: -and it's sort of just, because we've had to change and quit directors, Over time things just kind of fall off and we just need to

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:02:12] Right.

Design Agency: -over time, things just kind of fall off and we just-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:02:14] Sure.

Design Agency: -need to get going with that. Having said that, we've always had an intern in and yeah, it varies how good they are.

Interviewer: Yeah. Fair enough. So how is Joe going? Is it how you imagined the experience to be, and are your expectations of Joe being met?

Design Agency: Yeah, I mean, he's a different case in terms of normally our intern, what we offer people is a month, never any less than that because it's just hard for them to get situated-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:02:47] Yeah.

Design Agency: -into. We offer a month and then, that can potentially be a rolling one. We always have one intern in. So you can't always do rolling thing if you've got someone else come in. But with him, he, I'll probably get the times and dates wrong, but he's

Design Agency: stayed on for three months. And we've actually employed him now. So he's been great.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: I think he's really fitted in. Sometimes it's about the lack of projects, like he got really involved in a real-life project.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Design Agency: He could kind of run with it.

Interviewer: Sure, so it gave him a real focus-

Design Agency: [crosstalk 00:03:25]Yeah, yeah-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:03:25]-or something to sink his teeth into.

Design Agency: [crosstalk 00:03:25]-and that's kind of what's gone through-

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: -so it becomes a real, he's like-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:03:28] Joe's definitely part of that-

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: -and has gone along with the project.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Design Agency: And you know, it doesn't always work like that.

Interviewer: No.

Design Agency: Not because of, you know, sometimes it's just like luck [inaudible 00:03:39][crosstalk 00:03:39]

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah definitely.

Design Agency: [inaudible 00:03:41] people.

Interviewer: So, people were impressed with how he was working in that role and he stayed?

Design Agency: Yeah, I think sometimes it's, well, a lot of time attitude, he made himself-

Interviewer: Available.

Design Agency: -available and kind of, right along, you know, showed-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: -that he was able with the job he was given to show what he could do.

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: And he really kind of lived up to that. And he's been great. Yeah, he's been really good to-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:04:09] And in terms of his personality, has he also fitted in as well?

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Which is helpful.

Design Agency: Yeah, we've got quite a few younger designers, so I think what happens is they take people under their wing, and socially, he's like great, and he's quite confident guy [inaudible 00:04:21]. Yeah he just goes through it really.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: That's a big part of it, because sometimes people, you know, well-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:04:28] Too reserved or too shy?

Design Agency: -they're too reserved and they don't...well, it's like anything, if you just wait for it to happen-

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: -everybody's busy, so they don't necessarily...he's not bossy, but he had other interns, another kind of placement lined up as well. And he was in a bit of a like, well, I want to do them, can't turn down any thought of another chance for job. But we were like it would be great if you could stay. We couldn't guarantee anything--

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:05:00] No, it's that kind of awkward, but in the middle when no one quite knows what move to make next.

Design Agency: Then a really great job came in that was just perfect for him and so it's okay- [crosstalk 00:05:13]

Interviewer: So you needed to kind of take him on as a junior designer, did you need the opportunity to rise in the studio for that role to happen, or will you already had-

Design Agency: [crosstalk 00:05:21] We weren't actively looking for a junior. I think we always have an eye out if a graduate is really good, then there, that's an easier-

Interviewer: Yes.

Design Agency: -one to kind of go, yeah, we need it. So now we're going to more actively be a bit more selective about who we have in, because we did go through one of just placements that were a bit like "Oh, what do we do with them?"

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: But we also know that it's something we have to be good at for them, as well. So, like when you were talking about yesterday about having... because you haven't always got time to do the mentoring. Even younger guys in the team, they don't... they're up against it. We were talking about getting in real briefs that we've done that we actually have to give them, if nothing else, so at least-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:06:04] So being more technical about it.

Design Agency: - they get the experience [inaudible 00:06:07]. Yeah, so we're going to work on that as well.

Interviewer:	That makes sense.
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And how have you and the agency helped support and develop Joe's learning since he's been here.
Design Agency:	Well, he's only just, you know, we're talking a month. He's not actually, his contract starts first of April. So he's, still, [inaudible 00:06:34] in this moment-
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:06:34] In that transition, between-
Design Agency:	[crosstalk 00:06:33] - yeah, so but I mean, in terms of training here and what he will have available if that's any use, then there's quite a lot. So, we're quite good in terms of getting external people in or going on extra courses. I think that since he's been here, we do a lot of shared knowledge stuff in the studio anyway.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Design Agency:	So like our seminars like I was mentioning. We then give those to our people in the company, so he'll be party to-
Interviewer:	Are they shared with your other offices as well, or is it just quite specific to-
Design Agency:	[crosstalk 00:07:11] Well, we share the content-
Interviewer:	Right.
Design Agency:	We share the content. We go with...quite a few of the NDs came to the seminars, but we don't, we haven't got the time to go out and reviews in the offices, but they do use the content.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	We also have people coming in to talk and he's been to quite a lot of those since he's been here. So there's quite a lot of opportunity to learn, because we do...it's not just the design. He's probably learned quite a lot about the strategy and the insight and things. We have a Friday meeting where he's actually had to present something there, which is quite unusual for an intern, actually.
Interviewer:	Good.
Design Agency:	Because he was part of it, we kind of pushed him to do that. Every week, we share work we're doing.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Design Agency:	So he will have picked up on that. So I think he's ... I don't know. It will be interesting to see what he says, but I would say-
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:07:55] No, it's [inaudible 00:07:55]
Design Agency:	It's not official training.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	But now that he's kind of one of us, we have ...
Interviewer:	Expectations if you will-

Design Agency: Well, we have two year, like a mid-year and end-of-year review-

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: - where we actually set objectives and what training people want.

Interviewer: So, is that ... your sharing meetings, are they for everyone in the business to really, kind of, know what's going on, so everyone is kept abreast of what's happening.

Design Agency: Yeah, we have a Monday morning meeting which is basically a bit more of, not work planning, but it's a bit more like what's coming up.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: A bit of an overview, what each team is doing in the week. And then, we need to get better at studio one, being a bit, it's just how many meetings you have, but we'd rather get to those kind of go [inaudible 00:08:46] and this is, can you help out with that. And then Fridays, Friday supposed to be the more creative meeting of showing what we've done.

Interviewer: Like cap, not recapping, kind of winding up things. And do you think there's anything as an agency to facilitate learning further for someone like Joe or an intern with an agency?

Design Agency: Yeah, probably. I think there's... when I think back to my first ... they seem very confident when they come in now, but I think there's an estimation, like an over-estimation that they under... for me, it's like, how do you do time sheets, how do you -

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:09:37] Quite practical things.

Design Agency: Well, what's expected. A lot of time, there's a bit of an assumption and it's not necessarily in the studio, because we know they're genius. But when they're good, they just become another member of staff, and people forget that they've only been working a few months.

Interviewer: Definitely.

Design Agency: And I think that's a bit of a, personally I see that. You get someone that's really good and they're suddenly given jobs that midway or [inaudible 00:09:59]. And that's how you learn.

Interviewer: It is.

Design Agency: And you get it with really good people. But you get it the other way as well, when people don't think, you just don't get anything. So I think there's sometimes... we have a general introduction here to how things work. But I think then it's just assumed you're, you know everything--

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:10:19] You're okay.

Design Agency: And sometimes run into that in a graduate-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:10:21] It can be quite overwhelming, can't it?

Design Agency: Yeah, I imagine. But they all seem so bloody confident.

Interviewer: They do, although often when I talk to them underneath they, it's exploding a little bit with-

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: You know, just things like filing, and as you mentioned, time sheets and things, all those things. They don't obviously really learn at university, do they?

Design Agency: Even for them, and I go to the senior management meeting and I have to learn, you know, sort of financials. And a lot of financials are mentioned in those meetings and you kind of go ooh. We have quite a discussion over generally, with junior designers, how much do you even talk about money and budgets and...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: But actually you've got to have an understanding of, you know, you can't spend-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:11:10] Well, simple thing like an hourly rate, it being charged down to versus what is expected for them to-

Design Agency: [crosstalk 00:11:12] Yeah, it's quite [inaudible 00:11:16] to learn all that, isn't it?

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:11:17] -complete their work. Yeah it is. I think it's just learning how to introduce it to them-

Design Agency: Yes.

Interviewer: -when there's so many things to be introduced without overwhelming people, isn't it? So it's almost like a steady drip feed.

Design Agency: Yeah. Yeah, I don't know that we... part of how I think we're good is maybe part of how we're bad, because we treat everybody... we're quite flat.

Interviewer: Yeah. In terms of hierarchy, you mean.

Design Agency: Yeah, so Joe would work as much of the queue as with, do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: That's good though because-

Design Agency: [crosstalk 00:11:49] We're all quite open and he's worked with the CEO and [inaudible 00:11:53] that we're all quite flat in a way. I think he feels-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:12:00] Yeah, it's good.

Design Agency: - [inaudible 00:12:00] hopefully.

Interviewer: It gives him an opportunity to learn from different parts of the business, basically. And how has Joe supported his own development since he's been here?

Design Agency: Not sure. I'm not sure. I mean he's, I haven't actually worked with him directly on the jobs that he's been on. I've worked with him a little bit, but I don't know how he'd be supporting that. I mean, he joins in and everything. So, we've gone out and we have a type of circle, and he's very much, kind of, going to those things like the rest of the designers and carrying on with a bit of inspiration stuff. And he's always kind of willing to stay, which is kind of putting in the hours.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: So yeah, I don't know how he's doing it.

Interviewer: Sure, no, that's okay. And in terms of Joe's skillset that he's, whether that's from previous experience or university, what seems to have been useful and what potentially needs improvement?

Design Agency: It would be hard for me to say specifically, because it's all quite new, but I think he comes with a confidence, is something that people note, because that's an outward thing. I know that I can be a bit shallow, but it actually... having the confidence and a bit of a go for attitude. It might not be something he's done before but then every job is a bit like that-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:13:33] Yeah, definitely.

Design Agency: -isn't it, you know what I mean? You're going, oh yeah, I've got twenty years of experience, but we're doing new client stuff. I think the fact that it's that adaptability that's good and just willing to try. So, I'd say it's the confidence that's noted, whether it's technical skills. I mean, there's always somebody in the team that can do something and you don't expect one person to do everything, but he's worked quite a bit with the digital director on, kind of, the web stuff. Which, because he's new and people don't know whether he can or can't do, I'd say he's quite lucky, because they'll just try it out where some of the other people they go, "Oh, they haven't done that before."

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:14:13] It's the expectations, that's-

Design Agency: [crosstalk 00:14:14] Where we [inaudible 00:14:13]. So I think sometimes it's-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: - good to not always know.

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: I don't know if I answered the question.

Interviewer: Yeah, no, no. It was good.

Design Agency: But he hasn't come up against things that he can't do yet, but I think we're all there to support-

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: -any way in that instance.

Interviewer: Yeah, you're not expecting... you're not trying to trip him up.

Design Agency: [crosstalk 00:14:35] No, no one does everything.

Interviewer: No, no.

Design Agency: And we're really aware that some people in the team are much better at some things than others.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: We wouldn't expect him to be anywhere near knowing any kind of ad detail, what route should go through, or presentation, or-

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: He does most of that stuff. So.

Interviewer:	I get it. That's cool. And, yeah I'm not sure... yeah, this is a difficult question, I'm not sure it's the right one. So, Joe's learning has been taking place at work, obviously, you mentioned external clauses. Are there other things in the mix? I think we've covered this. So you mentioned you've gone to a few outside courses and talks and things. Is there anything that you specifically do, or is it-
Design Agency:	We just try to do a bit of inspiration. So we, I'll try and just say as a team, what's kind of go like a type of circle is one that we go to quite a bit, so he's been to, we've got membership for that. We all get, I don't know if he has, because he's only just joined, but we all get an art card. So we can... it's just to kind of encourage... what I'm trying to do is get people to bring and share that back. Say for instance, they went to [inaudible 00:15:55]. I couldn't go to it. I want to hear about it. So I'm like could you... I am going to make them do that because I think it's only fair-
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:16:02] Yeah, guess so.
Design Agency:	[crosstalk 00:16:04] - because we're giving you stuff to like share a bit with those that didn't go. There's nothing official, but there's a lot of stuff that we try and encourage really.
Interviewer:	And do you, just to clarify, do you do this outside of work and do you do it together? Or do you do it within work time?
Design Agency:	Outside of work.
Interviewer:	Yeah, but you might go along after work one night and just -
Design Agency:	[crosstalk 00:16:31] I mean, if something's on in, say for instance, when the [inaudible 00:16:34] run, I think we'll just try and encourage, you know, we're going to need [inaudible 00:16:37] on. That one will be worth the time. We go to [inaudible 00:16:44] and design meetings and things like that. We're not even noticed, you know it's not all on our doorsteps and we have to make a bit of a bit of an effort to go to things and I think just to try and do it together is really good.
Interviewer:	Yeah, yeah.
Design Agency:	So, yeah, he'll be part of that. He's probably not done, because he started what, November-ish or maybe sooner, don't remember, but yeah, we've done a few things in that time.
Interviewer:	So, it's good for team-building in a way.
Design Agency:	Yeah, well that's the idea
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:17:07] I mean, I know you're not using the words, [crosstalk 00:17:10] really well.
Design Agency:	It's really important. If he hadn't been really sociable and made him-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	So, yeah, he's got that skill.
Interviewer:	He's part of the team.
Design Agency:	Yeah, I would say that. It's bad, isn't it? 'Cause that's one of the most important things.
Interviewer:	It is.

Design Agency: To make yourself a bit vital and …

Interviewer: Also, you have to spend a lot of time with-

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: -these people. And if they're going to be a part of your team you want to enjoy being with them as well as [crosstalk 00:17:37]

Design Agency: It's a designer. You can only work here if you feel a bit comfort- a bit relaxed. [crosstalk 00:17:43] I don't know how people start now with so much-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:17:44] It is quite intense.

Design Agency: I don't know. I didn't … When I started it was like how to make and phone call and ask, do you- you know what I mean? Like how to make a phone call in an office full of people when you didn't know what the jargon was.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:18:01] Even the language.

Design Agency: Yeah, like how to speak to a printer. I used to find it [crosstalk 00:18:06] quite nerve-wracking where's they don't actually have to do that now, they can hide a lot [crosstalk 00:18:10] behind emails and things. It was all quite exposing.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, definitely. You had to do a lot more of quite practical things as well.

Design Agency: Yeah, don't you think?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: Speaking to people that … [inaudible 00:18:29]

Interviewer: Yeah, I feel it is different. And I guess that's what I'm trying to find out.

Design Agency: I don't know how much support there is on that though. Just thinking, you know, generally. What we find is that young designers, the whole- what they actually know about how things are produced, made, the importance of it. It's all a little bit remote, I'd say. Compare to when I started, so you know, I got exposed by messing up and kind of going to a printers and being on the- being there. Realizing how big certain things are. I think sometimes now, our work is quite remote. It's just an email and [crosstalk 00:19:10] a PDF of artwork-

Interviewer: It's quite contained.

Design Agency: And with some of them, they don't even see where it lives.

Interviewer: Definitely.

Design Agency: And how impactful it is. Do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yeah, I don't know what you mean.

Design Agency: That's quite- it can be a little [inaudible 00:19:21]. Yeah, I think that's something we need to try and help a lot of the designers, not just interns, really.

Interviewer: It's an industry-wide thing within [crosstalk 00:19:32] yeah.

Design Agency: It is. Do you think- [crosstalk 00:19:31]

Interviewer:	Also, I mean, yeah, one of the rites of passage obviously is as a junior, you go to the printers to go on press and things whereas, I don't really know an interns that do that anymore or junior designers. They don't seem to do it as much.
Design Agency:	We have tried to do it, but we don't get enough.
Interviewer:	No. [crosstalk 00:19:51] a lot of it's digital.
Design Agency:	In a funny way, a lot of the time when you've got really big clients, they handle stuff and it's- I miss that. It's all quite remote, isn't it now?
Interviewer:	Yeah. Things are a lot more compartmentalized, I think and also with design strategy and things. It becomes a slightly different kettle of fish as well.
Design Agency:	That is something- like I try to get people at the paper representative because they show you things that we will never get. Even when were using those you kind of go, "Oh yeah, [inaudible 00:20:25]"
Interviewer:	They're so nice. As an item- yeah.
Design Agency:	That's the thing. We don't do a lot of that. 'Cause we're at the front, you know- [crosstalk 00:20:33]
Interviewer:	Definitely.
Design Agency:	-setting stuff up and you're looking at it all constantly. Anyway, sorry. I'm blabbing on [crosstalk 00:20:40]
Interviewer:	No, one of my friends went to Smith the other day and I actually, again said, "oh, that's so cool. You just went to look at paper again. I haven't done that for years."
Design Agency:	Isn't it important? I mean, I have, just in the past with other interns I've been more involved in on. 'Cause we've employed a few. We've generally had, which is a nice thing. 'Cause they've like it here when they've done their placement. Yeah, we've done like a mill trip, for instance or something like that where we've gone and that's been suggested to see the paper being made. And that's a real luxury.
Interviewer:	Yeah. It's like a craft these days, isn't it?
Interviewer:	So, do you think- oh no, sorry, I've ducked one. Is there any major positive that you've noticed about Joe so far, within the workplace?
Design Agency:	As opposed to anybody else? Or-
Interviewer:	No, just to him specifically. Like, you've gone, "that was really good," or "I was really impressed with that."
Design Agency:	Yeah. I think it comes out of his confidence to try stuff. And I think you've got to kind put the work in and not- You've got to balance that kind of confidence and what comes when you're cocky and you're young and- with actually doing some work. And he's- he'll always ask if there's something else to do. And he's kind of-
Interviewer:	Aware of that.
Design Agency:	-he's there. Yeah. He's not like- Yeah, he's not like taking the mech out or assuming anything. So he's quite- He's got a little bit of humble nature still, which is kind of important because you can't just- you know ... And without sounding horrible, that's something that I'd watch even the next six months 'cause you can't let him get a job and go- Use that. You've gotta stay on him.
Interviewer:	Like he's internally, "Alright, I've got the job now, then I can just ..."

Design Agency:	Relax.
Interviewer:	"do this," yeah.
Design Agency:	I mean, not that you can't relax, but it's like, yeah, that's the start now.
Interviewer:	Yeah. It's like, "I've impressed them, and now I'm going to stop."
Design Agency:	Yeah, and I really conscious 'cause some of our other designers need to do a bit more. You know what I mean?
Interviewer:	People get a bit to relaxed in their environment.
Design Agency:	Yeah, 'cause we're quite a nice environment and you know …
Interviewer:	You just want to keep every one positive and working.
Design Agency:	You want it to be nice. Of course you do. We don't want it to be working so hard you need to be-
Interviewer:	Just busy.
Design Agency:	Yeah. So, I think it's- You know, that's kind of the- And actually, it's just, whether it's the jobs he's worked on 'cause they have a bit rather refreshing for us 'cause we did work for a music label, which we haven't- it's a new client for us. A lot of our workers are more industrial and a bit more straighter so- But he's stuff has been quite refreshing. It's great.
Interviewer:	So, it's been quite refreshing for the whole comp- well, you're team really, as well?
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Not only-
Design Agency:	Oh, I think for me generally having interns is- when they are good. Because they're up to the level of everybody else, so if you've got two new designers in it … Yes, they take you under their wing, but they're also …
Interviewer:	Fresh in their thinking.
Design Agency:	Well and it lets the other people know that they have learned stuff in the last year or two, as well. 'Cause they can help so it just lifts everybody a bit.
Interviewer:	Definitely. [crosstalk 00:24:09] It's good.
Design Agency:	Yeah, and you've got to have like- to be honest, sometimes we could just do it with a load of really good senior designers that could do stuff, but that wouldn't be as much fun, would it?
Interviewer:	No.
Design Agency:	You know what I mean?
Interviewer:	Definitely.
Design Agency:	So I think it's a bit nice.
Interviewer:	This is not supposed to be a negative, but has there been any points while Joe's been here, you've really assessed what he could do and thought, "I might need to

have a talk to him about that?" Or "we might need to approach that in a different way if he's going to do that job."

Design Agency: That's a hard one, 'cause I haven't specifically been working … I haven't heard from the other guys any issues. I'm more- because I am a little bit distant. I'm more aware of making sure that he doesn't get too comfortable. That's not because I'm a cow. That's because I want to keep him being a bit hungry for …

Interviewer: Yeah, just keep him on his toes.

Design Agency: Yeah. You know what I mean.

Interviewer: Definite things. That's okay. So, this role has turned into a permanent role, but what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internships?

Design Agency: For them or for us?

Interviewer: For graduates, actually.

Design Agency: Well, I find it quite surprising the attitude to doing interns for years now, like for a year or so. I find that quite wrong, if that becomes the norm. 'Cause, you know, I did an intern, but I did a couple of weeks and then I did like three or four weeks and then I got a job.

Interviewer: A manageable amount of time.

Design Agency: Yeah. It's was just like, I learned stuff. Where it seems to be almost like a, and this is just a personal thing, it seems to be like a list of things you've got on your CV now. And that worries me generally 'cause I think actually, you can only do that if you can afford to. And that's like a gap here of working and students taking a piss a little bit. I can see how it just makes getting into the industry harder and harder. So from that point of view, I mean, blimey, I know a guy that set about. He set himself a year to work. He would blog about it. He set himself a year to work in the best agencies as an intern. Now that, I think, is amazing. 'Cause if I'd done that, I would've realized there's so many different ways of working and different studios and I think that's a brilliant experience. Once you've got a job, that's hard to get again. Unless you go freelance.

Interviewer: Definitely.

Design Agency: So I think there's- I think that's great, if they've got the confidence and the money to do that.

Interviewer: Yeah, the ability.

Design Agency: But we're quite generous. You get, I think about 300 quid, 350 a week or something. And get free lunch so that's- you know, I think I got about 7 quid a day.

Interviewer: So did I.

Design Agency: But they still got to live in London.

Interviewer: Yeah, they do. So, I talked to a lot of interns, and they can- it's what you've just mentioned. They live in London or their parent or parents do and they can do that. But a lot of their friends are stuck in quite small towns where they just-

Design Agency: Can't afford that.

Interviewer: -they can't come to London to do that or to Sheffield or Manchester or what have you. So, yeah.

Design Agency: So they're staying on couches. They're in situations where the studios kind of want them to be working all hours. I mean, we don't- we're not like slave drivers at all. But there's exceptions of, "Well, you need to be here." But they've probably got to get-

Interviewer: Sure. Yeah.

Design Agency: So, I say it's the pressure and then I think if it becomes the norm rather than getting a job, that's what I would worry. That sort of-

Interviewer: A broad scheme.

Design Agency: Yeah, that's kinda ... But, I think ... No, I'd be quite jealous of how they can go in, see how things are done in a real range of studios.

Interviewer: Definitely. I mean, some of them experience quite interesting things by doing a few internships before they get a job and that is often seen as a benefit if they have been in a position where they have been able to do that.

Design Agency: You can tell people that have come in and worked in a few places. 'Cause they can see you. And blimey, when I started, I'd just kind of look up, not quite directly. That was it. That's how you did it.

Interviewer: The only way.

Design Agency: And then you realize actually, there's a lot better means to-

Interviewer: I know. When you don't have that workplace experience, it's much different then ...

Design Agency: We used to be curious when we'd see freelancers and they'd just take it all in stride because-

Interviewer: They have to [crosstalk 00:29:05] otherwise ... yeah. They wouldn't last two months.

Design Agency: Yeah, so I think it's good. But I think it's probably better off ...

Interviewer: So, there's, in the papers recently, there's been some talk of regulations of internships. Obviously, it's not specifically to the design industry, but you know, they're talking about pay and hours in terms of how long you can internship for and things so that's going to be interesting to see what unfolds there. Yeah, well see.

Design Agency: Well, it's- some places, it's like they're doing the interns all favors by actually ... It's a mutual thing, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes. I've heard of a lot of people who have- a lot of interns I've interviewed, there's very specific places that have seemed to say the same. 'Cause I've met several interns that have gone there, they've said the same thing. "Oh we're looking for a junior designer. Would you like to intern?" And then after awhile they say, "oh, actually, we're not going to take anyone on," and then they do the same thing to the next person. So, it's- I mean, obviously it's not a normal occurrence, but there are a few places that do that which-

Design Agency: We never make anything about, "we're going to take anybody on," it's kind of like, you become an intern. If you can impress us in the first, then you might see.

Interviewer: Most people have actually got a conscience and [inaudible 00:30:33]. I've just noticed over the years, there's a couple of places that do that.

Design Agency: Oh, that's interesting.

Interviewer:	Hopefully, it doesn't become a normal thing. What I don't want it to happen. So, because you've had lots of interns here, well you regularly take them on, I'm not saying that you're a conveyor belt place at all. So, what do you think are quite important aspects of graduates coming in, in terms of transitioning from university to the design industry?
Design Agency:	I think being aware, asking questions, and using it as a chance to learn. I think the ones that are kinda making themselves vital, but also not pretending to know- You know, I don't think we have an expectation that they're going to know everything. But there is an expectation that they're going to be interested in everything. And that they're going to make themselves available. Whereas we've had some people that just- you know, they're just kind of drippy. They'd just be like, you know ... They're not put under a massive amount of pressure ever, but if they can be a part of the project, then they've got as much chance of anything going through as any of the other designers.
Interviewer:	So the drive has to come from them as well.
Design Agency:	Yeah, I think so, but I think it's very easy to not notice people when you're really busy. And so that's where they have to kinda- [crosstalk 00:32:12] there's a balance.
Interviewer:	Step up a bit.
Design Agency:	Somewhere like this, there's always a designer that will go, "come have lunch," or whatever. So, yeah, I think it's asking the questions and showing interest. As much as anything. So if we have got an event in the evening, come along.
Interviewer:	Don't go home.
Design Agency:	Actually, we have 'a lot of socials. So go to the pub. Get out with everybody. I think the social thing- 'Cause it's quite sweet, people just like people that they like.
Interviewer:	Yes, definitely.
Design Agency:	You employee people you like.
Interviewer:	Definitely.
Design Agency:	And there's quite a range of people here, but yeah, I'd say anywhere that you intern you have to be interested in- that's really, really key.
Interviewer:	I imagine so. It's like most places, isn't it?
Design Agency:	Yeah, you just ... 'Cause, you become part of it. Then it's like you're missed if you're not there.
Interviewer:	And when you spend so much time at work, you don't want it to be an experience [crosstalk 00:33:16]
Design Agency:	[crosstalk 00:33:22] You have to share your ideas, put yourself out there all the bloody time. And-
Interviewer:	Clients and-
Design Agency:	Have a sense of humor when you're interning and not be too ...
Interviewer:	Just being keen and asking questions, [crosstalk 00:33:36] getting involved-
Design Agency:	That's kind of basic, isn't it?

Interviewer:	It is but, I think there's lots of people, sometimes, that don't do it because they're nervous or for whatever reason.
Design Agency:	Yeah, of course. I mean- But I think it's ... I think it's a real chance to get a little bit extra, as well.
Interviewer:	Definitely
Design Agency:	And not feel like it's just going to be handed to you. You know, know one's going to be a slave driver or have- I would say with our interns, we don't have massive expectations, we don't set briefs. I think we'll start to just so they get something out of it. 'Cause if we haven't got time, you know we're going to sallow and give in, which is ...
Interviewer:	Nice.
Design Agency:	I do think that generally, with interns and juniors and ... there's an attitude that they're going to be doing everything straight away. And you all got to start- I'll sit and look for images. Or I'll be sitting waiting for your upload.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. It's like there's no job beneath you at any level.
Design Agency:	Wow, there isn't at any level.
Interviewer:	No.
Design Agency:	You just got to do it and I think sometimes it's a little bit of, "oh, I would have done that." You don't find that very often in terms of- but you do. Yeah, I think whatever you do, there's always a chance to show a little bit of more enthusiasm.
Interviewer:	Definitely.
Design Agency:	Hard though.
Interviewer:	It's quite universal things. So, it's not rocket science I guess. And I guess a lot of interns feel that ... I think generally, they're being shocked at the workplace as a concept, a lot of the times. If you want to talk to the, not specifically, but in terms of agencies, but when they actually leave university and actually the concept of going to work and staying there and doing things is quite a shock to the system. [crosstalk 00:35:35] You've got to do that 30 or 40 more years.
Design Agency:	I think there's a pressure to make all work exciting. When you have clients who are a bit drier, and they're not the sexy ones that everyone sees on blogs all the time and not even- But it's getting the attitude that you can make that as good or you find you're interested in it because maybe it's a little more intellectually challenging. And I think that's something we try and share here that actually we could be a little bit smarter about.
Interviewer:	Definitely.
Design Agency:	And whether that works 'cause people still want to do stuff that's [crosstalk 00:36:08]
Interviewer:	Now you all do that. It's also that you realize that those clients are a dime a dozen and they might not pay very much and not support.
Design Agency:	'Cause everyone here always talk about, "should we do some [inaudible 00:36:20] and smaller campaigns so we can-" and you're like, "yeah, but can you just do the stuff we're doing really well as well."
Interviewer:	Yeah. And also, these people who are appreciating that work and really like it.

Design Agency: Yeah. It's funny isn't it?

Interviewer: It is. Yeah, I think it's a classic designer conversation, to be honest. Yeah, that's all the questions I have, so I'll stop-

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD-DR

Interviewer: Right so, how did this role come about? And describe the process it took to get here.

Graduate: This role, so well, I graduated last year, so last July, June, July and then I'd already had a couple of internships lined up, and then after I had those couple I needed to line some more up. So I saw the ad for this job online. I'd heard about Dragon Rouge before so I thought I'd apply to it and sent my portfolio, and I had an interview and then yeah, came in about three, four weeks after my first interview.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool, did you see the job or internship posted on their website or on a jobs board?

Graduate: It was a jobs board, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. And were your other internships in London or were they in other [crosstalk 00:01:11]

Graduate: Yeah. They were all in central London.

Interviewer: So you headed to London pretty much straight away?

Graduate: Yeah pretty much, I'd done a couple in between my second and third year.

Interviewer: Oh right, In London as well?

Graduate: In London as well, And then, yeah.

Interviewer: So you already had some idea of what it would be like?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool, and those other internships, were they, four weeks or a couple of months?

Graduate: They've all been different, so I've had one that's only been two weeks and then I've had one which was two months and one which was a month.

Interviewer: Yeah, so they've been quite varied?

Graduate: This one was meant to be a month.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Graduate: And then they extended it, and extended it again.

Interviewer: Cool.

Graduate: So yeah.

Interviewer: And how did you find the fact that you didn't quite know what was going on the whole way through, all those internships [inaudible 00:01:59].

Graduate: It's [crosstalk 00:02:00] something you expect really, and I'm just happy to do it for sure.

Interviewer:	Yeah, and I guess a lot of your friends from university will be going through a similar thing.
Graduate:	Yeah, exactly. So I've always had other people in London that I have been able to stay with.
Interviewer:	Sure. You've been here for... when did you start the internship?
Graduate:	The start of November.
Interviewer:	And you're going full time officially on the first?
Graduate:	Yeah the, first, second, whenever I get back from the Easter break.
Interviewer:	Cool, and is this how you imagined your career path to go after you graduated or were you expecting something different?
Graduate:	I dunno, I remember, going towards the end of uni some of the modules were talking about post uni life and what we expect and what we want to achieve. But I always had it in my head that I wanted to do a few more cause I'd done a couple of internships with my second and third year, like I said.
Graduate:	I was at a point where I kind of knew what sort of place that I wanted to go to, so I like the idea of being able to intern maybe up until about Christmas time and then come the New Year maybe going into a full time role. But as I started interning after graduating I realized that I never know if that's going to happen, it could happen next week or it could happen in a years time. So I was just kind of happy, just kind of going with it and waiting until something right popped up.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	So I think it kind of went as I expected it, but, I think in my head when I first started and I had a bit of a plan and I quickly realized that I didn't need that.
Interviewer:	Right, yeah. So what happens if you are still interning a year after graduating? Would you be worried?
Graduate:	I think, no, I wouldn't be worried, but I think I did always want to try and... If I could find a job that I like, I wouldn't have just jumped at any job but if I can find a job that I liked, quite quickly after graduating I would have taken it and I think say, I had the choice of staring a job that I really likes sooner rather than later, I'm sure I would do that.
Interviewer:	Lovely, yeah, cool. And would you intern for free?
Graduate:	No.
Interviewer:	No?
Graduate:	No.
Interviewer:	What were your expectations of this role when you started as an intern?
Graduate:	Here?
Interviewer:	Here.
Graduate:	Well, I've been to a few, couple of places before. I had a good idea of kind of what, they'd probably expected of me and what I wanted to get out of it, but

regardless of whether they were looking to hire or not. I didn't really know I didn't really have too may expectations.

Interviewer: Yeah, and did you? I guess you want to get involved with the project though and things?

Graduate: Yeah I think that a lot to do with it is being quite... I don't think that at an internship you can just sit back, and just hope that they give you some work. I think you've got to be quite proactive and ask for that sort of stuff which I'm happy to do.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: And it makes it more worthwhile for me and for the people I'm working for as well hopefully.

Interviewer: Definitely, I guess that's why they've given you a job. So it's all good.

Interviewer: So how is the role going? Is it how you imagine it being?

Graduate: Yeah, I would say it is for sure. I think that's why I ended up taking a job here, I think. Cause there's a lot of things that I was looking for in a job like everyone else is, but I think in terms of the work that that was that I'm doing work that I really want to be doing and also that the [00:06:01] the atmosphere and culture around it is something that's fun.

Interviewer: So you like the people?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: And you do extra things with work and the work is along the line that you want to be doing?

Graduate: Yeah

Interviewer: So it's a perfect role for you?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: And how has being here helped you support and develop your design learning?

Graduate: A lot, I'd say I've learnt loads in my short time here. More than I thought I would which I think is another reason I took it on because I've got people like Becky and the other creative director Damien and the people I work closely with, who I can just constantly be able to learn off, which is really, good. I've always wanted to be doing straight away coming out of uni. Wherever I ended up going I wanted to be able to learn off who I was working with, so that's really helped me in a short amount of time.

Interviewer: Okay, so you feel that you can really ask them questions, grill them about work, and you're not afraid to do that or bothered about that?

Graduate: I think like everyone else, when you first start somewhere as an intern the first week, few weeks you're going to be a bit nervous, and be maybe a bit more reserved, but once you get in and get to know more people then, its absolutely fine now.

Graduate: Which is again, is another reason why I'm taking it because I feel comfortable with the people I'm working with and able to... Right from the junior designers here, right up to Becky and [inaudible 00:07:45] the creative directors.

Interviewer:	So because you feel comfortable with them it means you can ask them more questions so there is there that environment, where it's that makes it easier to learn, because it's not awkward or you feel, that asking questions would be a bit weird.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so they're supportive of you?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And, how could your learning be supported more here? I'm not saying that they're doing anything wrong I'm just thinking how would you like to have… what could be setup better to help you learn more?
Graduate:	I don't know. I think it's a hard one because I think it's been really good for me here, I mean, I don't really know. I don't really know how to answer that.
Graduate:	I've been at places before, I think what's been good for me here and why I've been able to learn, is I think I've been quite lucky I can at a good time when they've had a lot of work on so.
Graduate:	Whereas I've been at a place before for a month where even though I really like the people and everything they just had a month where they didn't have much work on so in terms of learning, and the design skills, things like that it wasn't that beneficial for me, that wasn't their fault it's just that they just didn't have much work on.
Interviewer:	No that wasn't a reflection on them.
Graduate:	So I think it all depends on timing really, and I think I've just been quite lucky since coming here [inaudible 00:09:19].
Interviewer:	And in terms of learning, your workplace learning, do you think that that just happens by going to work, and doing the work and learning off people around you? You're not expecting to go on extra courses or do any things like that?
Graduate:	No I think that, definitely for me personally, for sure, it's better for me to learn whilst I'm doing it for sure. Yeah.
Interviewer:	Do you like to learn of the whole team, or do you like to have specific person that is seen as your… maybe seen as your mentor?
Graduate:	I think what they do here, I had two, Briony and Rob who have overseen my internship, and interviewed me and things like that and I met them before I can in and things.
Graduate:	It's quite nice to have that in a place which is a bit bigger with a lot of people I think it's quite nice when you first start to have the one or two people that you already know and can go to, to ask questions. But, more after a month, I think I know everyone by then so just to have one person if I only feel comfortable to go to one person, I think maybe would not be the right place for me.
Interviewer:	You feel like you've landed on your feet now? You don't have to keep going back to the same person, that's fair enough.
Interviewer:	And what skills have been most useful to you since you have arrived here? And these can be things you've learnt from university, or it could be your own personal… are they things…
Graduate:	Are you waiting to come in? Have you? Do you need to come in?

Interviewer:	Okay. So what skills have been most useful to you in the design industry since, that you brought could be from university, previous experience, personal?
Graduate:	Most useful. So including Uni, what I brought from there?
Interviewer:	Well, it could be the type of things that have really helped you once you entered the design industry. It might not be university at all.
Graduate:	Okay. Obviously, the course set me up, I think going to Falmouth, I think the course really gears you up for going into industry. Talking to other people who did my course elsewhere, they didn't have the sort of opportunities that we got through that Uni pushed for us to get. So I think there's a lot of ... in terms of setting up your portfolio. How to go and apply for internships, interviews, that sort of thing. They really really geared you up for that.
Graduate:	I think what was really good at Falmouth was that they really wanted you to ... they didn't want you to, just push you down one route. They really wanted you to do your own thing, and find your own sort of niche within the industry. Which really helped me, I think. I don't really think there's one thing really. And like I said before, most of the time I'd learn whilst I'm doing. So until I actually went into an internship, I wasn't really ready I think. I don't know if that makes sense. But I think obviously what really helped me was doing the two internships. In between second and third year, that really set me up before graduating. And also helped me go back into third year, and ways of working, things like that. And that was through Uni, they had a scheme where we could then take on second years for internships.
Interviewer:	Was it part of the course?
Graduate:	Yeah, it was part of the course as well. So it was at [crosstalk 00:02:07]. It wasn't compulsory to get an internship, but it was compulsory to build your portfolio, and have it ready to send it to somewhere. And then if you wanted them to, they would send it off to different studios.
Interviewer:	And so what particularly helped you about that placement in between years you did?
Graduate:	The way of working, so in terms of how fast paced it is. And I think working with clients and things like that. Because at Uni, even though they do, we have the one to one's where you're [inaudible 00:02:45]. The learning team is you're taught to work with other students. Essentially, they can give you feedback. But really you can still do what you want. Really, can't you?
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:02:59]
Graduate:	Whereas, obviously in the industry you can't do that at all. And I think it's having that, and then, like I said, the nature of the work and things like that. It's so fast paced, and I think that really helped me.
Interviewer:	Did it open your eyes when you went there?
Graduate:	Yeah, it really helped me going back into my third year. I think the way I worked going back into that year was a lot more efficient than the way I had been working.
Interviewer:	I don't need to spend 12 weeks doing it!
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	So that kind of exposure to the real world was really helpful.
Graduate:	Right.

Interviewer:	So when you actually graduated you had some understanding.
Graduate:	I kind of knew what I was getting into. I think I was able to kickstart my internships a lot quicker than I would've done if I hadn't done that.
Interviewer:	Yes. Definitely. I imagine so. And so how have you supported your own development while you've been here and at other internships?
Graduate:	Support my own development? I don't know. I don't know how I'd answer that. I think I've always made sure that I haven't sat back and "Oh, I've got the internship. I can sit back and wait for work, and things like that." I've always tried to make sure I'm proactive and everything. And try to be very friendly with everyone, and try and make sure I'm just not like another intern, and I'm here for a month and then everyone will be like "Oh, who's that kid last month who came in for..."
Graduate:	So I think trying to do that, and always thinking "I need to make it worthwhile for myself to be here." And if I just sit back and do nothing, and wait for work, what's the point of me being here? Because it also, is do you get paid, and have been paid in all these internships. It's still so expensive to live here, and things like that. So I need to make it worthwhile, to justify me doing it, for sure.
Interviewer:	And as far as learning outside of the workplace, do you go on any talks, or do you go on any external courses. Or do you learn about design in other ways, other that just at work?
Graduate:	Well yeah. I go to a lot of different talks, whether it's with one of the guys I'm living with who are in the same course as me. Or, what's good about here, this freshman, Becky, she likes to set up talks and things like that where the people come in, or we go out to the different talks. And we're able to go from here as a group. And yeah, talks, workshops, different things like that. I enjoy going to that because you learn from whatever the talk is, whether it's really good, or a bit shit. Though you also get to meet people there, and you get to do a little class to class networking, you get to meet people from different studios, and things like that. I wouldn't say I've taken any courses though. I probably would, in terms of building up actual skills. Whether it's with different software or things like that. I think I would do that. I think it is quite difficult to do it while I'm interning, maybe. Because I think a lot of my focus was on making sure I was ...
Interviewer:	Right. Got a more important focus right now.
Graduate:	But I think, obviously, now that I've been able to get a job here. I think it's definitely something that I would want to do. Whether that's doing outside, or just learning off the different people here. What they can do. For sure I would do that.
Interviewer:	And has there been a moment since you graduated, in your working career and the roles that you've had where you've had a major positive, where you've just gone "That was really good, I really like that".
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	A good feeling.
Graduate:	Yeah. I think it was here, definitely here. When one of the main projects I've been working on. We presented these three roots to a client, and it wasn't like I did one root, one designer did another root, and another designer did another root. It wasn't that at all, we all worked on it. But it was kind of like one of the roots that I was working on a lot, and really into. And the client ended up going for it, and it was quite a nice feeling to do that. Because something like that had never happened, well especially in an internship, that hadn't really happened for you for one. And it was quite a nice feeling to know that something that I was really heavily involved in is now, in a few months time, it'll be-

Interviewer:	A real thing.
Graduate:	A real thing.
Interviewer:	That's cool. And has there been a point which is almost opposite of that, where you doubted yourself, or thought "What am I doing?"
Graduate:	Yeah. Definitely. The first internship I did coming out of Uni. It was quite a weird one, because I had Falmouth do this portfolio for me. End of March sort of time, which I did last year. Talked through my portfolio with these guys from a studio, and they offered me an internship straight out of Uni, which I thought was really nice. I never really heard of the studio before. But looked at their work, really liked the guys. I thought it'd be a great thing to do straight out of Uni, it was just for a month.
Graduate:	And then about two months down the line, in June, they got in contact with me again, saying "We'd like you to come in for another interview, because we're looking to hire a junior designer, and we think you'd be perfect for it." So I was like "Oh", quite interested. And I think they wanted me to come in and meet their creative director. And then that all went well, and the really liked my work. And they were very positive about me coming in, so I went in, I think it was like August time. And it just went to shit.
Interviewer:	Oh no.
Graduate:	I kind of, I think having that in my head that they were looking for a junior designer. And they wanted it to be me, and then all the work I ended up getting was just not really the right work for me. And the the work I was showing them they weren't really responding to very well. And it was kind of like a month where I was just like "Ah".
Interviewer:	Just [crosstalk 00:09:40].
Graduate:	While I was there, I was really kind of ... It really did, I think, at the time really did affect me. And I think it just got worse week after week while I was there. And I think I was only there for a month. That did quite knock my confidence a bit, but looking back on it, I think it's just made me kind of ... I don't know. I don't know. I think it was a bit of a learning curve for me. And I think as well it was the wrong time for me, because I had just come straight out of Uni. It was literally the week after I graduated. And I don't think I was ready to go and-
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:10:18]
Graduate:	Be in a workplace. I think I needed a holiday off [crosstalk 00:10:21].
Interviewer:	[inaudible 00:10:22]
Graduate:	But yeah, that did really knock my confidence. But I had another one after that, and then I came here. So it was alright. I think everyone has-
Interviewer:	A horror story, or a bad experience.
Graduate:	I wouldn't say it was a horror story.
Interviewer:	No. It doesn't sound [crosstalk 00:10:37].
Graduate:	It just wasn't right ... yeah.
Interviewer:	So, in a way, even though it might have been a low point. It definitely gave you food for though almost. To think about what you didn't [crosstalk 00:10:50]

Graduate:	Yeah. And I think of all the things that I've been saying, like "Oh, try and be proactive." And "Not just sitting and waiting for work." And things like that. I think I ended up, towards the end of the process I was like "I'm not even gonna try and look for work, because." [inaudible 00:11:08].
Interviewer:	It's too much.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	So, just as an overall thing. Your view. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages for interning?
Graduate:	Interning. Well, the advantages you get, you get experience that, even though Uni can gear you up as much as they can, there's so many things that you can't do unless you're in a workplace. Like I said, the workflow is completely different. Working for clients you can't ... you can try and emulate that in Uni, but you can't actually do it. And I think what's really good is working with other people that aren't from this design world, or design backgrounds. So like the account managers, and people here. I've never worked closely with people like that. And it's quite eye opening, because the different views are really interesting.
Graduate:	Growing up. Obviously grow up for sure. Because at Uni, obviously, it's a completely different lifestyle. I think that interning really helps you do that before you go into a full time job. Disadvantage, I think, I suppose it can knock your confidence, like it did with that last one. But I don't know if that's a disadvantage, because I think that did help. It was quite eye opening. I don't know if there are any disadvantages, because you almost go into an internship, the way I see it anyway, you go into it with almost nothing to lose. The worst that's gonna happen is it's just not the right fit for you, and you just move on to another one. And it's more of a learning curve than anything. Money wise, it can maybe be a disadvantage. I don't know, I have turned down an internship before because, it wasn't unpaid, but the pay they were offering was just so-
Interviewer:	Low.
Graduate:	Low. It was unfeasible for me to do it, and I would have had to borrow money off my parents and stuff. And that, if you're trying to grow up and live on your own, borrowing money off your parents is not the right way to do it.
Interviewer:	Not the right way to start. No.
Graduate:	So I think, money-wise. But I think that's a lot more rare now, especially in graphic design.
Interviewer:	Yeah, I think it is.
Graduate:	I haven't actually heard of anyone who I've graduated with, or anyone else I know that's done the same course [inaudible 00:13:54], have been offered or done an unpaid internship. And I promise you that it's happening some still out there. But I think that can be a disadvantage sometimes. Apart from that, I don't really know any other disadvantages.
Interviewer:	Cool. And I know that you've probably not been in touch with everyone that you went to Uni, but what are your fellow classmates ... are they all in a similar situation, now, to you?
Graduate:	Yeah. Well, like I said, I've not been keeping up with everyone. But the people I am in contact with, I'm living with three other people who were also were in my course. And two of them are still interning, one got a full job around Christmastime. And then there's kind of a rotation as well, some people are still interning as [inaudible 00:14:50]. One more person leaves an internship, someone else will come into the flat. And it's kind of like we're on a rotation. But I think it's

starting to get to the point, especially with the people I've got in contact with, they're either getting off with something more permanent over there in an internship, which has lasted like six months. Things like that.

Interviewer: Becoming a longer-term thing.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, cool. So everyone's really happy with the way [crosstalk 00:15:18]

Graduate: Yeah. Yeah. Some of the guys have been at a place where they haven't enjoyed at all. Probably like I was saying earlier for me. But just at different times. Everyone's deciding on what they wanna be going into. So yeah.

Interviewer: And I guess you're all studying to figure out what type of design you possibly want to be focusing on over the bend.

Graduate: Definitely.

Interviewer: As a general practice.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. Okay, we're all done.

INTERVIEW TWO: DA-DR

Interviewer: How has Joe been developing in this role since we last saw him?

Design Agency: I'm trying to think, when did we last catch up?

Interviewer: It was in the beginning of March, wasn't it?

Design Agency: I think, the projects have changed a little bit and he's not on so much of a fun project. So he is actually having to do some more of the bread and butter work. And the more, the reality of [inaudible 00:00:38]. When he came in he was working on a really fun kind of music project and now he's working on a very different type of project so I think that he's, you kind of notice more the learning curve that needs to happen.

Design Agency: I think he is getting along really well but there's always that nervousness of when is he a bit, is it a bit of reality to hit for him. I'm quite confident of his mood at the moment because it is a very different pace in the studio and the work is a little bit different. So I'm conscience its maybe not so much fun and obviously that, combining with getting your first full time job, I wanted to make sure that we still get some good stuff for him to work on. Having said that, there's also, the learning that you have to do. The detailed, how accurate, how good you have to make some of those more boring things.

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: Does that make sense[crosstalk 00:01:36]

Interviewer: How much harder you have to work it.

Design Agency: Yeah, and I don't know if you find it a bit weird, its a lot the creation stuff. When people come in and don't have a proper with the ideas, the focal bits. Its when you suddenly have to do a type line and a logo which is dull and you've got to look at increments of where that goes. The kind of final, the detail and the rigor around a lot of stuff. That's where you kind of then notice they have never done that before because why would you in college?

Interviewer: Sure. Its all about the design thinking and creation of it.

Design Agency: I think there is a big gap in people thinking they have to do that. The reality, in fact some of the stuff we do is quite boring.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: I'm saying its boring because I'm very aware that's it very different [inaudible 00:02:22] creation. Every design, every designer we get that comes in here goes, "I love new ideas." Of course we all love the ideas but you've got to have.

Interviewer: Its delivering the whole project that the client [crosstalk 00:02:32]

Design Agency: And keeping everything going as well as making it feel so it works across things. When you actually get into social media, its, I think its really dull because it so [inaudible 00:02:46]. Its so, they have all these great ideas and then your give the space like this, you can't even, you know how you have to do responses and stuff? It's like you've got to make something work, its very practical. So I would say for me at the moment with him, I'm conscience that he's in that space. I want to still push him and I'm conscience of how motivated he is at the moment. That's just me worrying about him.

Interviewer: Sure. You are really look out for him, I guess?

Design Agency:	Yeah, I also wanted to give him a bit of a, this is actually what you are going to do as well. It can't all be the fun still [crosstalk 00:03:24]
Interviewer:	He's dealing with the things he hasn't had to deal with before, say for an example the tech, looking and learning the sort of thing. Does he get, are you aware of someone going through the process of...
Design Agency:	I'm trying to do that.
Interviewer:	So you're...
Design Agency:	I'm trying to see that or do that as I can to help know this is what has to be done. I'm hoping he's taking it and stuff.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
Design Agency:	And saying, he doesn't always say a lot. So do we need to have a catch up more generally on how he is doing and honestly we have had that but I think, he's doing what he is being asked.
Interviewer:	Yes.
Design Agency:	I think some times he could push himself a bit more, I think there's a little bit of complacent.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Do you think that has come from when he is transferred from interning to being a junior designer? Or do you think its actually the stage in the project?
Design Agency:	I think its quite common across some of the designers [inaudible 00:04:29] in the studio actually, where their not quite pushing themselves enough I think. Cause its quite a nice place to be in and they get quite lax. And I don't know I find it, its not like when I was, if my director had asked me to do something with my senior designer asked me to do something, I would do it and I would do five times over. I may stay late and I don't know that there is any of that.[inaudible 00:04:55] I think sometimes you do, he's quite confident and in his, its what's lovely about him but its also like, we might, what we might have to do because usually with people we give them objectives. I think we kind of relaxed it for his first three months probation. I might actually might need to give him a objectives just to...
Interviewer:	Reaccessing the all the boundaries constantly for him.
Design Agency:	I think so. I feel like I sound like an old nag that way but it is, I do need to sympathy just can't get complacent and its, it would be quite good to keep the boundaries there somewhere otherwise, the reality is he is going to go through this over and over again. Its not a one off, a one off job. This is much more, the clients in the previous room but also, possibly get a little more experience, get to really enjoy the intricacies of the really baniel stuff that they might not find very interesting right now but..
Design Agency:	Well that's making it worth it, we have just for contact, we've had few people leave recently. There was fewer younger designers that would have been really fun for Joe to be around, they've left so we've had a bit of people leaving. We've also got a leader who's isn't the best mentor.
Interviewer:	Right.
Design Agency:	So I'm kind of forcing him to do his job a little bit with Joe, I'm not sure he is the best person.

Interviewer:	Fit, match.
Design Agency:	So, it just so you know, I'm just conscience of the need of the mood[crosstalk 00:06:29] We've got a coupled of really great new people coming in so we've added to teams but you know how you get to your first job and when you can't come in as an intern with all these people, that what I'm really conscience of with Joe at the moment. Its suddenly like where has all that fun stuff gone and where [crosstalk 00:06:45].
Interviewer:	Did he get along so well with some of the people?
Design Agency:	Yeah he did and they were more naturally. So there was junior designer there was a couple of mid ways and there was people that, a few more guys that were just would naturally, wouldn't be like a mentor in a formal way. They would be just more [crosstalk 00:07:05] I fear he's probably lost that a little bit. Just anything I say is more in context, of being a bit sensitive about that really.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	I maybe am not the person he wants to do that.
Interviewer:	But you are aware that ne needs someone like that?
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	You're now figuring out who that might be.
Design Agency:	Yeah, sometimes we have too big a gap.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	So it would be me telling them, you grand designer and...
Interviewer:	So actually the kind of formal hierarchy going up was actually really important.
Design Agency:	I think it was more natural. Isn't it.
Interviewer:	Rather than there being a huge gap in the middle of super senior and super new.
Design Agency:	Yeah, and I do think they, I'm only if they think of me like [crosstalk 00:07:51] yeah anyway.
Interviewer:	You're just aware of it.
Design Agency:	Yeah I am.
Interviewer:	So I guess that probably answers my second question about Joe's, the expectations of Joe and his role being met, so, you're aware that they aren't met but there's a few.
Design Agency:	Yeah, he's doing stuff but I think he, you don't get the, there's not quite a drive as I...
Interviewer:	Would expect?
Design Agency:	Yeah, so maybe a little bit more proactive, maybe or, I think we just need to push for that and go, "you've been given the job but actually you've to got to

	prove you can, you haven't just proved yourself, you have got to." Cause I haven't worked with him before and so I'm not I'm like, you've got to push yourself a little bit more, add a bit more love. Having said that he's doing everything he...
Interviewer:	Do you think that essentially its more heading around the interns that this needs tweaking, rather that the care. [crosstalk 00:08:52] you really say all this, its really just minor stuff on the outside, its not...
Design Agency:	No no its not a mental issue, [crosstalk 00:08:58] its more around, I'm very conscience of making it develop and actually getting a little bit of a reality of the work. And learning to appreciate that's part of the job. I think that a lot of the designers we get in here, it goes up to quite a high a level, they just don't think have to do the kind of time [crosstalk 00:09:20] it just goes really quick and its, when I think of all the people that starts like that, sort a little bit immediate now. They jump value and actually it isn't [inaudible 00:09:34]
Interviewer:	No, not always. Sometimes you're on a job for years to be honest.
Design Agency:	We have a lot of those big repeat clients who come back to us.
Interviewer:	All the modern corporates who need long term.
Design Agency:	Yeah so you're not gonna go [inaudible 00:09:50] you'll go, well do do we use this differently. We've got to,
Interviewer:	So sometimes the creative work has to be done and you're just interpretating it in different ways. I get it. You probably won't want to answer this question but what type of support is Joe getting when these events take place. You've talked about you being quite aware and honest that there's, is there anything else that is happening?
Design Agency:	Well its only been in the last few weeks, its only been in the last month that we are in to that scenario. I'm trying to get [inaudible 00:10:27] where's its directly on the account and you don't have to try to get him to mentor a lot more.
Interviewer:	So its not necessarily to Joe, its more toward someone else who deals with Joe more.
Design Agency:	Yeah, just to try and get that kind of support. I think that myself and Dave, the other CD, were kind of, he's kind of his blind manager in a more formal way. Were aware of what to speak to him about, actually give him some objectives and their nice objectives, their not just development objectives
Interviewer:	Not scary towards...
Design Agency:	No not scary towards,
Interviewer:	Or unreasonably?
Design Agency:	We've been trying to work out a bit more of a student and type program and he's been helping me on that. Just this kind of side things.
Interviewer:	Sure. Just feeling that he is valued and has got his own theory of interest.
Design Agency:	Yeah, part of the team and saying, because we are aware that people have left and were getting new people, we also want to offer a bit of support in that and go a bit better with the next. Over the summer its going to be a bit quiet and we've actually got...[crosstalk 00:11:36]

Interviewer:	Reinvigorate him?
Design Agency:	Cause you know [inaudible 00:11:38] just have...
Interviewer:	Its only natural.
Design Agency:	Its good that people have left, it was getting a bit of negative[crosstalk 00:11:46] I was just really conscience in that [crosstalk 00:11:50]
Interviewer:	So in a way..
Design Agency:	I think its support, its a bit at the moment, we lack support and were just working through that together. Hopefully I'm giving him enough, were waking together on stuff really and more for the kind of mentor. Its not all just fun in the studio stuff, there's are other people who organize that as well.
Interviewer:	Okay. Has Joe supported his own development or trying to get through this time himself? How's he dealing with it? [crosstalk 00:12:28]
Design Agency:	That's what I'm not sure of at the moment.
Interviewer:	Is he trying to [crosstalk 00:12:31]
Design Agency:	He's quite forward in coming to show me stuff, I think he could probably be a bit more proactive. I think I need to kind of encourage that. I don't know how much he is going to any of the other guys when I'm not around. I wasn't here last week so id say there's a process in encouraging him to get involved.
Interviewer:	Yeah. That's just more sharing and talking.
Design Agency:	I think just day to day they just naturally do that and he's not the kind of person who would just sit there and...
Interviewer:	Just stew on it?
Design Agency:	I don't think he is, I think, we've got some really nice free lancers and he is sitting next to somebody different now and I think they kind of chat. [crosstalk 00:13:21] I think there's, a bit of comrade in the team.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Could you tell me something positive about Joe's works since we last talked?
Interviewer:	Do you think that you've...
Design Agency:	Yeah, I'm not negative about his work at all I think that he gives it a go. I think he's got, I'm trying to think of what we've been working on. He's, we haven't been doing particularly conceptual stuff. But he has taken on some of the intern stuff and has done some things with that. I think its...
Interviewer:	So he's taking on more than his actual just design role? So he's doing other things to contribute?
Design Agency:	Yeah, I think he contributing to some of the other stuff. I think he could, I think some of his department, find his voice in the work while not just in the social ways, so I think
Interviewer:	Yeah, it will take a while is the only thing.
Design Agency:	I think some of these young guys come in and they have that quirky way about them and they do stuff through humour.

Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Do you know what I mean?
Interviewer:	I think I know what you mean.
Design Agency:	What would be interesting with Joe, to be in a meeting with the senior, with the consultants, when were all no more commutative to see how, oh I haven't been this situation yet but I would hate to have to present his work. I think will be a really interstice development to see how he, cause he talks back stuff to me quite seriously.
Interviewer:	And articulately?
Design Agency:	And articulately, it will be interesting to see how he does that to other people as well. I think there's tendency to joke about stuff.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Not just from him from other people and actually you know when your got in there, when to take it a bit more seriously.
Interviewer:	Yes, when its a serious meeting not just a laugh.
Interviewer:	Is that part of development in terms in becoming more confident and being able to go into those meetings and say deal with more senior people in the company and then possibly client meetings and or presenting?
Design Agency:	Yeah, I think client meetings, he definitely could go to, not the ones that, we have a problem because some of our clients its just all PDFs and phone calls.
Interviewer:	Yes.
Design Agency:	Cause of that when were going to meetings, its annoying quite limited to a couple of people sometimes. That's the reality of it if your physically going to meetings. I think that's a bit of a shame, encouraging him to be in the calls to be able to hear stuff to hear how it
Interviewer:	Is how its dealt with?
Design Agency:	Yeah. So he's, if and when its appropriate he will join in. And in the studio, when its kind of a collective quip, he will
Interviewer:	He would do it with [crosstalk 00:16:14]
Design Agency:	So he will hear how a CEO talks or how
Interviewer:	So [inaudible 00:16:22] of actually being there
Design Agency:	Yeah, were pretty flat here in terms of who does what, so Joe would totally be part of the team on anything. So hopefully he gets that.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. I have a lot of these questions open left actually. How have you been helping Joe learn and develop during these experiences?
Interviewer:	I think you've covered already.
Design Agency:	I think we've just been able to talk through. Honestly I feel like, you have to go and sit down with him and check in with him. It would been nice to have

	done that before because I've got no idea how he's felling about stuff. He seems kind of positive but.
Interviewer:	No its good, most people are kind of up and down, even if there quite minor. Just checking in is always a good thing. Even when people are going, oh.
Design Agency:	Yeah, I had a bit of a thing on holiday where I wanted some of the guys to do a brief meeting for us internally. Some random staff photos and I sent the proof to them because I didn't get the chance to do it before I left. So I sent an email to three of them to get them to work together. So there will be a couple of hours [inaudible 00:17:36] and they did nothing.
Interviewer:	You're not here.
Design Agency:	It was actually so amazing [inaudible 00:17:42] all three of them, one of the girls acknowledged it when I came back but Joe and this other guy didn't acknowledge it. I was, it was actually really annoying, that made me think, wheres the respect for what I've actually asked for. Did they think I was asking a favour?
Interviewer:	Its wasn't a joke.
Design Agency:	Yeah, so I actually sent them an email after that, I wanted to speak to them about it and I only sent the email because I want in the office. I sent email saying please don't ignore. But I'm surprised he hasn't said anything to me.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Is that weird? I just know, I find it weird that he hasn't
Interviewer:	Just a little bit of acknowledgement.
Design Agency:	Yeah, he didn't even reply to my email. So its like email is the wrong thing. I will bring that up face to face with the guys. But I felt like on that moment had to say something to them. When I went home because I was headed into meetings the next day, and goes, I don't want to lack. No, he didn't say anything that actually where I was a little bit [crosstalk 00:18:47]
Interviewer:	Its about learning etiquette and I think a lot of the graduates I talk to find some of the work places you get are much more difficult than all of the design school etiquette. You lean towards that but just general day to day stuff that actually they often struggle with to find, I mean it sounds really obvious but...
Design Agency:	No no, its not at all. I remember [crosstalk 00:19:11]
Interviewer:	I'm supposed answer it, what am i supposed to do. I mean obviously it was different when we didn't have emails, really.
Design Agency:	No, maybe that's the thing. I've actually been told off by email, maybe its really lame. Maybe I shouldn't, I dealt with it that way because I didn't want the, I knew I was going to be in meeting the next day.
Interviewer:	You didn't want to leave it.
Design Agency:	I didn't want to leave it but I don't know if it was the right think as a manager to do. I'm just really amazed that not one person has said anything to me.
Interviewer:	Yeah, I'm not really. Id be annoyed.

Design Agency:	Yeah, you would wouldn't you? That's where I'm a bit like with Joe, I just need to catch things a bit and nip things a little bit in the butt because they have to respect that, I never play the leader, I find it hard sometimes but other times I just do what needs to be done. I don't know want it to be like, you did me a favour, a team thing, I'm trying to shake that attitude with a lot of them is quite draining.
Interviewer:	I also think that its easy to tell someone about mistake rather than letting it burn out and then it becomes a problem rather than just a casual conversation. Say, hey you shouldn't have done that, that wasn't really cool. If its a long term thing, they just walk over you, don't they.
Interviewer:	How do you see Joe's role developing further in the work place what would a Dragon Rouge be doing to develop his role further.
Design Agency:	I think just the variety of projects needs to mix, so I think he's definitely on a different project that will be a learning curve and expose him to much more. A brand creation is one thing but actually taking a brand that we have had for years and working on that is very important as well. So I see the balance. So for me i have to make sure he has the balance of the two and all the little bits in between as well. I see getting him involved, my responsibility to make sure he gets all that exposure and realizes that its all important. I think the idea stuff is really important to what were doing. It is the most important actually but if you can't sell it, or you can't get it into reality, I actually don't think its anything.
Interviewer:	Yeah. The reality is that, it doesn't happen every day.
Design Agency:	No, I'm always a bit conscience when I employ people. You can have people with the most amazing portfolios but none of its really, for an agency like this, you've go to sell it. You've got to make the exciting stuff, we've got get what's after a quite boring client brief into something exciting.
Interviewer:	Yeah, that is how you often communicate that idea through all of the different areas and that's quite skilled, its not just an amazing first that you do. Its how to filter through every single event and sometimes its quite the big skill in itself.
Design Agency:	It is and keeping the interest. It's the stamina for some things that's hardest. That's being the person teaches them is really important can be quite horrible because you...
Design Agency:	I see it as trying to get that broader base of skills. You know that will be down to me, that would be down to the rest of the team. Making sure that, I don't want it to be down to me. I want it to be a more natural thing, where everybody works together a little bit more. I think, Joe has so much potential to just, there's nothing holding anybody back here because he hasn't much involvement as a DD on a job.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Design Agency:	So that's really important. Training, we do quite good training so I think we've gone through the probation period, we quite simply, he'll still have a 3 month probation thing, which isn't, that's just if there are any major issues but then we have reviews and trainings. So we've got mid-year reviews coming up and that will be a check in just to see and more of an objective thing as well. So I think yeah, if we hire anything he wants to do then. He's been quite involved in the digital stuff, so might want to do a bit training more specifically on that. A lot of that will be offered.
Interviewer:	An opportunity to highlight anything that he has really enjoyed [crosstalk 00:23:55]

Design Agency:	Yeah, I think so. You know we are quite lucky here. The are only 4 CD's and one of them is more a digital specialist. We've all got quite different backgrounds. He's got access, he's learned from all of us plenty. Which is great.
Interviewer:	So he's working his way across the board already.
Design Agency:	Yeah, think so.
Interviewer:	That's cool. Of the skills that Joe has come to you, has come with, what actually is being really valuable to the company? You mentioned that he worked across all of them but is there...
Design Agency:	I think he's just got a really can do attitude. He doesn't seem, the kind, I hate to see it but its kind of like cockiness. It comes into the work, quite confident but not arrogant. I would say its more about the good energy he can bring to it. I don't want to see that die off, you know what I mean? You know when suddenly see someone get a bit cocky with stuff, a bit proud, I don't want that [inaudible 00:24:59]. No I think its that, he's quite, he's just quite confident and really gets on there really.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	I think also when, its a bit of, he has that funkier style that comes [inaudible 00:25:20]
Interviewer:	with the younger.
Design Agency:	I'm like, where did that come from. Its good, its fresh stuff.
Interviewer:	And if you could reflect on when Joe started, so from the beginning of his internship to now, how do you feel that the majority of his learning and development has happened?
Design Agency:	The reality, doing jobs. Just actually being given something you've never done before and working through it. I think you can do concepts and stuff and its great, and you do it how you want to do it. He has worked through some really nice stuff. A lot of it actually didn't have to change very much so it was refinement and bringing that to life. Its always going to be much more satisfying than just bugging on a visual.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	So I think the reality of working through, he did one job where he did all the guidelines, and he did the website but he was quite...to take it from the great idea, he worked a lot on the visuals and the whole concept for the brand. Which was really really lovely. He actually took through and doing some of the account work, I think they did the website stuff in sketch and he took right through, I think that's great.
Interviewer:	You felt like he's got some ownership on it?
Design Agency:	Yeah, I hope so. He was given credit for doing it.
Interviewer:	What do you feel your goals and aims of Joe are in the future, in terms of, this is probably say, in the next year in the immediate future?
Design Agency:	I would like to see, a continuation. Because I don't think he is held back from doing stuff at the moment so in terms of owning a project. He is kind of had a quite a bit of responsibility already. I think that, obviously the client side, as appropriate. I do think, with some of the jobs, I spare him from that. To be

	honest, he needs to have normal kind of client group meeting on a Monday night and I just put a stop to it because it was just going over a list of stuff.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Part of me wants to save him from some of that. You know what I mean? I have to do it.
Interviewer:	Don't want to put him off?
Design Agency:	Yeah, no just get on with it. Depending on the jobs that come in, I see that he is just as valuable part of anyone. So I don't know just about him progressing generally. Going from junior to designer. We purposely put him as junior designer.
Interviewer:	Right, because then he can move up.
Design Agency:	Because he can get, well I just think it's, as much as it doesn't make a difference in how things work in the studio, I do think the feel in the those first few years of being a designer, you want to feel like you are moving on. So, I actually asked for the junior title to be kept. I think that within six months to a year it would be good for him to drop that. So he feels like, cause I do think, when they first start as a graduate, it is things like the phone, the working out how to deal with the accounts, account managers, all that politics stuff...
Interviewer:	That's the stuff they don't teach you in uni and you've got to learn.
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Okay, I think there's just one left. Has taking part in these interviews, made me think about how you deal with a junior designer and their learning or has it made you think, I'm doing it however I'm doing it is fine.
Design Agency:	It makes me really conscience of, I think one of the tricky things to do is because I didn't work with him on the first project.
Interviewer:	Right.
Design Agency:	I'm conscience I don't know some of the stuff as much or maybe...
Interviewer:	His background?
Design Agency:	Yeah, the whole like thinking of the skills, I just know that he fitted in and he made a really big impression on the first project that he did. Two of the CD's worked with him, so I totally trust them. It definitely makes me, I think about how were trying to involve the designers really.
Interviewer:	Cool. Is there anything you think the design industry could do to help graduates in their first jobs, that they're not doing now, or that you think could be done better?
Design Agency:	Probably loads, I think generally across the boards with designers, we tend to have a job and then we just make them do it, which can be a good thing. I sometimes thing, it is good to know peoples specific interest and specific skills because do bring slightly unique...
Interviewer:	As they should do.
Design Agency:	I don't necessarily think that's a problem for the creative team in the studio because you get to know it. Sometimes you do have to defend that with the rest of the designers.

Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	They just go and get designers, but we've got the best designer, your really stretching them now. I do think it making awareness of what people learn at college. You know sometimes they don't actually know the programs brilliantly.
Interviewer:	No.
Design Agency:	Cause they wouldn't have, they may have used InDesign but they haven't had to do style sheets or they haven't got the, they do it how they have learned it. But they haven't fully explored or they haven't got into how to file somethings.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely.
Design Agency:	I think there a lot we can do to kind of be realistic about what skills people come in with.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	I would say graduates now are pretty articulate and are good at presenting their work in a way that looks professional, there's not always the sustenance behind it.
Interviewer:	I know what you mean.
Design Agency:	I'm amazed [crosstalk 00:31:54] when I think about [inaudible 00:32:00]
Interviewer:	There is a photo copy about that[crosstalk 00:32:10] no it was like, you just photo copy things over and over again. That was about as exciting as it got.
Design Agency:	There was always somebody [inaudible 00:32:19]
Interviewer:	You need to get that done.
Interviewer:	That is all.

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD-DR

Interviewer: Yeah, I mean it's nothing major. How's everything been going since we last talked [crosstalk 00:00:07]

Graduate: When did we last talk?

Interviewer: In March, so-

Graduate: Wow.

Interviewer: I think you were about ... You were finishing your internship, and you were about to start-

Graduate: About to start.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Okay, how's everything going? Yeah, good. If I'm honest, it's not too much different from [crosstalk 00:00:25] the internship. I've got a bit more responsibility now-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: And I've got a bit more in terms of I'm not just doing bit parts on projects, I'm kind of-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Actually taking control of a lot of stuff, and-

Interviewer: Like, a more full approach.

Graduate: Yeah. I've moved [inaudible 00:00:48]. But yeah, no. Honestly, because I think my internship is so good.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: I think that is maybe one of the reasons I got offered the job with was that I was almost really working here already-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Other than just-

Interviewer: You just fit in-

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Really naturally.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, and it felt like you're part of the team.

Graduate: Exactly.

Interviewer: And so, like you said, transitioning to being a designer here is also quite seamless for you as well.

Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yeah, cool. And so I guess that means are your expectations of your role being met? Are you doing what you think you should do or want to do in the role?
Graduate:	Yeah, I think so. I mean, I think I'm in my probation period. I think that runs out at the end of this month I think.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And when that finishes, I kind of have got a meeting in terms of-
Interviewer:	Right.
Graduate:	Hoping my part's [inaudible 00:01:48].
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Which I'm pretty sure I will, hopefully. Fingers crossed. I don't have a meeting in terms of setting proper targets-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And I think then it might feel a bit more long term than it does now-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Necessarily.
Interviewer:	Do you feel like you're on probation, or do you feel like it's in the bag?
Graduate:	Well, I'd like to think ... I haven't done anything overly drastically different from when they offered me the job. I don't know if I've done anything wrong.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so you're not feeling nervous or anything?
Graduate:	No, I'm not. I'd be pretty gutted and shocked if I didn't pass probation.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	I think you'd know as well already.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Wouldn't you?
Interviewer:	Yeah, I think so. And do you have anything in mind that you want to discuss at that point in terms of your plans going forward-
Graduate:	Kind of. Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	You know, like [crosstalk 00:02:42].
Graduate:	Yeah. I mean, I'm not someone where I'm planning to be here for a year or two years and then I'll move on to like ... Generally, I have no idea
Interviewer:	Yeah.

Graduate:	Where I'm going to be at, but in terms of like, just so I can figure out moving forward, in terms of going from junior maybe to a higher role, and what projects are coming up, and what projects they want to get me on, and level of involvement in those roles-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Whether there's anything else in terms of outside being a junior here, anything else within the company I can be doing.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Just, yeah. Just kind of figuring it all out really.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely.
Graduate:	I mean, I would've kind of preferred to do that before my probation really.
Interviewer:	So actually, this has given you a chance to kind of go, "Oh, I could have asked that before …"
Graduate:	Yeah, because I think it was almost like even though they hired me, because I've been here for so long already, it was almost like I think maybe I kind of got forgotten about, like I was-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Kind of there, so I didn't really properly go through the hiring process.
Interviewer:	Yeah, if you came in as a junior designer-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	You probably would've asked these questions-
Graduate:	Exactly.
Interviewer:	At that point in time-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	But you kind of just went, "Oh, cool."
Graduate:	I kind of just went into, "Oh, I work here now." And it's like that.
Interviewer:	So, actually that period is quite [inaudible 00:04:01] to think about-
Graduate:	Yeah. Maybe. So I can properly plan for it.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	But yeah, because I don't want to just end up being stuck at a junior, at this level, for [crosstalk 00:04:12]
Interviewer:	Yeah, and just doing actual work-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And kind of not being in control of your own destiny.

Graduate: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: Cool. In terms of your role developing further, what would be your next plans? You've talked about what you've thought you'd like to talk about, but what do you think that you'd expect from those things? Like middle involvement and moving forward and things?

Graduate: Yeah, I mean, I want to … Every time I am working on something, I'd like more and more responsibility. I'd like to be properly having control over what I'm doing. Not full control obviously-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: But more level of involvement within projects, rather than not just kind of doing something and running it past Becky or David.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: I'd like to kind of be-

Interviewer: Making a decision or-

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: And I'd like to be doing that a bit more. I mean, I'm not at that level yet. I think I need to learn a lot more, but-

Interviewer: You feel like-

Graduate: I'd like to keep [inaudible 00:05:12] to learning-

Interviewer: Aiming for that, anyway.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Yeah, I'd like to just keep going. I mean, not like a massive approach.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: More and more I can do it.

Interviewer: When would you like to say, move from a junior designer to a designer? Do you have something, any sort of timing for that?

Graduate: I don't know. Maybe that's one thing I want to figure out in terms of when I have this meeting. I don't know in terms of [inaudible 00:05:43]. It's different from place to place how easy it is-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: To move up internally or whether then you need to move on somewhere else to go up.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate:	I don't really know. Maybe that could come clearer at the meeting I have, but maybe that would come clearer if I ask the people here. I'd like to think it wouldn't be too long, like the start of next year. I don't know, because I've been [inaudible 00:06:08] lucky.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And I've pretty much been here since I graduated, so-
Interviewer:	It's not unreasonable.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And quite a few people have left, as well. So, especially my team I feel like I'm definitely in the level I'd have to work up because we've had three designers leave in the space of a month. I've had to kind of under pressure step up a bit.
Interviewer:	Yeah. What's that felt like? Is that quite good?
Graduate:	Oh, yeah. I'd much rather do that than ... Because it's essentially just working alongside either Becky or David. I don't think-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	A lot of people get that opportunity this early on. So saying, whether I'm doing any good at it I don't know, but I'm definitely playing along..
Interviewer:	So actually, being thrown in the deep end-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Has actually kind of made you go, "Oh, I have to just-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Get on with it and learn."
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. Sorry. How has Dragon Rouge, or the team, working with them helped support your learning and development since I've last talked to you?
Graduate:	A lot. I think they've kind of ... Like I said, I've been thrown in the deep end a lot and I think that's really kind of pushed me to have to learn quicker.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And I think they know that. Especially David knows that one of the projects I kind of was the only designer left on it-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And I was I think getting a bit overwhelmed. I think I got a lot of support and stuff with that.
Interviewer:	Did-

Graduate:	But it's like not like-
Interviewer:	Did he support you with it?
Graduate:	Yeah, [crosstalk 00:07:43] it wasn't like in terms of they did the work for me. It was just kind of understanding and making sure I had enough time, and [crosstalk 00:07:48]
Interviewer:	There was just a lot of work-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And simply, that was the fact and you needed-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	More help.
Graduate:	But, yeah. Because still, I'm a junior.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	I'm not necessarily going to be able to work at the pace-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	As other people, but I'd like to. I'll try.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Yeah, I think that's because the team is quite close. I think everyone really understands where everyone is at.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Graduate:	Everyone gets a lot of good support.
Interviewer:	How have you helped your own development and learning during this time as well? What have you done yourself?
Graduate:	I think I've tried to be as proactive as possible in terms of if I do ... I try not to have any sort of down time, so if I do find I haven't really been put on anything, I'll figure out where I can help anything out, or I'll start on something, or they're doing a lot of work internally in terms of bringing new interns in, or-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	I put Dragon Rouge identity stuff. Like, work on that-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	So I've tried to keep myself working as much as possible, because if I'm sat there, then I think I'm not going to learn anything, am I?
Interviewer:	No.
Graduate:	So-
Interviewer:	Just, [crosstalk 00:09:08]

Graduate:	The more and more work I've got going on, I suppose-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Just make sure I'm not being lazy.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Which nobody would think.
Interviewer:	People naturally are, aren't they?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Is there anything that has been a positive experience that's happened at work, like with your work or something work wise that has happened that you thought was really good?
Graduate:	Yeah, I think one of the first projects, or two of the main projects I've worked on are now kind of I'm not overly working on them much anymore, it's just little tweaks, but they're about to be put out-
Interviewer:	Okay.
Graduate:	To the real world. That's the first time that's ever happened for me, so that'll be really cool.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	[inaudible 00:09:54].
Interviewer:	Is that what you do?
Graduate:	Yeah. I told you I was doing something. I suppose just kind of getting hired-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Was a good thing.
Interviewer:	You'd like to think. Otherwise, we wouldn't be having this conversation.
Graduate:	Yeah, I suppose those are the two main things.
Interviewer:	Yeah. No, that's good.
Graduate:	In terms of work, yeah.
Interviewer:	And has there been anything where you thought, "I'd really like a bit more help here." Or, that hasn't turned out so well?
Graduate:	Yeah, I suppose that a lot of the projects I'm working on, there's always parts where I think that would be bad, but I've always voiced my opinion on that, whether I'm right or wrong. At least, even if I don't agree with something that's happened, at least I know that I've said my piece-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	On it.

Interviewer:	Well, yeah. Sometimes, things come out of just saying stuff-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Even if its ...
Graduate:	Exactly. So I would say that's what I've challenged.
Interviewer:	Yeah. How do you feel about the way that Dragon Rouge is helping you learn and develop skills on the job? Are you happy with how they're teaching you things, or is there ways that they could do it differently?
Graduate:	And I haven't necessarily been sat down and gone through courses and classes-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Because no one really has time for that, but I think the best way to do it is learn whilst you're doing, really.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And as long as, whether it's something technical in terms of I don't know how to do something in Illustrator, I've got five people around me that probably know how to do it.
Interviewer:	Right.
Graduate:	Or if it's in terms of approach, I suppose its kind of doing what I think is right and then speaking to David and Becky and seeing what I could've done better-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	What I've done right.
Interviewer:	Yeah. [crosstalk 00:11:55]
Graduate:	So it's just learning whilst doing, really.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	It's not necessarily me being put through courses or classes or anything.
Interviewer:	No.
Graduate:	I don't think I would learn well doing that, because I find especially when I was at Uni, I did courses on how to use Illustrator and it would be a two hour course, and an hour in, I would've forgotten what was at the start.
Interviewer:	Yeah, you just need to get on and do it.
Graduate:	Yeah, go and do it.
Interviewer:	Fair enough. How do you imagine ... What type of ... How do you imagine you would develop your role further while you're here? I know you kind of answered that with the review and things, but ...
Graduate:	I don't know. How I would go about doing it?
Interviewer:	Yeah.

Graduate:	I suppose it's just keep trying to push for more ... I think maybe always ask .... I'm a junior, so they'll put me on a job that a junior can do, but I wouldn't necessarily like ... If there's other jobs going, which a junior wouldn't necessarily take on-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	I'd really give it a go-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Whether they want to risk me doing that or not.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	But, I sort of kind of just not asking for too much, but asking for stuff that would push me, rather than just something that suits my role.
Interviewer:	Not being complacent-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	About the kind of roles you take on?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yeah, okay. Has there been any skills that have been the most useful for you since you've been here? Like, your skills that you've got. Maybe, for example, you might have skills that other people don't have here that have actually turned out to be beneficial for you.
Graduate:	I suppose maybe it's just everyone works in different ways, right? So, they're not going to want to hire an intern or a junior that just comes in and works like everyone else. They want someone that will have a different way of thinking.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	So I'd like to think that in the projects I've worked on, I've come at it from a different angle through the way I've been taught at Uni, or just-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	What's going on in my head.
Interviewer:	Yeah. So, it's almost like how-
Graduate:	Just a different approach-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	To working, whether it's right or wrong, I think they want someone to disrupt what's going on in the studio. And I'm loud.
Interviewer:	And what are your goals and aims for the future in design?
Graduate:	Goals and aims ... I think I don't really have goals and aims, I'd like to think that I'm constantly growing and learning. I wouldn't say, "I want to be a creative director by the time I'm 30 years old." Because I don't overly think it bothers me too much. I think I've got I'd say more of my goals outside of work, in terms of me and family and me as a person, rather than-

Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Actual work.
Interviewer:	That's cool.
Graduate:	So-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	As long as I'm enjoying my work and enjoying the place I'm at, enjoying the people I'm around-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Definitely progressing. I'm not saying that I just want to ... I'm happy as a junior, so I want to be here-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	For the rest of my life, but as long as I'm doing all that, then that's good with me.
Interviewer:	Cool. If you reflect on when you started at Dragon Rouge, at the very beginning of your internship to now, could you tell me how you feel like your learning and developments happened, as a general kind of thing?
Graduate:	How ... On the how I'm working and ...
Interviewer:	Well, it's just like ... You might say it's been really fast, or you found that this way of learning has been the most beneficial to you.
Graduate:	Yeah, I'd definitely say it's been fast, but I think there's no way around that. I think the pace of work going from Uni to here, into the working world is a hundred times faster, so you have to learn quicker. Otherwise, you won't be able to keep with it.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	I think I've been made able to manage it. I think what helped me was I did internships before coming here, so I think maybe I got along better here because I've had experiences before.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Whether I've slapped the bear or wasn't able to keep up, so I kind of knew the pace that I needed to start at. So, I was able to kick-start it quite quickly.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Do you feel the way you've learned is ... What ways of learning have you found most beneficial? Has it been just working on jobs? Has it been people passing knowledge onto you? Has there been something that you thought that's helped me learn?
Graduate:	I think a bit of both. I think definitely working on something, being thrown into the deep end working on a job straightaway for me was the best thing to do.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And also, whilst you're working on jobs you're ... Speaking to like, Becky. I was working on a job with her and understanding her way of working, how she does things and learning from that-

Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And taking that on board and applying it to what I'm doing next. That's also really good. It's kind of just like picking everyone's brain in the studio. Just like in general, even account and things like that because that was a massive thing for me, presenting and working with account managers and strategists. The Uni, when you're presenting work you're presenting it to your tutor and five other people in the course.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	When you start mumbling about work, they can still kind of understand what you're talking about, whereas the account manager is not going to have a clue what's going on it your head. They're just like, "We want to see this, this and this. This is what the client wants."
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And that's one thing I think I've had to learn quite quickly, be really clear with your work and when you're presenting [inaudible 00:18:15].
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	I thought I was confident, and then five people stood around me looking at a board of my work and I nearly shit myself.
Interviewer:	Yes, [inaudible 00:18:24]. Cool. Has taking part in these two interviews made you think about your learning at all?
Graduate:	Yeah. I like reflecting on things, and I like talking so I think it's really helped. Yeah, it's been really good because I've kind of maybe thought about my journey, what I'm doing well and what I'm not doing well, be able to look back on it, and also made me think about the future as well and how I'll progress. Maybe because I've seen here it's quite fast-paced, a lot of pressure of working, maybe I don't necessarily get time to think about that.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Because when I get home, that's the last thing I want to do is sit down and-
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Walk a journey.
Interviewer:	Yeah. "What should I think about for the future?"
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Okay. As a general idea, do you think that the design industry have a responsibility to recent graduates when they first enter the design industry?
Graduate:	When you say, what do you mean responsibility? To hire them, to offer them opportunity?
Interviewer:	It could be anything.
Graduate:	I think that-
Interviewer:	Like, train them, hire them [crosstalk 00:19:40]

Graduate: Yeah, I think they've got responsibility in terms of treating people right. I think that's just to anyone, not just graduates, right?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: I think they've got responsibility to offer opportunities. I don't think they've got a responsibility to hire people. I think that responsibility falls on graduates, or someone else trained to get a job.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: I don't think just because you come to a ... Say, you go to a top university for graphic design doesn't mean you're entitled to get a job at the top. I think that should be opened up to anyone-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Wherever they're from. Maybe they don't even have to go to university-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Maybe they've done something else.

Interviewer: Cool. Do you have any advice for graduates that are about to graduate just-

Graduate: Graduate ...

Interviewer: In what, in about two weeks or something?

Graduate: Yeah, mine would be because mine was I think ... Well, I was coming up to the end of Uni, I had my idea in my head, where I want to intern up until Christmas and then have a job by January.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Then, I did my first internship for a month and I was like, "Wow, this is just not going to happen." I had that in my head, and it's just kind of ... Make sure you just go with what happens, because week by week it's going to change-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Because you could be sat there ... I was off my first internship, I had a month where I sat home and applied to things. And I was like, [inaudible 00:21:12] and suddenly an internship I applied to in like March emailed me back and said, "Are you free here?"

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: And I was like, [crosstalk 00:21:22].

Interviewer: This is random.

Graduate: So yeah, just going with it. Going with-

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: I hate the saying, but it's going with the flow.

Interviewer: Yeah, so not go get too personally hung up-

Graduate: Yeah, hung up on things.

Interviewer: Yeah, there's a lot of stuff going on out there and a lot of places not necessarily have opportunities at that right time.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, [crosstalk 00:21:43]

Graduate: Right place at the right time as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. There's a lot of that. That was all the questions.

Graduate: All right, thanks.

Interviewer: Cool.

INTERVIEW ONE: DA-MW

Interviewer: Testing. Testing. The questions I'm going to ask you today although they are about graduates in general are going to be focusing on the relationship with you and Chris as a case study. I'll just ask you a couple of quick questions. Your job role is the owner of this design agency. You're the founder.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: How long have you been running it? It's been quite a number of years [crosstalk 00:00:34]?

Design Agency: January 1996.

Interviewer: Wow. Great. Obviously you did work in the design industry beforehand.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: You've been a designer or working in the design industry for how many years now?

Design Agency: Since 1987. About 30 years.

Interviewer: When you say 1987, it doesn't feel like it would be that long. I know you do regularly take on intern and junior designers and you run various programs, so to be honest I'll probably just lift what is on your website, in a way about [inaudible 00:01:13].

Design Agency: Yeah, so over the years we have taken on quite a few graduates so those that have graduated in July we would have taken them on from there. We would have been their first full-time job. We've done that quite a few times over the years.

Interviewer: Would you say you have someone at least every year or not always?

Design Agency: Not every year. How many would we have taken on? 10 maybe. Maybe a few more. I can probably sit and work that out for you, but-

Interviewer: No. It's fine. It's just a general idea. When you do take them on, is it a combination of internships, placements, and junior designer roles or do you have a very specific way of taking people on when they're out of university?

Design Agency: No. It depends. Chris, for example, came in on an internship, placement. I don't know how you want ... Then we got busy. We were looking for someone. We thought he was good. We took him on.

Interviewer: Do you mind asking this question, but do you pay your internship?

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: This is now going to recap the first question. How did you find Chris and how did this role come about? You mentioned that he started as a intern, and you got busier.

Design Agency: Yes. I can expand on that a bit if you like. I guess I'd been thinking that we had enough work on that we thought getting a junior designer in, when I say junior I mean a graduate up to a couple of years, would be a good fit for our team. Other people we've got in our team and they're sort of like a design director, and sort of more of a senior designer role myself, and I felt as though it would be good to get someone in at that level. Is that all right?

Interviewer: Yes. I'm just checking just in case.

Design Agency: That was the first thing that was going through my head. Secondly I do a portfolio review with Bath Spa University on a fairly regular basis, as in once a year, and I've done that for quite a few years, and it's something I do. They ask me if I'd be interested, and I'm always up for giving that a go. I saw Chris at that portfolio review. There were lots of students I saw that day, but Chris was one of them. I'd already clocked his work and thought, "Nice chap. Good work." That was in [inaudible 00:04:13] mix. Then I am also part of a group that set up something called Workhouse, which was an industry-led design training weekend. That's what it turned out to be, and it was a design experiment that I did with other design professionals in the area. Do you know about this?

Interviewer: I've read about it. Yes.

Design Agency: It was this at the time it was a one-off weekend. We gave it a go. Chris was one of the 150 applicants. We then selected, and there was ... I don't think I was even one of the ones who selected Chris. He sent in. There was other people from Bath Spa who wrote in. I think three of them got in, in the end, but we accepted people from all over the country. We weren't really looking at portfolios. It was about their responses to our questions. We were looking for a mixture of second year, third years, people who have graduated, people who haven't gone to university. Then I was able to work with him a little bit then. That was another ...

Interviewer: Layer of [crosstalk 00:05:40].

Design Agency: ... layer of knowledge about Chris, and then a sort of [inaudible 00:05:44], but not in a big way, because there was lots of other ...

Interviewer: There was lots of people [crosstalk 00:05:48].

Design Agency: ... people on the course, but it was just another time ...

Interviewer: Pinpointing moment.

Design Agency: ... where we started to work a little bit together. After the Workhouse weekend, so I think it was in the week following it, even maybe in the first few days, Chris emailed me to say, "Just wanted to say a big thank you for the weekend." He emailed me at the right time, and I'd also met him a few times, and he sent me his portfolio. Now, I got quite a few thank yous from other people, but because of those couple of little times that I'd met him, and significantly because he emailed me when I was thinking I needed someone, and he sent me a good email, and it was in response to something we'd done over the weekend, and that his portfolio looked good, all those things combined. I thought, okay, I'm looking for someone to give us a hand over a few weeks. Are you up for coming in for a placement? He emailed back and said, "Yes. Definitely." At the time I just said, "We'll give it a go and see what happens." It was a paid placement.

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:07:01]. It was not necessarily just down to Chris on his own. It was a matter of luck and timing and that he was good every time you met him and things like that.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: He started as an intern and that's morphed into a junior design role. Generally, how is Chris going? Your expectations, are they being met and what you expect an intern as someone who obviously moves through into a junior designer role go? Obviously it must be fairly successful because he stayed and he's now a junior designer. Is it how you imagined the road to be [inaudible 00:07:42]?

Design Agency: Yes. It is. It's been very good. Whilst you don't want to judge a junior designer on this, his skills with the Adobe software packages: InDesign, Photoshop, are very good. That helps. Now, I haven't taken him on to just be good at that, but because he's good at that, that has helped his situation. I would expect people to have a

reasonable knowledge and that they would develop their skills while they were with us.

Interviewer: There's a certain amount of self-initiation that you're imagining that they would do, so even if they were good at something or they identified an area which they could improve on that their self-motivation should be important enough that they would do that or be able to spot that area where they needed to work on and they would work on it.

Design Agency: Yeah, and together we would. If he had said, "Look, I can do these but I'm not good at one particular package," but that was quite important for the role, then we might say, "Okay, well maybe we'll send you on a one day course to learn the basics and you get up to speed." He was good at that, but also he's proved himself over that placement period that he was a good team player, and it's little things like he'll make the tea. I know that's a small thing, but when people get up and say, "Do you want a cup of tea?" You think, "Thank you." You just acknowledge those little things. If you say, "Can you help me with that?" He said yes straight away. There's none of this sort of, you know? He'll just immediately help you out.

Some of the jobs that you do when you're a junior designer are interesting, but quite a few of them are less interesting. At that level you just want to know that people are very competent, that they can do what you ask them to do, that if there's any issues they come back and clarify what's needed. On the whole he's been very, very good with all those.

Interviewer: He's fairly perceptive about what's happening in the studio, and his personality and his willingness to help is just as important as his Adobe skill sets and his graphic design and design mind and things.

Design Agency: Yes.

Interviewer: A full package basically.

Design Agency: Yes.

Interviewer: You mentioned some aspects, if he needed to, a certain area needed to be improved, you would possibly send him on a course or something like that, but how do you think as a design agency and as, I guess, a boss have you been helping support Chris' learning, and how do you see you are developing his learning through being in the workplace?

Design Agency: Developing his learning. I guess we would be, if I think through the stages of a project, for example, so purely on the graphic design level, so if we are about to start ... I would talk to him about how we might go through the design process as a professional design agency, so everything from the research phase. I would share with him what we might be doing. The other week we went out and did some interviews, for example, for a job. I guess something I would be keen to do when we can do it is to talk him through what happens. At some stage, maybe not at the moment but at some stage I'd be wanting to bring him into those interviews, for example, so he can hear how that's happening. Now, that hasn't happening yet, I don't think, but that's something I'd want to happen.

I'd want to be talking him through, and bearing in mind he's only been with us a few months, but over ...

Interviewer: He's a long way to go.

Design Agency: ... the course of this year I'd be wanting to talk through, say, the thinking phase, the strategy phase, so what are the sorts of things we'll be doing, and talking him through that. When we put the concepts up on the wall, I'd be wanting to say, right, now come up with some ideas. Here's a brief, so here's how we would write

a brief, so that's at the end of stage two. I'd show him, sharing the brief, and say, "This is what we're looking for, so now let's put the ideas up on the wall." Once everyone puts the ideas up on the wall, as a group we would discuss the merits of each idea and how it relates back to the brief. I guess involving him with all those different stages, sharing it, getting him involved with the discussions. We're a small studio, so it works well.

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:12:35].

Design Agency: There's a discussion going on in the studio, he's been there.

Interviewer: He's involved.

Design Agency: He's involved. I try and get him, and then as it shifts down into stage four, more of the craft, I'll say, "Right, I want you to do this. This is what I'm looking for." We'd be working closely together to try and develop something, so a logo or something like that. Then there might be stage five, the delivery. At each stage I'm trying to say, "This is what I'm looking for. These are the standards I'm looking for." If it's not right, I'll be saying, "This doesn't work because of this. Try this." Talking him through. I also, one of the design bit I like to get all designers involved in, if you like, the running of the business side. That's something not a lot of design agencies would do. It's a very important part of running a design agency is that they understand that it is a business. We have to make money. We have to make a profit.

Already, Chris has been involved in on a monthly basis we have a review about how are we doing financially. I will get Chris involved with that. Now, he might think it's going over his head a little bit, but I said, "I need you to understand that everything that we do has an impact, and I want you to be part of that." Ultimately I'm thinking it'd be lovely if Chris stays, but I'm assuming in three years he might want to leave and go onto another firm.

Interviewer: Yes. He may do. Yeah.

Design Agency: If that does happen, I want him to leave here with a good understanding of not just as a graphic designer, but as an all round designer, every aspect of it, so not just the design bits, but, if you like, the business side of things.

Interviewer: Business sense.

Design Agency: How do you interact with clients? That everything you do has a value, that you need to be challenging for your time, those sorts of things. I'm sure there's lots of other things, but one other thing I wanted to say was that I've tried to get Chris chatting and liaising with the clients early on, because the best way is by learning to be on the job. I will involve and keep Chris CC'd into emails that I send, to an update, I would say. I want to hopefully share with him best practice. Then I'd also say to Chris, "Right, now you talk to the client." Or say to the client, "Can you please talk to Chris to get him to send things over," so he gets used to how to deliver, or what their expectations are. I will talk to him about managing expectations, and say this is what we need to do. "If you send this on, put this in the email."

Interviewer: You're teaching him through experience by keeping him in the loop constantly, but you're also recognizing that being a designer is not just about designing. It's a client-based relationship, and also it's a business relationship. I guess actually being in a small agency is quite a useful thing, because if you're in a big agency that would possibly not be so fed into it, or you would have a separate person to take care of that. As a designer, they might not be involved. Also, you're basically mentoring him through an experience.

Design Agency: Yes. I think so. Yeah.

Interviewer:	That's how …
Design Agency:	Excuse me.
Interviewer:	… although you might not have … You know what you're doing, but it's not a written down process that you're following to the T. It's as you're responding to how Chris is responding and recognizing when he can pick up certain things and take on more responsibility, so you just gauge that as a individual, and you've got the experience to be able to do that.
Design Agency:	Yeah. I guess so. Yes.
Interviewer:	Is there anything you think you could do in the future to facilitate learning further for him, or do you have any plans in the future for Chris' learning? You mentioned that I think you have, because what you've talked about is a continuous process, so you are probably going to continue doing that. Do you have any talks to him perhaps about the future or how you plan to …?
Design Agency:	Over the last few years I've tried to implement this review process, so rather than doing it once a year, I try and do it about three times a year. We will meet up, and it might be just 10, 15 minutes, but rather than the review process all about being the past, we try and focus on the future. It's sort of like, "What are you happy with? What are you less happy with? Where do you think are the areas that you need a bit of training or input to help further your career and to help you do your job better?" That might be Chris coming back to me and saying, "I feel as though I'd like to learn a bit more about this particular," and I'm talking about the software package, because it's an easy thing.

We've done things like presentations, for example. I did a whole series where I got somebody in to help train on presentations, because some people will love presenting, some people hate it. It's an important part of the job. |
Interviewer:	It is. Yes.
Design Agency:	We will discuss and try and discuss on a regular basis developing that, you know?
Interviewer:	Yeah. Strengths and weaknesses.
Design Agency:	Strengths and weaknesses and how he can develop that. I guess that's one thing. Secondly if there are any creative talks or something like that, there might be a …
Interviewer:	Like a D&AD talk or something.
Design Agency:	D&AD talk or …
Interviewer:	Something external.
Design Agency:	… questioning design forum in the local area, and they're putting on a talk. Then I always pay for them to go to the talk, because I think that for me is a bit of training. They might be giving up an evening, but normally it's an enjoyable evening.
Interviewer:	It is.
Design Agency:	They're learning something about design and how they can improve. I guess I'm keen for them to just become more involved with some of the projects. There might be some clients that they start to take on more of a developing a closer relationship with. Depending on what happens and who we have at the time and what jobs and projects and clients we have a lot of the time, it might be that there's one particular client that I think, "Okay, Chris. You've started to do some work. They seem to like working with you. You're doing a good job." He might to

start to come along to some of the meetings. He might start to become more of the main contact person rather than me.

Interviewer: You'd be more of a overseer.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: We have touched on this slightly right at the beginning, but how do you think Chris has supported his own development in his role here since he started?

Design Agency: Excuse me. I guess he's been enthusiastic. I always think, because the things I look for when somebody comes for a job here is them as a character and their attitude and their overall character and their desire to learn and be engaged and their portfolio.

Interviewer: You're already seeing the successful elements already before you've taken them on, and you feel that trajectory should continue maybe.

Design Agency: Yeah. In fact, in many respects whilst most of the time we've taken on people who have gone through the university pathway, I'm not that bothered about the degree. It's about the person and their portfolio for me that's the most important thing. Chris, he enjoys design. I'm starting to pick up some of his ... Designers have different skills and talents in different areas. I'm starting to think, "Okay. You seem to be enjoying that. That's good." I will just try and encourage that. If that's the bit, an area that you love doing, then I always want to encourage people. If he started to show an interest in something or, I don't know, I mean since he's been here he's always ... Think the fact that he just comes in, he's conscientious, he wants to do a good job. If something needs finished in the evening, he'll stay and finish it, those sorts of things. He is helping himself become a better designer.

Interviewer: I guess also if he wasn't doing those things, he wouldn't be in the position he is now. You would have said, "We've finished up with that job, and it's really been nice having you here but we don't need you anymore."

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Maybe not as bluntly as that, but essentially that's what would have happened if he wasn't going upwards on his own.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: In terms of Chris' skill set, you mentioned before that you don't necessarily need to have someone from university, but what has been useful and what type of things could be improved? When I talk about his skill set, I don't necessarily talk about just his design skill set. This has been interwoven in what you've talked about constantly, but there's certain attributes, personal things that he may have learned from university or other places, the type of thing that makes him tick, and you've pretty much covered this, I think. It is the tea making, the fact he stays late, and that's the type of things that you need a well-rounded person, a well-rounded skill set, and it might not necessarily be from someone who's come from university, or they might have done a different degree, an art degree.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Something like that. Okay.

Design Agency: What was the question?

Interviewer: In terms of Chris' skill set, what has been useful and what could do with improving?

Design Agency: I guess we have covered that. Team player, conscientious. He's got a real interest and passion for design. Certain aspects like he likes his typography, that's really important as a graphic designer. I've clocked that and thought, okay, that's [crosstalk 00:23:39].

Interviewer: Those type of things fit in with this agency and how you work, so his skill set's probably aligned with the type of ethos in here.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Whereas someone could be very good but not right, I guess.

Design Agency: Yes. Exactly. Chris, I guess he would probably admit the same, he's like ... He's the same as probably lots of people who come out of at their stage in their career, he probably feels less confident when he's got to present some work, but that's a very important part, that dialogue with the client and building that relationship, how to present it is a very important part. That's probably an area that he needs development.

Interviewer: I think a lot of graduates probably do, and at least they are in a situation where they can learn it and someone can help them through that process. Their skill set's not going to get any better usually from that point, or it will be a bit flat. You mentioned that you did or are happy for Chris to learn in other places, but where has most of Chris' learning taken place? Obviously it's here, but has he gone on any external courses or have you sent him on any other ... Have you sent him out to printers or to, I don't know, typography places? Is there anything that you've sent him to or expanded his learning in different areas or is it all studio-based?

Design Agency: Mostly studio-based. He's gone along to a few design talks, which I encourage. I think that's good for them to go along to. [inaudible 00:25:24]. Just trying to think really. It's probably been those to be honest at this stage.

Interviewer: It's early.

Design Agency: We took him on in August, so he's only ...

Interviewer: It's only been ...

Design Agency: Only been a few months really, but I would hope in the new year that ... It's one of those things if Chris came to me and said, "Oh, there's this amazing exhibition up in London. I'd love to go and see it." If I've got wind of that, I'd try and encourage him to go along and see it.

Interviewer: That's cool. These might be a bit early to say, but has there been a major positive so far in Chris' time here where you've gone, "That was really, really happy with that. That's something I really noticed that I just thought, 'That's amazing that you did that.'" Or something that you really clocked that you thought ...?

Design Agency: There's been a couple of times. I asked him to come up with some ideas for a longstanding client for this cover. He developed something that was ... I said, "Don't ..." I gave him the framework to work with, but he came up with a design that was different to what we'd done in the past, which I was really pleased to see, because ultimately you want people to come up with good ideas. It was something different to what we'd normally do, so I was really pleased to see that. That's the idea they went with. I was really pleased for him, but it was good for us as a design agency. It was a bit of fresh thinking, and suddenly that's influenced a lot of the other things for the project. It was just a slightly different way of looking at something, but it did make me think, "Great. I'm really pleased you've done that."

Interviewer: It showed something of his own thinking. He wasn't just following what is happening in the studio. He can ...

Design Agency: He was taking his initiative.

Interviewer: On his own [crosstalk 00:27:35].

Design Agency: Doing something different and it was for a cover of a prospectus, but it led to the design. It was good.

Interviewer: Cool. That's really good. I don't want to be negative, but I'm only asking this because I want to see how [inaudible 00:27:52] responds to points where things don't go so well, and what happens then. If there's a point where Chris got himself into a bit of a situation whether it was with a client, a timeline, sorry, a deadline, or something, how have you reacted to that or talked them through that in that situation where something might not have gone to plan, and how that can turn into a learning point rather than something that knocks his confidence?

Design Agency: There haven't been that many ... Because it's been fairly recently, there haven't been that many instances. I'm trying to think. I guess sometimes there's been perhaps quite a bit of time spent on worrying about some details, and details are good, but perhaps an understanding that ... All designers are a bit like that. They get into a job and don't worry about the time so much. Sometimes I've had to come in and say, "Okay. I think we need to move on now, and move away from that." I always encourage new designers to be quite vocal and express their opinions, and sometimes I don't always agree with them, but then I've got to say, "I think we're going to go down this route, so there's a different path to one you're suggesting, because of these reasons."

I just try and always make sure that ... There might have been one or two occasions where he's worried too much about the details for some particular reason, but to be honest it's very small. It's not a big thing.

Interviewer: No. It's not a big problem, but ...

Design Agency: It's something all designers need to be a little bit aware of in terms of the amount of time they spend on a job.

Interviewer: I think when you mentioned earlier about being involved more in the business and the costing and things like that, if they've got an understanding of that they then can start to see how an hourly rate turns into a job, and then a job, you know, and things. Your experience sometimes will be able to say to them, "Look, at this point the job means that we can only deliver this much. In my experience we're going to go for this option because ..." You actually are just using your experience to help them in the situation, to guide them, so actually although they might be annoyed or feel like you're overriding the decision, it's actually experience that's doing that.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Just a general question. I know Chris started on a internship, but do you see internships as a useful tool for graduates entering the design industry?

Design Agency: Yes. What really annoys me is that people don't value them. I've seen and heard of many cases, and it's not just the design industry, unfortunately, of graduates being taken on and not paid anything, and it lasting for months if not years, and I do not think that's really an acceptable practice. If they're coming out and they are offering ... Chris came out and within a week or so if they're doing something that is offering something of some value to the company, the agency, let's [inaudible 00:31:41] design agency. If he's doing something that's helping us as an agency, then that has some value. I think they should be paid, and even if it's just a minimum wage, at least they are being paid and recognized for their value and their contribution. I guess that's probably the first thing I would say.

The second thing is that I do think it's valuable, because I always say to the designer, "You don't know what's going to suit you as a designer. This agency

might be right for you, it might not and vice versa." This is a good opportunity at … It's a fairly low risk but good opportunity from both sides to say, "Look, come in for a couple of weeks and let's see how we both feel about each other and how you fit in, because you might not like it." Don't just take the first job that … I do think it has got a place, and sometimes it's only by you working with someone for a … It only takes a week or so, you think, "Okay. This is what they're like."

After about a month working with Chris, and at the time we had another person on placement, so it was quite an unusual situation. Inevitably there was the sort of, "Oh, okay. Chris is doing this. This other chap or placement is doing that." We were comparing, but because I've had so many people in placement or graduates and juniors, I was able to assess-

Interviewer: Learned to read the situation a bit better.

Design Agency: I do think they're useful.

Interviewer: I guess this is the point, or one of the points of my research is how to make internships probably what you just described, which is to make design agencies more aware and for them to be more understanding of what it means for a graduate to be in a internship, so treating them fairly and things. There are a lot of people who don't pay and a lot of people who keep them on for a long time. I can see the advantage of an internship for both the graduate and the design agency, but I think or what I'm looking at is possibly looking at guidelines, and not guidelines in terms of a regulatory guidelines, but guidelines for design agencies who might be unfamiliar with the process or who could have a better structure to provide internships that are worthwhile for graduates, and also that they can get the most out of a graduate too.

That wraps up. The last question, which is I know you're really involved with graduate education and early career learning. What do you think are the most important aspects of graduate transition both for graduates and also the design industry? Maybe it could be specifically to you or it could be as a general rule.

Design Agency: Can you read out the question again, just so [inaudible 00:35:04] answer it?

Interviewer: What do you think are the most important aspects of graduate transition? This could either be for the graduate or the design [inaudible 00:35:13]?

Design Agency: Graduate transition, so for the graduate. For the graduate, I guess, so if I think about if I had a graduate come into us for, say, a month on a placement, I'd want them to leave thinking, "Graphic design's a fantastic job. I want to carry on." I guess that would be probably my number one, because I've seen, I've had people come in on a school placement and then gone on, gone to university …

Interviewer: To go to the university.

Design Agency: … because they've enjoyed it so much. I think that's great. That's what I'd really want. I'd want them to think, okay, it could be a good career. Sometimes you don't know when you're in university and so I think you almost … To go in and then see it, and I think this is how it could work for you, but also recognize that and maybe to try and get a little bit of an understanding that some people might study graphic design but might not end up being a graphic designer for the rest of their career, and understand [inaudible 00:36:32] that degree or that learning can take you on into different way, different career paths. I think that's really good.

I think it's good for them to make the transition in terms of having contacts. If a graduate goes in and spends a month, use that time to ask as many questions and get as many contacts as you possibly can. It's a fantastic opportunity to sit there and say, "Who can I go and see next? Who do you recommend? Who's good? Who's not so good? Why are they good? Why are they not so good?" Really, really ask the question, and that's why it's a wonderful opportunity while you're working

[inaudible 00:37:21] suggest to learn, and just learn on the job. The sorts of things where some university courses, I would say, are far more academic and are less …

The ones that are perhaps more academic and you get students or graduates coming in who haven't got a real understanding of what it's like in a design studio, and the practicalities of being in a design studio, if they can learn in that month, okay, here are some of the basics you've got to have in place, if they can learn some of those, it will help them get their next role and their next …

Interviewer: It's almost like doing some almost work placements while they're at university so they build up a picture before they graduate rather than being thrown into the industry at the end and having not a very clear understanding of what they might be doing.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think that design agencies need to be more understanding that graduates are often, although you were saying that they should be really getting out there and asking questions, it takes a particular type of person to do that and also the studio to respond to them, and some people end up in either situation where it's quite a shy graduate and quite a design agency that almost ignore them?

Design Agency: Yeah. There can be that. I totally hear what you're saying about that. We've had people in here who are very shy and who aren't sure about … You just need to encourage them and try and bring that out. I guess really the agency needs to question why are they taking on the placement, because if you take on the placement with the acknowledgment that it's going to be good for the graduate, because I didn't go on many design placements when I was their age, and I think it would have been … I would have probably enjoyed it.

Interviewer: Quite liked it.

Design Agency: I did one, but I think it would have been good to have done some more. Why are you taking them on as a design studio? I think you take them on because they've got fresh ideas, new ideas, different way of looking at things. They're much younger, so that's a good thing. As I get older, it's much better that I get their point of view. I think it can be really healthy, and it's great having Chris' ideas floating around amongst our ideas and my ideas, and my ideas are going to be at a different level, and I have a different perspective because I'm older. He comes in with a much younger perspective, so that's really, really useful. If they've got a skill set, like Chris happens to be good at some of the design packages, so he's very useful, so he could be a very useful addition.

I would imagine some agencies might say, okay, I could get in a freelancer and pay them £25, £30 an hour, or I could get in a graduate, and they should be paying them. I'd imagine what happens is they are going to be paying them less, but at least they are paying them, and they won't be able to do it to the same level as a freelancer. If a freelancer has got 10 years of experience, they're going to approach a job, but there might be some jobs that they might think, "Oh, I could get in a graduate and they might be able to help me with that, and it won't cost me as much, but they will be learning." It's not the same level of job. I don't mean to say it's the same standard, but I need a certain standard and they could help me with that.

I think they can help in certain ways, but I think just the agency needs to acknowledge that they're not all going to be at the same standard. As I say, the thing that annoys me is when people stay for months and months and months desperate for a job. Many years ago I took someone on and she was lovely, and we needed a hand, and I said to her … I knew she was looking for a job, and I said to her, "I don't think you're right for us. I'd like to keep you on for a few months, but I probably won't take you on." She said, "I'd love to stay." I said, "That's fine, but you must realize that I won't be offering you a job at the end. I'll help you get another job." She stayed for about four or five months I think it was at the end. We

ended up getting her a really good job, and she ended up [crosstalk 00:42:03] and she's still in that same role.

Interviewer: She's still there.

Design Agency: She's still there. She was lovely, a fantastic team player, really good, but just not the person I was looking for.

Interviewer: Because she was great but not quite right, you were willing to help her out, so there is a knock-on effect [crosstalk 00:42:18].

Design Agency: Yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Interviewer: That sounds great. Actually, that's all the questions I have. Is there anything else that you wanted to add to ...?

Design Agency: No. I guess I'm just curious as to ... I know you can't necessarily go into names, but I just want to get a sense as part of your research how many are you seeing and ...?

Interviewer: I have been ... I'll turn this off now actually.

Design Agency: Yeah.

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD-MW

Interviewer:00:01   Ok, so how did this role come about and describe what happened when you got this position?

Graduate: 00:01   Bob did my portfolio review at university. So he came in, looked at my work. And

Interviewer:00:01   Was that towards the end of your degree.

Graduate: 00:28   That's more work because I went away and thought about it. What was working, what wasn't, what needed to be changed. Um, I also applied then to Workhouse is all about getting students into studio.

Interviewer:00:47   How do you find that quite interesting or was it...

Graduate: 00:51   It was a strange one because you like will, you were, not told what was happening, or what was going to happen to you. Just kind of give a brief synopsis of the whole thing. You're just thrown into it. Um, but yeah, it was quite useful, quite insightful. And so after that ended, um, we have a industry view at university. So when freshmen come in and look at your work and Bob was that again. That was like the day after Workhouse ended. So I spoke with him then and he looked at my work again, I had a look at all of that and some of the day after that I emailed him the right place, right time

Interviewer:01:37   You kept popping up basically. Obviously you also did some of your own initiation and emailed him and he had a role that.

Graduate: 01:48   Yeah, he said you can go in and he said come in tomorrow, so I quit the internship I was doing.

Interviewer:01:56   D just tell them that you're really not going that well anyway.

Graduate: 01:59   It wasn't like it was a pretty great.

Interviewer:02:04   What's happened in your career so fast that as leaving university, is this how you mentioned like entering the design industry would be like or do you have any idea of what it would be like?

Graduate: 02:16   Somewhere good because you don't really know what you expect. You're just going to have a lot of cups of tea. You don't really do anything other than making people tea. I'm maybe doing all the brunt work, but because it's such a small studio, I've got a lot more control and I would say how was it a bigger studio.

Interviewer:02:36   Do you think that you would have to get a job so quickly you have to move somewhere else?

Graduate: 02:45   My trigger was just going home and not getting a job. I'm just not sure what that to do next. So yeah, it was quite lucky that I to find something quickly.

Interviewer:02:58   Did a lot of your friends ended up getting jobs or did you..

Graduate: 03:03   I think if you've got the right attitude, if you want a job in design the jobs are there. University makes it seem that there's nothing out there for you? In a way it's sort of seems like, oh, you got to go into this big wide world with what competition, which there is at this truth, and it's interesting.

Interviewer:03:28   But you imagined that you knew that you were going to just have to get out there and it was part of what you had to work for it and so you just, you know, carried on meeting people, emailing and things like that...

Graduate:	03:41	All my friends have got jobs are people who are persistent, proactive.
Interviewer:	03:46	None of them sat back and waited for the job or they didn't apply online and email.
Graduate:	03:46	No.
Interviewer:	03:53	OK, so what were your expectations when you started here? Of this rolr? I mean, I know you started as an intern, so were you at just kind of coming along to see what would happen?
Graduate:	04:04	Is even stranger only really offered a week and a half and there was must be someone else coming in and do an internship after I did mine, so I'd been fitted into that slot. So my expectations were doing very small things but just getting a flavor for what studios like. So the first thing I've got set was to make a booklet about the whole Workhouse weekend, so I started doing, so that was sort of like a Workhouse student being brought doing that on during the week and a half and shake your hands and say goodbye, yeah, that'll be great. And then just kept on going and he just week by week I stayed on and it got so the week before I was going back home and Bob offered me a full time position.
Interviewer:	04:04	So until then you just kept coming in each week, week to week?
Graduate:	05:04	I just got to the Friday and he said I'll see you next week instead of just kept on coming back to work. Sort of became more work than you would expect from the studio, rather than just the small task kind of giving you a job. The Workhouse on it wasn't a real job was at a set job, it was so just like you here for so will keep you going for a while.
Interviewer:	05:32	So it started to become more grounded in reality. After awhile it started to feel like your starting to become part of the team and then you got offered a full-time job, which you took obviously. So how has the role gone since that turned to junior designer role and is it how you imagined a junior designer role to be?
Graduate:	05:53	It's. I think because I got taken on so quickly after university I was probably only here about six weeks before I got employed. I still feel like an intern. I didn't really like come back to it and it was different work, it was the same work, so slowly gets in to a bit more of this and that and get a bit more control. So it's not a jump. It's not like a leap. It's a soft transition I guess.
Interviewer:	06:21	So you feel like each stage is going to naturally progress to the next day. You kind of going along and it's good. It was, I wasn't quite sure what I was mentioning anyways. So it seems to be going in the right direction, so obviously, yeah, you happy about it anyway. So I guess the main point is questions are to talk about how you feel like you're learning as a designer and also how the design agency is helping you. So how do you feel the design agency is helping you develop as a designer? I guess develop your learning as a designer?
Graduate:	07:05	So would do several outside of work activities. Several lectures, things like that. So that's quite helpful in terms of just seeing people's work, their experiences. I guess in work there's just so many small things. University teaches you a lots of things and not a lot of things as well - but it's like the small things, the minute details like about just sending things of to print. Not things I've never really experienced because I didn't to print a thousand of. Those sorts of things are probably where I learned the most. I felt well rounded in the things I knew. So you felt quite confident in saying no one else has something to do this. So I kind of was OK on that sort of front. I think you just slowly learn things as you need it.
Interviewer:	08:00	Yeah. So in the studio on a day to day basis that you, do you think you're learning as you go along from being in the studio or do you think certain people are taking you aside and helping you out or it's not quite like that?

Graduate: 08:15   Well no because sometimes it depends on what we're working on. So we've done like a calendar recently and that involved a lot of colours. At university I did things in black and white and just like the easiest colours I could get printed by the day before it needed to be handed in, but now it's like this matters and it's got to look the exact way and I got pulled aside and told 'This is how we do these colours, what you use, how you do it.'

Interviewer:08:48   So as you do a project your learning? Specifically for each project and that's increasing your ability as a designer?

Graduate: 08:54   But then there are projects were perhaps I just know what to do anyway because I can just do it. It depends on the project.

Graduate: 09:03   And how do you think that learning at work could be improved or - I'm not saying that it's wrong - but how do you think that it could be developed for the work? Do you feel confident that as a designer now or do you feel like you need to have more help in being developed further?

Graduate: 09:22   I feel relatively confident. I think it was like when I just need what I need to ask something I just ask it. I don't really feel afraid.

Interviewer:09:32   So it's an environment where you can ask and you're not going to be made to look like a fool or anything like that?

Graduate: 09:47   Yes. I think because is such a strange feeling because until they come along I don't know what I need to know.

Interviewer:10:06   So what skills would be most useful to you in the design agency? And I'm not necessarily talking about software skills and design skills. What general skills - could be the things that you've learnt at university. It could be personal skills, it could be previous experience, it could be design skills. What that's been really important that you found that's been really useful?

Graduate: 10:30   I think. Well, I mean there's the obvious ones like creative thinking, communication, got to be able to communicate the brand or the concept to be able to communicate with the audience or who you are working with in the studio. You've got to kind of be able to tell people your ideas and show them in a way it's true to how you think they are. Then there are odd ones, but because we're such a small studio, we don't have copywriters so the writing is done in house which isn't something I've never had to do before. So in a way writing would be a good skill to have. I don't feel particularly confident because I'm not a writer. It's not something that you've never focused on the. No, but there is some thing designerly about it comes quite naturally so it's quite good at coming up.

Graduate: 11:28   Yeah, I know what you mean. I guess maybe if you in the future you might feel more confident at it, but right now it feels like a bit of a leap and

Interviewer:11:28   So in terms of your personality has this helped you?

Graduate: 11:46   Yeah. I think people who like graphics and design in general and people who were willing to put themselves out and go for it tend to succeed more.

Interviewer:12:07   How have you supported your own development. While you may not haven't sat down and made a plan yourself, in your own head you've probably thought about it, what am I doing? What can I do? Can I do to help myself out? How do I get ahead? I wonder if you're doing anything to help that side of things?

Graduate: 12:52   I've always read quite a bit and studied quite a bit of graphics still outside in my own personal time. Just because I'm interested in it, I'm normally pretty clued up about what's happening around me and whats going on. In that respect I feel like I'm fine. Besides just reading stuff, I don't really do anything else.

Interviewer:	12:57	Do you ever have any friends or colleagues from university that you still talk to and network with?
Graduate:	13:22	Yeah I've got a few friends from university. They are in the area, in the industry around Bath, I don't really network with them. We talk a little bit of work, but it's mostly to not talk about work. Networking is always better when you searching for a job.
Interviewer:	13:40	So you mentioned that most of your learning is taking place at work, but you have been to some talks and things like that, but do you think that you need to do any other external courses or anything like that? Do you want your learning to take place outside of the workplace as well or are just quite happy just working here and just learn what it was happening here?
Graduate:	14:06	I mean like workshops and things like quite nice to do when you grow and you kind of learn something new from those experiences. They have done a few workshops before when I wasn't here. Yeah, there's a few things that might be nice to learn. It's a lot of things just about setting up documents and doing stuff the boring stuff that no one ever taught me about thats so important to teach me, but no one does.
Interviewer:	14:37	You've just got to learn these things through watching other people?
Graduate:	14:42	Yeah, I mean we get a freelancer and who does that sort of stuff. That's essentially his job, setting up these documents and that's his thing, so when he comes along I go over and to look over his shoulder
Interviewer:	14:54	Just to kind of ask people and quiz them about it?
Graduate:	14:57	Because it's such an environment where you know its open. Bob's very open to just learning something new.
Interviewer:	15:17	What do you do any courses for accreditation or do you feel that now that you have been to university, you're not really that keen on formal education? Even if it was just course like?
Graduate:	15:33	Yum, I don't know, depends. I feel like a Masters or some sort of higher degree I kind of respect and think is quite a good thing. It's about the education side. How many design sort of things you can do - I don't know.
Interviewer:	15:53	I think most people who have got a very specific thing that I look at, so if you had a particular interest?
Graduate:	16:00	I've always pondered the idea of a Masters. I quite like the actual learning about art and design sort of thinking about stuff for a longer period of time.
Interviewer:	16:17	Maybe when you've worked for a while it might be different. Um, and so could you tell me something that's happened since you've been here that was a real highlight that made you kind of go, that was amazing or that was really cool, like I really have done that or that's made me love this job loads or something.
Graduate:	16:56	My memory is all broken a bit! A few branded projects where like you kind of see out in the real world thats always quite nice, like when you see a billboard you did, and you say I did that or I was involved with also you.
Interviewer:	17:10	When you go back to work and does it make you feel more positive about work or does is it just a bit of in the moment thing?
Graduate:	17:20	Asking such difficult questions. Uh, I think much more of an in the moment thing, but I mean I'm quite happy as a day to day basis, so it's not really a problem there anyway. It is encouraging that you're kind of done something

and it's out there. I think the respect of people around me anyway, just the most encouraging thing when someone goes 'I like that'.

Interviewer:17:54   Almost your colleagues getting - not approval - but when they say something about your work that was really good

Graduate: 18:00   Knowing your doing it right is probably the most encouraging thing.

Interviewer:18:01   Yeah, definitely. And they would tell you things like that and that's been you kind of, I don't know if you've seen a learning chart, those types of things would make you feel more positive about your role, positive about your job and about carrying on. I know that this is really over analyzing, you know, you probably don't think like that, but at the same time properly in the back of your head, psychologically it's happening. On the flip side, any point have you gone 'I'm really out of my depth', 'I'm really freaking out' or 'this has gone really badly and I don't know how to deal with it.'

Graduate: 18:48   Probably everyday internally, but not externally. I think. I think the first, first month was difficult because you go from university which was different. I mean, you've given like three months on a project and your just sent off. You don't have to show anythings for a week. And here, you're given something at 12:00 and it needs to be done by 3:00 and it needs to be off by 4:00.

Interviewer:19:12   Do you feel 'I just think I can't do this?'

Graduate: 19:25   Yeah, I'm just used to lying in bed, sitting around talking away and working away when I'm in the mood. It's quite hard to force creativity into my ideas and I think that's been the hardest thing to do. My idea used to come when I was asleep or almost asleep. I think that's been the most difficult thing... notes on my phone.

Interviewer:19:41   So your saying basically that when you first entered, when you left the university and started here, it was a shock, not in terms of kind of... in terms of your lifestyle and working and everything that you hadn't really worked full time before.

Graduate: 20:00   I had sort of internship before. I've worked before to varying degrees of success.

Interviewer:20:05   It wasn't I guess career focused? That's not your career?

Graduate: 20:11   Yeah, and I think because you did an internship, you almost want a job at the end of it. But nothing is guaranteed. so you're trying to prove yourself. There's also all these different factors of not knowing what your doing fully, having to change yourself and learn all these new things, so there's several levels of pressure.

Graduate: 20:33   Its quite an overload in terms of things happening in your life at the same time?

Interviewer:20:39   I mean, I could've been the one that made all the problems that's not to do with anyone else.

Interviewer:20:45   I mean its a lot of things happening. Most people don't have to deal with layers of things happening in their life like that. There's only a few points in people's lives when that happens and I would say leaving university is one of those times. You don't know where you're living, you don't know if you'll be paid, so there's a lot of things happening. Also having to deal with starting in a place and you're not sure what the deal is and you're trying to prove yourself so you've got a lot of stuff happening and it is quite an interesting time for graduates to deal with. Some people that don't deal with it very well and some people sail through it and there people that looked like this dealing with it, but underneath there is just so much happening.

Interviewer:	21:43	When you did these internships, were happy to do internships and could you see the positives of internships? What have you seen disadvantages of doing internships?
Graduate:	21:54	I don't think, I've never gone to start applying jobs straight out of university it always was going to be internships, thats how I was going to start, but I feel that's because you don't, you know the working side of it. You kind of an internship, as much as the pressure was of trying to get a job and also a little much pressure because you're not paid the full salary not being expected to fall, junior sort knowledge, building up your knowledge and stuff, getting into the industry that way. My friends are still in doing internships. So they've been through several. So in theory they've got a wide variety of experiences from different places and they know what studios they like and what they don't like. I think with an internship you can kind of gauge what feels right and what doesn't feel right. So in that respect I think it's.... ar
Interviewer:	22:50	...that's an advantage? So you see internships as something that is quite a useful tool when leaving university to help you define what you want to do as a career.
Graduate:	23:01	So as long as I paid the most graduates these days, say that I wouldn't, I wouldn't do an internship, wasn't paid, but I was spending lots of graduates who also say straight after saying that they say except for if it was here, here, here.
Graduate:	23:20	Yeah. Well I mean there was, there was no talk of being paid a week and a half, so it was so like reading a half I'm period to the world about, you know, if it's just a handshake is after those few days and I can go back to Manchester and I can find something that you've got experience. So in that way I'm just helping myself if it doesn't work out, but it's a give and take. With what that is about parents and um, do you feel that you could have spoken up and asked any way? What would you always just split and just wait and see?
Interviewer:	24:15	So do you think the only disadvantage that intention is if people aren't paid or are there other disadvantages of intentions? So the paid from, I guess it's just a fun switch because you're working for someone, for instance, you've got people sleeping, people surface and also it's just eating nothing. But would there be any other disadvantages do you think? Doing intention? Uh, I think you do a lot of work, don't. It all depends on where you're, where you are. Some people can probably done mobile, it should be doing email, that would be tonight's and taking them on to do the work of someone who should be overworked.
Graduate:	25:43	So every voice feels like I'm not being exploited perhaps that, that they're being taken advantage of. That internship could have actually been a job rather than intention, but essentially internships as seen as a positive thing for graduates, for the fact that they can try things out and make decisions about your future career. It's almost like you don't freeze university and this is your final calls. So did you do any work placements at university now? Previous years to do some soul sick India? We know we had people come in and talk to us, solve things like that. I think there was an opportunity for you to do two years of junior year in industry. They come back for your final year, which I, one person did for me to write to edit a year onto the. Yeah. With. Do you think it would help to. It will be of use if he had done a work placement. That was at least a decent links I guess. I mean he took a good couple of weeks or something. Who would've been good? I mean the University of active almost for two weeks a month, but yeah, I mean I could've gone off on my own back door. Yeah. People do it now and I just never did. Not really sure to be honest, to be honest. Um, is there anything extra that you had said that what you think might be helpful for graduates when they leave university or advice and first roles? Worst person to give advice. Just don't take it too seriously. Take it seriously enough to play professional, but sometimes you can pressure yourself. Just little insight as an arboretum. Yeah. No one else is looking at it as much as that seems fair enough. All right.

INTERVIEW TWO: DA-MW

Interviewer: 01:07   So since I spoke to you in December, how do you think Chris has been developing in his role?

Design Agency: 01:32   A little more confident. Yeah, I think being proactive, which perhaps he wasn't doing before. A lot of the things I said before are sort of appropriate and I think that's probably the thing I'm noticing a little bit more. I said something this mornings and he acted upon it without any further discussion, so that's nice to see.

Interviewer: 02:08   Yeah, so he's being slightly - because of his confidence rising - being more proactive about the things that he's doing in the workplace. So does that mean that your expectations of Chris are still being meet or being exceeded because of this, this. Do you think that that progression is about right?

Design Agency: 02:32   Yeah, that's about what I would have expected, yes.

Interviewer: 02:35   Cool and in the last few months has there been a particular standout moment that you thought that was a really big leap or an amazing thing that you did? I felt that that was something that really stood out for him in terms of his work or perhaps even an incident.

Design Agency: 03:15   Quite possibly, nothing that immediately springs to mind. I guess there's been some. There's one thing we're trying to do with out clients, nothing we have done before he's doing. Its quite technical, were using new software packages. He's been using it and it's been going very smoothly. He's been very confident about it and that's helped me and it was something different for the studio. Although it was based on the knowledge particular software package that helped us do or going to help us do some stuff we haven't done before. So in the last three months thats something I've been really pleased with.

Interviewer: 04:22   And did he get that job because, do you think you internally would have you given him that job because it felt like he would be the person that would be able to take on new that new software and things, or was it actually just a coincidence?

Design Agency: 04:42   I don't know if anybody else could have done it

Interviewer: 04:50   Yes. Okay. And been an on the flip side of it, has there been something that's um, has there been any times where you've had to reassess what Chris is doing where you've kind of pulled back a little bit because things haven't been going as well as you expected him to be doing and you've had to not necessarily have a talk to him but maybe reassess how his progress or how he's working within the workplace is going?

Design Agency: 05:43   Nothing really that I've noticed. Apart from things that I regularly see from people at that sort of level.

Interviewer: 05:58   So it's not an individual issues and so it's just the fact that junior designers often need a little bit more support and a little bit more guidance around certain areas. So as it's not him in particular, it's just the symptom of being at that level within the industry. So they still learning.

Design Agency: 06:21   Exactly. Right.

Interviewer: 06:24   Okay, cool. I imagine will take quite a bit longer.

Design Agency: 06:28   General support I guess.

Interviewer:	06:28	Yeah. So, um…
Design Agency:	06:42	Actually, I have booked in some more one-to-ones with him, so he has more of these.
Interviewer:	06:45	Yeah. Okay, good.
Design Agency:	07:08	I think he could work on communication. There is too much email and not enough on the phone. I think this is a general trend,
Interviewer:	07:14	so it's just um, it could be a generational thing, but also, um, the fact that client still value being taught it directly rather than, I guess a lot of things can get lost in translation on email as well.
Design Agency:	07:32	Yeah. Sometimes you get an answer quicker on the phone. It is a generational thing. Well, because people just don't pick up the phone. People hide behind email.
Interviewer:	07:54	It's not always appreciated sometimes! So. Yeah. Um, and so in both of the examples, you gave me were quite general because obviously it sounds like you're generally happy and there's nothing kind of extremely wrong or, and Chris is developing at the rate you want him to, but how have you, um, how, when these things happen, do you help or give feedback to Chris to help him develop learning so that he can take these cues, so if he does something well he gest told he's doing something well, if he's needs to correct or get back on a different path. Is this communicated to him?
Design Agency:	08:38	I'm probably not the best person to tell you that!
Interviewer:	08:49	Ok.
Design Agency:	08:54	Whether I do as much as I should, I don't know. But I try to.
Interviewer:	08:57	It seems fair enough. And I guess in the next one is, how does Chris, have you noticed how he reacts and, um, a supports design development when he's experiencing positives and negatives in the workflow? Does he, does he seem to learn from experiences as well?
Design Agency:	09:36	I don't know to be honest with you. I couldn't say.
Interviewer:	09:40	It's not apparent to you?
Design Agency:	09:53	When I look back over the previous week and seen he's done it and acted on it. So I guess that hopefully that is building on his confidence.
Interviewer:	10:05	Yep. No, that's fine. And uh, how do you, um, how do you imagine his role developing further and say the next kind of six months to a year within Mytton Williams?
Design Agency:	10:25	Probably a little bit more independence. A bit more liaising with the clients.
Interviewer:	10:42	So this is essentially just building on the skills that you're encouraging him - what he's been building on and you're encouraging him - even more so all these elements are really important as a designer to have and especially because obviously it's client based, so…
Design Agency:	11:12	It's more to do with whether they are soft skills or the hard skills. Recently I was at a breakfast meeting, people were talking about going from college or university into employment and um, the thing that everybody

said was that they wanted to see on top of, bearing in mind this is what people want to see on top of what you expect the hard skills university to learn, whatever you expect to a certain level. But the thing that makes the differences is often the soft skills. So I guess building labels and um, you know, there he has some particular passions around design aspects. Typography for example. If someone was really good at one thing, and not so good at another. If you have a passion for one thing, and not another area.

Interviewer:	12:10	Yeah.
Design Agency:	12:10	So rather than saying we need to build up what he is good at, I always say we, you could, if you really study, you don't have to be good at everything. We need a go to person for that particular skill. So I hope I'd like to encourage more of that, in that particular area. I know and hopefully the areas he's not so keen on, I can help him develop those other areas.
Interviewer:	13:12	And so generally the soft skills that you are wanting him to build up, is it essentially meaning that his design skills you're relatively happy with in terms of a junior designer?
Design Agency:	13:26	Yeah, yeah. There are some areas that need developing, but generally you would expect how he's performing at this level.
Interviewer:	13:37	Okay. So he's on target in that way? Great.
Design Agency:	13:46	I'm generally very happy.
Interviewer:	13:48	Great, that's really good. And I know Chris obviously has come to you with a particular set of skills and um, and you were just talking about his areas that he is particularly passionate about, but what skills whether the harder or softer skills, if you found to be the most useful over the last few months or even beyond that since he started working for you? Yeah. Well, I mean, what's really stood out that you have thought that's probably what makes Chris really a person that we value. It's because of those skills. What are they? Is it a particular skill that he stands out for us?
Design Agency:	14:28	Just gets on with it. Good team player. And that's a real bonus. You ask him to do something and he does it. Yeah. So that's pretty helpful. He really knows his software programmes, and that's very useful asset. Very good. Very, very good. These skills are what some of the other designers don't have. Good eye for typography.
Interviewer:	15:38	If you could reflect on when Christopher started with you, how could you tell me how his learning and development has gone do you think overall? I mean, I know he hasn't been the greatest scheme of things. He hasn't been with you for a long time, but have you seen that learning and development? If you compare now to then can you, I know that obviously on a day to day basis it's quite slow, but just reflecting back on that starting point.
Design Agency:	16:28	Yum, not quite a year, which is incredible.
Interviewer:	16:30	I bet it doesn't feel like that at all?
Design Agency:	16:36	I'm just trying to think. Yeah, I mean I think he been developing at a faster speed compared to eight months ago. He's' having an opinion on stuff, being more proactive. He's still making the tea. That's good.
Interviewer:	17:16	Yeah. Yeah, definitely! So looking to the future then, what are your goals and aims for Chris in the future whether this might be like, you know, you

		might have been, I don't know, a three month plan or a six or a year plan, but do you have anything that you've discussed with Chris? Do you have any plans for how he's developing over a certain amount time?
Design Agency:	17:53	I try and have reasonably regularly, so about three times a year and we have a catch up, and I do that with everyone, so I can't remember off the top of my, you know, when I sit and go through a number of things and say these are probably the things I've already mentioned to you over the next six months to a year. We have another one due. I'll be going through those same thing because I can point certain things out. And that's for me to say if certain things went well or whether you need to develop areas and what you need to help you develop those particular areas.
Interviewer:	18:45	So it was kind of a collaborative effort on how you can get to the next stage as well. So it's not just you telling him what to do. It's a give and take situation.
Design Agency:	18:55	Yep.
Interviewer:	18:56	Okay. And um, that's really all about Chris. Um, but do you think overall the design industry have a responsibility to help graduates when they leave university? And how, what are the types of things that you imagined they could or should be doing to help graduates in their first roles?
Design Agency:	19:25	Now there's a question. So the reason I say that because, when were you down? Did I mention Workhouse before?
Interviewer:	19:31	You did.
Design Agency:	19:36	Yes. So we were running that again, are from the perspective of being slightly frustrated with some of the students and graduates. Who perhaps didn't have all the skills. All those skills we would be hoping that would come from University.
Interviewer:	20:02	And that is that, um, specific things or is it actually overall like a soft or hard skills?
Design Agency:	20:12	Both. So I guess, yeah. So I guess we would expect, you know Chris is very good and what you would expect to see, in design thinking, be able to answer a brief. So you see that all the time. I guess this is practice and design industry. Anything can help him. So are they work ready? I hear that, that. So I guess it's more than understanding, even if they can't do it, the process of how do you go through and find a design solution, it and how you collaborate with your team, with the client, managing client's expectations, how you sort of come up with it and then evaluate ideas within the studio, know you put forward opinions and ideas and then discussing with, you know, your mates and your team might select one or two ideas to go forward. How do you get involved with that. How would you put forward the presentation? How do you put forward your argument? How do you put through a lot of the things that. Um, you know, you could argue not about the design stuff that goes around the design bit helps if you might sell and get the project running through to its conclusion. Um, so yeah, I'm trying to sort of summarise, but that's what I think design industry, I guess it can come through in terms of doing things like these Workhouse things which are which are very much small specific workshop or small specific event, but it could also be via placements and even if there are any for week you sit there and go, I see what goes on and I think it's just getting involved with following and reading up about design. A lot of designer don't ready design books and stuff about designing. They might look at Instagram, follow their latest design, but they're not reading and understanding design, so mean there's a bit of that that can go on. Just talking to the design industry, just talking to people and going to events and trying to sort of get involved

with things like that. But for, I think some of them do get involved but a lot don't.

Design Agency: 23:06   Yes. They are quite varied. I think recently I saw there was a Sydney design agency in Australia and they are running a placement or an internship that they're doing. I think this is not university. No, no, it's not frost, but it is. Oh, sorry, I'm just having to look it up. It's small. There's not a huge agency but they are running a place called this as not a university and it's kind of like a.

Design Agency: 23:58   Oh,

Interviewer: 24:01   Sorry. Here we go. Essentially they're going to go through a lot of the things that you talked about.

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD-MW

Interviewer: 00:05　Right, so basically I'm just gonna run through a few basic questions. Probably won't take as long as last time, but um, yeah. How has your role been going since we last talked in December?

Graduate:　00:30　Yeah, it's been similar, there's been a few projects I've been taking the lead on and taking the projects on, my own thing, rather than someone else's. It's slowly progressing, slowly getting there.

Interviewer: 00:46　And do you think that as a job and your development have your expectations been met of that role and development?

Graduate:　00:58　Yeah, I guess because when I came in there was given so much control to start of with, there hasn't been a huge amount of progression. I started of with a lot of freedom and control. As I'm starting to get my own projects I'm getting more control over that sort of thing, so yeah, it's progressing, yeah.

Interviewer: 01:26　Did you feel that because you've got so much responsibility straightaway that you almost had to catch up with yourself or you did you actually feel okay about it?

Graduate:　01:36　It was pretty good to start of with. But there were times that I felt a bit out of my depth.

Interviewer: 01:43　So you felt like you've grown probably within the responsibilities that you've got.

Graduate:　01:51　I think there were probably a lot of mistakes made when I first started. Yeah. I don't tend to make now.

Interviewer: 01:54　So you identified certain areas where you've gone 'yes, I'm okay with it now'. Okay. And how have you been supported in your learning since December?

Graduate:　02:31　Still similar. Bob's quite open to giving me training in stuff I want to, like motion graphics. Still attending a lot of lectures and events like that, so that's good. I'm quite into design publications. It's all steadily progressive.

Interviewer: 02:47　Has there been anything that you've done yourself to support your learning and development since December?

Graduate:　02:57　My usual reading design blogs and things like that - a constantly stream really.

Interviewer: 03:08　So you're keeping up to date with what's happening in the design industry and does, does that make you feel more confident about design or does it just make you feel like you're aware of what's going on and you're not isolated from it.

Graduate:　03:08　Yeah, it just gives me a good gauge on what people are thinking, current trends and what people are finding interesting or what's current.

Interviewer: 03:38　Yeah. You don't want to be designing a website based on ideas for a few years ago. I guess it's just noticing what's happening I guess, isn't it? And can you tell me since December has there been anything that's happened to you that you just thought at work that you thought I did really well there? Well that went really well that I think I nailed it or something like that. We're just really pleased with your own development or work

Graduate:　03:38　Yeah I took the helm of the design of one of our biggest clients, a big university and designed a prospectus and the campaign material. There were bits that I wasn't happy about it...

Interviewer:	04:52	How did you feel about, what did you learn from that experience? So some of the things that you didn't feel so well, could you have changed that.
Graduate:	05:08	Yeah. I think I was a bit timid to assert myself.
Interviewer:	05:11	Is that with the clients or internally?
Graduate:	05:11	Uh, possibly more internally. I think it's out of my control, maybe I'.m too young
Interviewer:	05:42	And has there been something over the last few months where you've witnessed something hasn't gone as well as you expected and you thought this isn't going well or what have you done to improve it?
Graduate:	05:42	As before, it was something I wasn't happy about, it was out of my control. I could assert myself more it might not have turned out the way it did.
Interviewer:	06:35	It was the earlier stage that made you think if I, if I actually spoke out or was it a bit more assertive, I could actually changed it?
Graduate:	06:35	Yeah
Interviewer:	06:43	And so you used that experience later in the project to get the second half going a bit more in the way that you wanted it to happen?
Graduate:	06:43	Yeah.
Interviewer:	06:53	And how do you feel about Bob and the general team at Mytton Williams? How are they helping you learn and develop skills on the job?
Graduate:	06:53	I'm picking things up along the way and sometimes I'm actually teaching them new things. A lot of it is just taking in new things. Sometimes you see things you really like and you sort of absorb that rather than being sat down and told what to do .
Interviewer:	07:45	So your noticing and picking things up on the way? If you're really interested in something specific, would you ask as well, or are you happy looking and learning?
Graduate:	07:45	Yeah, I tend to ask.
Interviewer:	07:59	And is there anything else that could happen at work that would help your learning - say in a really casual way or, a very formal way or, something else?
Graduate:	07:59	Maybe. Sometimes I think no one in the studio can really help with some things, and I would need to go somewhere else to learn that. It would need to be outsourced that, like a different route of learning.
Interviewer:	08:31	Are you talking about software or something similar to that?
Graduate:	08:33	Yeah, I'm interested how to do that.
Interviewer:	08:38	Sure. Okay. And how do you imagine your role will develop further, say in the next six months to a year while here.
Graduate:	08:38	I hope to take on more projects of my own and have more free rein. Working with clients without having to go through several channels of people, which I'm still sort of this stage, but it would be nice to start having my own projects.

Interviewer:	09:13	Yeah. But are you getting to do any of your own projects at the moment or are you, will they just smaller ones?
Graduate:	09:13	Ah there is a mixture of projects at the moment. Group projects, and my projects.
Interviewer:	09:25	Yeah. And do you feel like they're kind of slowly cutting the ties, and you're get more and more responsibility or do you feel that...
Graduate:	09:25	It depends what projects. If it's pure concepts, its different.
Interviewer:	09:41	Right. So it depends on the process before the job actually, depending on what happens. Okay. I asked this last time but I'm going to ask it again, but what skills do you have, or you think you've got, have turned out to be really useful within the workplace. What have you bought that has been really useful for the business?
Graduate:	09:41	My knowledge about using software, and my knowledge of typography and interest in that. Its been useful in art working and things. And creating work that is typography-led.
Interviewer:	10:51	And does it also mean that you're, you feel like a bit of a specialist in that area within the team or you're the go-to person.
Graduate:	11:02	Sure. It just seems to be the thing on demand. Considering that we've done something purely typographic, the other week I was given that job.
Interviewer:	11:27	It's been identified as a skill, cool. What are your goals and aims for the near future and I'm talking about, you know, it could be three months, six months, a year...
Graduate:	11:27	Just more projects that are mine and I can get on and do.
Interviewer:	12:05	So you're quite looking forward to that. That's actually something you really want? I know I talked to you in December, but in that time have you thought, did that make you think a little bit more about learning or did you not really think about it at all - just be truthful? It's fine
Graduate:	12:05	I'm quite comfortable with the level of knowledge that I have. Um, still keep up to date to books and design blogs. In terms of skills, it would be nice to learn a bit more.
Interviewer:	12:53	Are you talking about design skills or other skills like presenting or, I guess soft skills.
Graduate:	12:53	Yeah I think both would be good. Presenting is not really done by the juniors. So not really interacting with clients like that.
Interviewer:	13:22	And in terms of the design industry as a whole, do you think they have any responsibility to graduates to help them in, they kind of like early career, possibly their first year in the industry?
Graduate:	13:22	In terms of further education?
Interviewer:	13:43	In terms of... just obviously most people are learning on the job at that point. So it would be, like yourself, how does the design industry pass on that knowledge to you? Do you think we should have any responsibility to help recent graduates or learn in the workplace or generally offer it doesn't need to be formal. I would imagine it's almost in the way you're experiencing it, which is quite informal.

Graduate: 13:43 Yeah. I think any self-respecting design agency should offer jobs and the ability to learn. I guess its hard, because people to have learned it for three years at university and you're expected to be okay. It's difficult.

Interviewer: 14:56 Do you have any advice for graduates coming up about, who are graduating soon, I guess, about entering the design industry.

Graduate: 15:19 Don't be so scared. It can seem very scary because people expect so much of you. Even if your doing an internship don't necessarily don't expect anything, just been the best you can be, create they way they create, work the way they work, and that way they'll see the best of you.

Interviewer: 15:49 Okay. Well that's all the questions. I actually have so afraid go back to work. I think we said our goodbyes, so it's fine to say if you could just say thank you again and thank you very much for letting me interview you as well is really helpful and good luck with everything.

INTERVIEW ONE: DA-TX

Interviewer: Okay. So, the junior designers you've got in at the moment, are there four of them?

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: And, they are all graduates from 2017, or are they a mixture?

Design Agency: Yes. Yeah, so we've got two from Falmouth University, one from UWE, which is University of the West of England, Bristol, and fourth from Norwich.

Interviewer: Okay. Cool. And, how did you find these people from the universities?

Design Agency: So, I run the placements program. So, we have adverts on our website, people to send in portfolios. That's the main way we look. But then last year, we had a bit of a recruitment drive because we wanted more juniors.

Design Agency: So, it was essentially me, and a few others, going out to universities to do talks and workshops. Visit interview shows, going to D&AD New Blood, where everybody has their stands, and that kind-of stuff, and basically just scouting them out pretty much. Portfolio reviews as well. They were actually really good, just going out to unis and doing those.

Design Agency: So that's really how we found three ... Oh, sorry, two of them. No, three of them. Sorry. And then we also ran a one day workshop in Falmouth, set a brief, and that's how we got Andrew. One of the guys took part on the day, didn't win the brief. But, then we got him in for a chat and portfolio review in the studio. And then based on his personality, more than anything really. He's just quite smart.

Design Agency: And then Lily, from UWE, she was part of the West Wing Design Forum, which has got body in Bristol. She was part of the buddy scheme. So Pete, one of our senior designers, was her buddy. So you can kinda get buddied up with someone in the agency. Know it's not really to do with the agency. It's just about encouragement and advice from someone in the industry so there's no real pressure to get them in for anything.

Interviewer: So it's not potentially a job based match.

Design Agency: No, no.

Interviewer: It's just like an industry help person or mentor.

Design Agency: Exactly. I think they paired up ... I think two guys are doing it this year from our studio. I think they can get paired up with freelancers or digital or a range of different things. Then she came in for a chat after that and really impressed us with her stuff so that actually did end up ... That happened anyway.

Design Agency: Then they all came on, two week placements. As trial placements because we wanted to get lots of people in. Then it pressed from there really and then we offered jobs. Yeah.

Interviewer: That sounds great. So did they all do a two week trial placement before they were given a job, or did they do internships that possibly were-

Design Agency: They did. So we usually do four week paid internships. But because the nature of last year and wanting to get a lot of people in. And not wanting to miss out on people, because it's quite a long process. We offered some people jobs and they went to London. We wanted to get people in.

Design Agency: We decided, let's do two weeks for them to get a flavor of it, and then because we think the students as well, it's good for them to get to as many places as possible so it works for them. It gives a short two week, getting paid to get placement.

Design Agency: Yeah, so they all ended up doing two weeks. I think all of them after the two weeks got offered a job on the last day almost.

Interviewer: Okay.

Design Agency: I think. It was a case of go away and think about it. They all just impressed. I think once we got one, then two, then it was like, yep, right. Let's some more in. They're all really great.

Interviewer: It's really good news.

Interviewer: How are they all going? You obviously had expectations of them when they started. Are your expectations being met in their roles?

Design Agency: I think so. It's good that they've all come in at the same time. I think that's really helped them, because we've never really had four juniors. When I started there was two others. Then one guy got promoted. One guy since changed his role to motion design, so I was the only junior for a while.

Design Agency: So I think it's good that they've teamed up and want to work together. And their eagerness to learn I think is the main thing that's impressing everyone at the minute. They started ... They put forward a plan to do lunch time sessions where you can basically hire them out for an hour. Put them on any project for an hour, and they just think about it and come back with a few scribbles which is amazing.

Interviewer: They come up with it themselves.

Design Agency: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's an initiative they've done. I think it's working pretty well. There's obviously been a few hiccups in the more technical side of things. Which there always is when I think, you're starting out. It's working on big artwork files and big projects. We work on a lot of global brands, a lot of packaging and portfolios. Getting their head around that kind of stuff. That's taken a bit of work for all of them, but I think that's to be expected from anyone coming into an agency.

Interviewer: So it's not their design skills so much. It's more the functionality of working life that they wouldn't have been exposed to.

Design Agency: Yeah, yeah. Definitely. And just the size and scale of a project. You're at uni and you're your own client really, and you're working on one. If you're doing packaging, you do one packaging design. You come into here where we have projects where it's thirty different skews and different flavors and all that kind of stuff. So the scale of everything is just huge.

Interviewer: It's enormous.

Design Agency: So I think that's been a learning curve.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Design Agency: But we're all about ideas and concepts and they're all hitting the ground running on that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: So their design skills are being ... That area of skill set is being met.

Design Agency: Yeah, definitely. [inaudible 00:06:21]

Interviewer:	It's more just adapting to working life.
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	It's not been a problem. It's just that you've noticed that's the area they [inaudible 00:06:33] the most.
Design Agency:	And obviously the time scale thing. But they've all actually done really well at that, at managing projects. I think for a couple of them it's been frustrating at times, being on something for a week, then getting taken off it and it goes off to someone else in the studio. It's a bit ... I mean I'm struggling with it. It's not your project anymore. It's the studios and everybody's. You don't own any of it really. It can get passed on to the next person and completely change. I think that's a struggle a little bit to adapt to that, but it's not been a problem. It's just something-
Interviewer:	They're learning about.
Design Agency:	This is really different from university.
Interviewer:	Definitely. How do you think that as an agency you've been helping them support their learning and helped develop their learning since they've been here?
Design Agency:	So we do a few things actually. We have a pretty extensive PDR process. Personal review process. Everyone has a line manager. When you come into the business, you have a three month review.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Design Agency:	Like a probation period and at the end of that you'll set goals for yourself and you'll be asked to analyze your own performance as well as getting your line manager to do so as well. Then every six months you review that again, as well as reviewing it with three other random people in the team to get opinions of each other.
Design Agency:	So right from the offset they're already getting an idea of what their strengths and weaknesses are, and what they can improve. That's an ongoing process. So you catch up with your line manager every month. They're dotted about the studio as well, in the juniors, so they're next to ... Well I sit next to two of them. So they're next to senior designers.
Interviewer:	So their seating arrangements are strategically done so they're sitting next to someone who can be that person to ask.
Design Agency:	Yeah. Helpful. And that's really, really encouraged with us as well. Always asking questions. We put an emphasis on not seeing that struggle. Let's do it. Someone's probably going to know how to fix the thing you're struggling with if you just put your hand up and say-
Interviewer:	If you just ask.
Design Agency:	So that kind of culture.
Interviewer:	Cool.
Design Agency:	The PDR thing is the main thing really. Then we also have a training and inspiration budget for each person in the studio. So that's not just juniors. You actually get a set budget each year and you can spend that on whatever you want. Well it has to go through your line manager, work towards your goals and that kind of thing.

Design Agency: But I think ... Andrew's doing ... I think a couple of them are going to design festivals. I think Liv's doing a brush, lettering workshop. Stuff like that. I think some people are doing more practical things like illustrator workshops and stuff like that as well.

Interviewer: So it can develop more of a personal interest in design or something that you're particularly interested in.

Design Agency: I've done a presentation workshop, because I'm going to need to be doing more of that. So I think it's split half and half. You can do some stuff which is just inspirational, then it's encouraged to use some of it on the skill.

Interviewer: That sounds like a really good idea.

Design Agency: Yeah, it's great.

Interviewer: Do you think that ... It sounds like you've got so many good things in place to help them learn and develop. Do you think that there's anything ... What I'm saying here is, do you think that you could do more or do you have any ideas for doing more things that could help them?

Design Agency: I think there's a few things that they've, again initiated themselves. Or talked about it. I think the day to day things that they're finding valuable is when they learn something like a skill in Photoshop or a short cut or how to use gradient maps and search for something. They're like, "Oh my god. How have I never learnt this?" Yeah. And I remember doing it on the simplest tools. So I think that they're planning to start collecting all these into something so when we get new people in or when they're struggling with something and nobody's around to ask, then they have just a glossary of handy tips and tricks. So I think that's something we're going to look at doing as well for them.

Design Agency: So that's more like general day to day things rather than what do you think of this concept.

Interviewer: Make day to day life run more smoothly.

Design Agency: Definitely.

Interviewer: Rather than a big huge idea.

Design Agency: I think we just need to give them opportunities to take projects on and, not run them, but give them opportunity to develop their own concepts within projects. Which is happening, but I think we can do more of. Like the women in design projects we're currently working on. That's a bit of a freebie. We're offering studio time, but when those nice jobs come in, giving them ... Inspiring them to take it on themselves and do it themselves, because I think the more client side often will get, stuff will just get booted straightaway because you don't have time to push something that you have to look for. You have to be a bit definitive about what's going to work so I think giving them ... It's more encouragement I think, to develop their ideas and take it from initial thought to actually is this gonna work? I think that actually helps more and more.

Interviewer: They feel more confident.

Design Agency: Yeah, yeah. Definitely.

Interviewer: How you structure when they're involved in a team? How do you structure it? Are they always brought in on a job in a team to then almost be in the team but do a part of the job, or are you-

Design Agency: No. They're given quite a bit of responsibility really. Depends on the job. Some jobs, they'll be on it on their own with people overseeing them. It's that kind of first

stage, initial concepts, we'll usually do a 24 hour critique and they will be given as much time and go through the same processes as a senior designer or a design director would go through. But yeah, sometimes they have to be given smaller tasks.

Interviewer: So they're in a situation where they're more supported. Although they've definitely got their own role and responsibility in a job or a project.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: They are still supported by someone more senior within it.

Design Agency: Yeah, most of the time yeah. But if it's a smaller job that's part of something, like building a PowerPoint document from templates, then that's definitely something they can do on their own. But still being overseen by someone.

Design Agency: So if I'm overseeing them, I'll check in with them a couple times a day and see how they're getting on, but they're off on their own.

Interviewer: They're more than able to run it on their own day to day.

Design Agency: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: You briefly touched on this, but I'm just going to ask you again anyway.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: How have they supported their own development and learning? You have mentioned they've done some of their own initiatives.

Design Agency: Yeah, they did the junior hour thing. That was all them basically. I think that's come from them all starting at the same time and all chatting amongst each other. They are really good at putting lunch times aside as well to catch up with each other. Because their initiative, the hour at lunch thing, that came from them wanting to work together more. It's quite rare that two juniors will be on a project together, because it will be a junior and senior.

Interviewer: More structured hierarchy?

Design Agency: Exactly. Yeah. So they want to do more of that. So that's feeding that need. Then they're just really inquisitive, really. I mean Andrew, you'll meet, he's like the chattiest guy ever. He's really funny. He's a really good guy. He sits next to me and he's constantly asking questions. Which is great. They're just I think, trying to grab as many opportunities as possible really.

Design Agency: We make a big point of that when they start, but because you're not on a set project doesn't mean you can't get on it. We've got a big glass hall that runs through the studio and the projects get stuck up on there. If you see something or read someone's brief that you wanna work on. If you come up with an idea we'll try our best to get you on it. There's no reason you can't give ideas.

Interviewer: Inspire.

Design Agency: Exactly, yeah. So I think that's instilled in them right from the start. Already I think they're taking that on and trying to do lots of different things. Which is good.

Interviewer: That is good.

Interviewer: In terms of their skillsets, what have you guys at Taxi found really useful that they've come in with and thought, that's a great skill that's been important or that's their strength?

Design Agency: I think they're all very ideas and conceptual. Which is really good. Which is what we like. Because then you can learn other skills after. I think we don't tend to get people here who are really amazing at Photoshop and Illustrator and designing beautiful things but then don't have concepts behind it, so-

Interviewer: So it's their design thinking.

Design Agency: It's the thinking. Yeah, definitely. Then Kiera's got a lovely illustration, a typography style, a hand drawn type. So that's been utilized on a few projects already. So I'd say that's a specific skill that she's brought which no one on the team really had before. Liv actually as well, has got a good typographic eye. So there's a few skills like that that they've brought in.

Design Agency: But we're interviewing people again and going out to unis again. There's people now have got ridiculous animation and 4D skills. Like how'd you even do that? And you're just fresh out of uni, so I think we might be looking to bring those skills in a bit more. But this crop is just all about ... Their minds are great at offering ... It's like nice naivety to things I think somethings. Which is really nice because you get so bogged down in those bigger projects actually, when it's all this madness and they can come in and just go, oh, what's this? [inaudible 00:18:38]

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. So their almost fresh way of looking at things.

Design Agency: Yeah, definitely. Which is really, really good. Then just enthusiasm I think for the work. The excitement. I think that's probably the main thing we looked for last year. We didn't really have any placements in the year before. Then I pushed to do a whole placement to get them in all year round. I think now, doing that, I think we had about seven or eight in over four months. And it does give the studio a big lift, because it's exciting and people are asking those questions. Not that it's depressing and down anyway.

Interviewer: No, no, it's just-

Design Agency: But it breaks it up a little bit. I quite like getting asked ... Not when I'm really busy, but when I'm getting at what are you doing there? Why are you doing that? And it helps you explain your idea a little bit to someone.

Interviewer: Rather than just doing it.

Design Agency: Kind of question yourself a little bit. So yeah, their enthusiasm for it is definitely of much importance to the studio.

Interviewer: That's really good. When you get people into internships, I'm not necessarily talking about before you've got these junior designers, but do you have to spend a lot of time planning what they will do when they're in? Or do you just try to teach a formula of what to run through?

Design Agency: Because it changes so much it's quite difficult, but I always try to sit down with our traffic manager, Terry, and then send round the portfolios to the OCDs, because they have a more broader view of what's coming in to the studio. So I try and do that before they come in and then pinpoint a few projects where we might get them on. So we always try and get them on at first stage concepts, because that's the ideas bit which we want to see from them. But it does change quite a lot so it's a little bit adhoc.

Interviewer: Depends what you've got happening in the studio.

Design Agency: Yeah, exactly. And they will have to jump on the more ... The tasks that just need doing. They do have to do a bit of that.

Interviewer:	So sometimes, someone could come in and be doing something quite exciting, and possibly the next person might be on something more functional and that's just the nature.
Design Agency:	Yeah, but I think having four weeks tends to give everyone an opportunity to do a bit of both. I think which is good.
Design Agency:	Then if it's quiet, which it's not much, but if it is quiet, or there's no ideas or concept stuff coming in, we've got past briefs, like uni briefs that we've used. Or extra stuff that we're doing for clients that we can kind of just give them. Like activations for a Carlsberg project we just did the packaging for. But how would you take this poster design which the customer might not ever see it, it's like a test for them to see what they've got. I think we used that on a couple of them actually. I think Andrew did that when he came in. Just right, gave him three days, see what he comes up with in a review, then I think he got offered the job after that.
Interviewer:	He was like that's great.
Design Agency:	Brilliant. Yeah, it didn't go anywhere after that, but that was the purpose of it.
Interviewer:	I'm sorry. So where has their learning taken place mostly do you think? Is it in the workplace, do you take them outside of the workplace to learn? Is there other things that you … Basically what are your plans for learning in terms of taking them outside of work, in work.
Design Agency:	Well I guess the majority of it is the day to day stuff. Then yeah, the training inspiration budget will allow them to go and see talks and lectures and workshops, tutorial lessons and all that kind of stuff. Then we will just do events as well. So Emma is the chair person of the Western Design Forum as well, so we get free tickets. Well we don't get free tickets, Taxi paid for tickets towards those events. So in terms of learning from talks and stuff like that, we try and get out to as much of those as possible.
Design Agency:	Then the day to day learning is just on the job really. I mean I guess something that could be interesting which we tried to do before, go back to your earlier thing about what could we do more. So when Luke, he was a designer, he moved into motion. He would always have a day of the week set aside just for training and learning skills himself.
Design Agency:	We've tried to do it before where we've got Linda.com and tutorial thing, which I think is probably not the best one, because I think it's a bit too American and a bit too cheesy. It wasn't quite right I think. But we all got an account on that. Then in down time, which I'll say, doesn't exist much anymore, but then you go and you spend two hours on trainings.
Design Agency:	So whether that's something we can bring in for them, whether it's half a day a week, to learn a set skill, to do tutorials and stuff. But in theory that works. It's whether the more on the job stuff actually, they learn more from that rather than sitting and watching a video on how to do something.
Interviewer:	Yeah, it would have to be proper down time for them to do that wouldn't it?
Design Agency:	Yeah, definitely. But I think that's something we could look at again, so it's … Because I think when it's quite fast moving, so you want to make sure that they are actually learning stuff. Not it being a whirlwind of just getting through it and not looking back and going, alright, what did we do there?
Interviewer:	What was the point of that?
Design Agency:	Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:	What about things like presenting skills to clients? Or say printing, go and visiting printers, or I mean it's quite an integrated thing now. Or research and development for packaging or something like that? Kind of work related things, which aren't necessarily that you learn at work? But you could learn by external-
Design Agency:	Yeah, I mean they don't get much experience presenting to clients. I mean they're more than welcome to go and do seminars and workshops on that. That will come more when we get the golden C clients we call them. Like charities, like we work for the YMCA, we worked on a hostel in middle Bristol. So that they might get an opportunity to do more of that.
Design Agency:	Printers. We try and do that. Try and get out to study. But that's another one that's so vast, it's easy to send someone who knows what they're all about to go and do it. But there are opportunities to do that. I've been on runs before. I was a junior. I got sent to Switzerland to Vanessa headquarters to look at their archives for certain projects.
Interviewer:	That's good.
Design Agency:	There are certain opportunities.
Interviewer:	Sounds good better than local version.
Design Agency:	Yeah. So yeah I think when certain jobs come up we try and get them out to do that kind of stuff. Then I know some printers do run workshops and tutorial days so ... There was one at the end of last year which I was looking at. I didn't go in the end, but there's opportunities like that to go out and do that kind of stuff.
Design Agency:	I'd say that kind of thing, the more technical stuff, they don't necessarily need that yet. That's more ... now I'm midway, kind of going into a more senior thing. I probably need to know more of that because if they ask me a printer question I probably wouldn't be able to answer that well.
Interviewer:	So it's more of a long term development rather than throw everything at them immediately.
Design Agency:	Yeah, yeah, definitely. And like the way we talked about the way the teams are structured. There should be someone more senior on that team who would probably know that.
Interviewer:	And then can pass on the knowledge.
Design Agency:	Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Definitely.
Design Agency:	Then I guess in terms of presenting. Not to clients, but we have a meeting every Tuesday, big team meeting, and they often stand up and you can present some work you've been working on, or show and tell some packaging you've found. Or we do a thing called three things, where someone gets up and talks about three things about themselves, they can be random things-
Interviewer:	So it organically happens. Instead of doing it within the workplace to other people that they work with, then eventually they'll start having clients which you're more open to letting them on.
Design Agency:	Yeah. Things like that.
Design Agency:	I think actually a couple of them have presented over the phone. But again they've been on projects where we've done something the client didn't know they were getting, or paid and other stuff.

Interviewer:	I'm going to ask you a couple of questions. They're not supposed to be negative in any way.
Design Agency:	Okay.
Interviewer:	It's basically a yin and a yang type of thing. So in terms of their learning and development can you pinpoint any major positives that have happened? You've thought, that was amazing. You've really exceeded expectations. Or that was really impressive that you did that.
Design Agency:	Well when they all presented their junior hour thing, that was really impressive because that was just them going out of their way to gain more experience and learn more things, which is brilliant. There's been a couple of occasions where they've just knocked it out of the park creatively. They've just come up with really great ideas.
Design Agency:	There was one example with Andrew, and we had a couple of days come up, we had loads of concepts, we had the all spread out the table, and his got canned, the certain idea. It kinda like, this doesn't really work. But separately [inaudible 00:29:18] don't worry that none of them got through, that's still relevant that might come back. That happens sometimes. Then a week later that came back in, in another way and he was then was really excited and took that on board and developed that root. He muchly he did it himself I think. So that was kind of nice, that he learnt not to be too [inaudible 00:29:48] that it was gone, then when it came back in really helped it by the [inaudible 00:29:52] and developed it and stuff as well.
Interviewer:	So he saw it was not a personal thing. Sometimes ideas can be really great, but they need the right outlet for them not-
Design Agency:	Yeah, definitely. Or even that it was just not at the right time, almost. We were, on that one it was more the concept than the visual and he had started on the visual stuff. But it just wasn't … We weren't discussing that yet, so I kind of dismissed it. Like, I'm not doing that yet.
Design Agency:	But yeah, that was quite a nice thing for him to learn. I think a lot of them, I think they've learned more things like that. Like the process things, and not that there's politics, but just the way certain people work and how to sort out the ideas and stuff like that. And I think they've all improved how they talk about their ideas. So when they're stood up in front of, there's sometimes ten people reviewing your work, they're all learning quite quickly how to stand up and present ideas and talk about the succinctly and stuff. There's been a couple of moments where they've done a really good job of that. Which was good.
Interviewer:	On the flip side, have there been any times where there have been any low points, or where you've kind of, oh I need to help you out here? It's not necessarily a negative thing, interns make mistakes and learn from them. What are those moments for you? You have to just jump in, and kind of-
Design Agency:	Yeah, there's probably been a couple. Trying to think of it. Yeah, there's been a few occasions, but I mean I sit next to Andrew so I guess I've seen more of what he works on. I know there's been a couple times where he focused on one thing a little bit too much, and it's gone off brief, or away from where the feedback was. Then not me, but someone's had to come in and get him back on track, when he wasted half a day doing stuff like that.
Design Agency:	But then saying that, they're all very good at putting in the extra hours as well if something is going wrong. He knows that he's made that mistake. He's like all right I'll just get this right. And I don't think it's from … It's not from doing it because they're getting scared of getting told off. It's more like I'm taking responsibility for it. I'll get it right now, because it's not quite got there yet.

Interviewer: So when sometimes things haven't gone to plan, they have got the self awareness to recognize that?

Design Agency: Yeah. Definitely. Then I think you do always learn from your mistakes don't you? I mean I was a junior and I did these artworks for something and they were all terribly wrong, and I've never done that again.

Interviewer: No, no. I think I wouldn't happen again.

Design Agency: Set them all up totally wrong, and then realized the day before they had to go out it was all wrong and so I had to stay late to fix it.

Interviewer: Oh that's what they mean.

Design Agency: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, no I know.

Design Agency: But, nothing's gone drastically wrong. I think there's just been some things where, which happens anyway, they'll go away for a 24 hour period or asked to produce concepts and things and come back and it's completely the wrong thing. They've just got the wrong end of the stick. Or have looked at ... Which I have done before as well.

Design Agency: I remember working on something and we had a 24 hour run at it. And I just came to the table with reference imagery that I found. I was like oh this is cool. This is cool. And everybody else had come up with fully concept boards and stuff. I was like, oh right. That's what we were supposed to be doing. Not just finding pretty pictures and stuff. So I think there's been little occasions like that where they've gone, oh, actually I should have thought about it that way.

Design Agency: But there's no howlers really that spring to mind. Just little things like that. I think that's probably the way the system's set up. Is hopefully they're not on their own for three days. Then all of a sudden it's all gone wrong. There's people checking in.

Interviewer: So yeah, there's things in place so they aren't just being left. I mean it would be easy to do.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: So it's basically, the internal systems to help.

Design Agency: Try and stop that. Things go drastically wrong.

Interviewer: How about the skills that the designers have brought from university in this house? How do you think university has helped shape them?

Design Agency: That's kind of hot debate, the minute with all this workhouse stuff that we're doing. I think what is clear is that universities are very different from each other. And I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing. It's just some of them aren't prepared to go into our industry, specifically. So like if you compare UWE, where Lily came from, to Farnworth, where others came from, her portfolio ... If you compare those portfolios Lily's wouldn't necessarily get picked up by us, because it's really conceptual. It's amazing work, but it's harder to think how that applies to what we do.

Design Agency: Where as Andrew and Kira's would be more packaging and branding and you're like, okay I get it. Falmouth and Norwich are very like minded in their thinking and concepts, where UWE isn't. Which I don't think it's a bad thing, it's just different courses. It's a lot more conceptual. It's a lot more social, and political, which I think

you want to go through it at uni, but then there's less of an emphasis of turning that into a commercial thing.

Design Agency: They're from very different unis and they're all getting on really well. So now, really, Stephanie got the thinking for it and now is applying it to the more commercial stuff, so she's brought, they've all brought their level of thinking into our studio.

Design Agency: I think what is always lacking is the technical stuff, but then I don't personally want uni to be like that. You need to learn the basic things. But you want it to be a bit experimental, a bit like, I didn't do anything good until my third year at uni really. A lot of weird stuff. Looking at it now it's awful. I think you have to go through the bad stuff and do a lot of that conceptual thinking. Those skills are always lacking, but we can always teach that, and they can get up to speed on that.

Interviewer: What skills?

Design Agency: So like Illustrator, Photo Shop, Design. Technical software and technical skills.

Interviewer: So they're fine.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Once they can start working they're easy.

Design Agency: And like how to set up files and the organization of files, that is always.

Interviewer: It's the one thing that always comes up. It's filing. Everyone's like, I need to file.

Design Agency: It's always final dot final. Final dot version four, kind of stuff. And untitled folders.

Interviewer: Version 24 Final.

Design Agency: Yeah. Exactly. So that kind of side is always lacking with anybody we get in.

Design Agency: But I think, it's weird the uni thing. It's different unis doing it different ways. Found with the Norwich historically have always been really, really good. And now University of Gloucester where I've graduated from, Jess, one of the lecturers there. She was just at bullet proof in the last two years. So that course now is getting really good for what we want, because she's going back to bullet proof and bringing briefs in and it's a direct link to the industry. [inaudible 00:38:19] That's kind of... They're more branding and packaging, which it says more [inaudible 00:38:26] but it's the thinking side of it and building concepts and rationales behind things. Reasons for doing it. That's what the best unis, for us anyway, do.

Design Agency: I think Norwich and Falmouth have quite strong links to agencies, so a lot of them, I think all of them have already done placements before they come to us. So they have an idea of how a studio might work, and they know all the agencies that we know. That always helps.

Interviewer: To say, hi, you've worked with such and such before.

Design Agency: Yeah. Or the you know ... It's like the references you know. They've heard of the partners and those kind of ideas the agencies that we admire. [inaudible 00:39:20] that's what we're about. If they know what that is, then that's good and the news that kind of [crosstalk 00:39:32] .

Interviewer: Shared language and kind of appreciation for the work

Design Agency: Yeah, and I think they're all quite prepared in that respect.

Interviewer:	Cool.
Interviewer:	This is a general question, not specifically about your designers here, the four of them. But just as a general industry thing. What do you think the advantages and disadvantages of internships are for agencies and graduates.
Design Agency:	So from agencies point of view. You're giving something back to designers and people coming out of university. Giving them a chance to put what they've learned into practice, which is always great. From an employment point of view, you're basically getting to test out students without employing them, and you're getting them for cheap really. Although we pay them and make sure our rate is comparable with other people. We all ... It's a really cheap resource really. Which is great.
Design Agency:	I think it also, it keeps the studio quite fresh with new people coming in and when you get these kids with crazy animation skills and stuff like that, you're like whoa. We really need to like-
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:41:11]
Design Agency:	Yeah, yeah. You're like whoop. And even people who don't. Who are very different and from a different background. That's always really interesting as well. Like from another country have got different` experiences. I think that's a massive advantage as well. And it also, from people like me who are organizing it and going out to universities and stuff, that's a good experience as well. To go out and practice presenting in a relatively safe environment, because it's students. So I think I'm reviewing portfolios and doing portfolio reviews and can learn a lot of things from that as well.
Design Agency:	I guess the negative side is sometimes stuff goes wrong, and sometimes you get people in and they're not quite what you thought they were going to be. It's not all good, but it's a little bit like ... Maybe you're not gonna be as useful to us really. Not useful in terms of ... We're not giving you loads of work to get it for cheap work. But we thought you were gonna come up with some really cool stuff, and it was gonna be really exciting, and now you're been here four weeks, so we'll just have to rethink how we give you the best opportunities and how it's going to work for you as well, more than us I think. Because if they're struggling with something, we don't want to give them four weeks of that. Because they'll have a terrible experience. We want to give them something-
Interviewer:	So you're quite conscious of the fact that you want to still make sure they have a good experience.
Design Agency:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Maybe it's not quite as, well not advanced, but you can have something that's simpler.
Design Agency:	Yeah, definitely. Or just a different skillset. So we've had people who have come in, and they're actually, they're not great thinkers conceptual wise, but they're amazing editorial or typography. So then we're like okay, actually that's ... You can tell quite quickly that's the thing that gets them excited so can we give them something close to that.
Interviewer:	So you're trying to draw their strengths out.
Design Agency:	Yeah, definitely. Because then we're gonna get excited about it and put more effort into it I think, than something they struggle with.
Interviewer:	Do you find sometimes when you see things go wrong, that maybe the intern themselves possibly isn't putting as much into it as you'd hoped. Because you only get what you put in.

Design Agency:	Sometimes.
Interviewer:	Or is that not really normally what happens?
Design Agency:	I think we've always had ones that try, and their enthusiasm is always there. I think it's just, sometimes, it's more down to their personality. We've had some … Like you won't, in our studio, I think if you're a little bit quiet, then you're not going to get on so well as someone who's really chatty, because that's just the culture in the studio. It's quite open. It's quite loud up there sometimes. We've had a couple who were a bit more reserved, which is fine. But they've been the ones that haven't stood out as much. But you know, they've come up, they've done good work and good concepts, but-
Interviewer:	It's just a personality-
Design Agency:	Yeah, and maybe it's a little bit overwhelming and not quite what they thought it was going to be. I had one guy, a really lovely guy. And at the end I always sit down with them and kind of review how. Honest he was like, yeah I had a really good time and the stuff we worked on I really enjoyed, but I've realized I don't want to work in agency like this, I don't want to. The size of it's too big. And I think he's since got somewhere just like four or five people, and that suits him a lot more.
Interviewer:	So that could also be a positive as well?
Design Agency:	Yeah, yeah.
Interviewer:	The whole thing of trying out something and putting your hands up and saying it was great but it isn't for me.
Design Agency:	Yeah, definitely. Definitely. That's happened a few times with really, really talented people, who we've wanted to get in and they've gone, actually, I don't like the bigger packaging projects that you work on. I want to do something more specific. And I go fair enough. Let's go do it. Then obviously the positive side for the graduates is they get experience in [inaudible 00:45:18] they then will always know someone who knows someone.
Design Agency:	Oh yeah I worked with this guy and got a contact for someone. It's the foot in the door isn't it, really I think. Whether you have a good or bad experience, as long as you're not pissing people off you're kind of in then. If you're a nice guy, or a nice person and put effort in and are willing to learn, I think then anybody, this industry it's quite a friendly one, and you'll get-
Interviewer:	You're reward for just being nice all this time.
Design Agency:	Yeah. I think so.
Interviewer:	I'm just aware of how long it's been. I've finished actually all the questions.
Design Agency:	Cool.
Interviewer:	So …

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD1-TX

Interviewer: So to begin, this is really simple, straightforward. So how did this role come about and describe the process it took.

Graduate: Yeah, sure.

Graduate: Our university put on a degree show in London every year called New Blood and Sam and Carl attended that and saw my work there. So I got an email from one of those a couple of months afterwards asking if I'd like to come in and interview and sort of chat about things. Which then led to a two week internship. And then at the end of the internship I was offered a job, so I went home for a week and then came back. And then started.

Interviewer: Sounds great. What university are did you go to? [inaudible 00:00:46]. It seems like it's a really good course.

Graduate: Yeah, really good course.

Interviewer: Did you enjoy it?

Graduate: Definitely. Yeah, 100%.

Interviewer: So how long have you been at Taxi now. When did you start?

Graduate: So I interned in August and then started September so like seven months, eight months?

Interviewer: Kind of in your groove now.

Interviewer: And how did you imagine when you graduated, how did you imagine your path into the design industry would go and what it would be?

Graduate: Well, I kind of had a ... I wouldn't say structured plan but a plan of ... I had quite a few internships lined up for the rest of the year. So I graduated in July so I gave myself July and December to test out a couple of things and the plan was January of this year to hopefully look for something a bit more permanent but taxi was my second intern of the summer and then I cancelled all the rest when I took the job in September.

Interviewer: And did you know it would just be, when you were here you felt like it was right and you knew.

Graduate: Yeah, I felt like it was right and I wasn't a fan of going to London. I'm originally from Thornton area so the depths of the countryside, that way.

Interviewer: So you were happy with something more in between rather than ...

Graduate: Yeah, definitely, I didn't enjoy London, the one before taxi and I enjoyed the studio culture but then as soon as I left the studio I was just like "this isn't for me." So Bristol was definitely somewhere I wanted to aim for, I just didn't think it would be as quick.

Interviewer: What were your expectations of this role when you started?

Graduate: I don't think I had overly that many expectations. I did think that maybe I would be a bit of a floater Sort of jumping on and off a lot of things that would be quite fast paced and not settled on a certain project is probably what I imagined. Which to a degree it has been but there has been certain projects which I had stayed on for a while, which is quite nice. I guess I did expect to not know much at all, which is definitely the case. Just to learn tons and tons daily, more than I thought that ... I

thought I was quite well equipped coming out of uni but as soon as you enter industry it's a completely different set of rules.

Interviewer: Yeah definitely. And when you say "I'd imagine that I'd learn daily" How did you imagine you were going to learn daily?

Graduate: Probably more through watching and listening rather than physically doing if that makes sense. Even to the point of listening in client calls. No idea what the word is. I didn't even know how the industry worked on that side of things. Just through that more but obviously physically a lot as well through computer skills and that sort of stuff. I guess I imagined learning more about design but I think I've learned more about how it actually works as a business. How design works, client side as well rather than just designing.

Interviewer: So that real life application design if that makes sense. How do you think the role is going? Is it how you imagined it to be and are you enjoying yourself?

Graduate: Yeah, I would say that's how I imagined it to be. There are a lot of aspects which [inaudible 00:04:41] at university at all.

Interviewer: Do you think it's something that they can't do or …

Graduate: I think there are aspects that they would be able to do, maybe toward the end of your final year. Even just getting in more studios to maybe talk about how they actually work rather than their work. That would have prepared me a lot more for the initial role, definitely.

Interviewer: How is taxi helping you learn and develop a new role?

Graduate: Taxi in general is family run so it is very nurturing and they want you to grow as a person as well. We have all sorts of things in place of like, inspiration budgets which you can use for whatever you would find inspiring rather than a company assuming that every single person wants to do the exact same event or the exact same thing. It's very tailored to you in that terms. And even systems as our line manager systems are amazing. That's really nice to have somebody as a base to go and talk to about things which is really nice. And then things like the buddies, like Sam was a buddy but she's just a set of people in the studio that you know. They know that you're gonna come and ask for help, so it's rather than approaching with caution there is that set of expectations.

Interviewer: Have you spent your inspiration budget this year or what did you do?

Graduate: Well, it's in the pipeline, it's the Birmingham design festival. It's in June. Originally I spent it on the good design festival in Cornwall which just got cancelled. So now it's rescheduled and all of that so now I'm using it on the design festival.

Interviewer: With your line manager and buddy system, did you use them much or do you still use them much and do you think of them as a person you could always talk to?

Graduate: Generally the buddies that we have are very approachable people anyway and probably my closest friends in the studio so I kind of approach them more as a friend asking questions rather than oh there's a buddy. Line manager system I find that we don't really talk about design or my progression but more as a like "How are you coping?" And how are other things. It's definitely more personal. Just somebody who you can make aware if there are stuff going on like maybe that's why you are not performing as much so it's nice to have that as well.

Interviewer: Is there anything that you think that could be done any further towards your learning and development or are you relatively happy?

Graduate:	I wouldn't say so actually. I'm sure if those sorts of things weren't put in place then I would say yes. But I feel like I'm covered on a personal level and then on a design level at the same time. So actually …
Interviewer:	What have you done yourself to help support your learning and development as a designer?
Graduate:	Us juniors … I don't know if Sam told you about juni-hour? So that was one thing that we all got together and thought we could really do with learning, like sort of bouncing off each other as we have come from different universities or different ways of going about things but then also we're planning to get members of the studio in at lunch time to workshop us on their specialisms. So we got a guy who is like super knowledgeable about printing and all of that. So, he is gonna come in and … So that was also initiated on our behalf. I think maybe also just making myself a lot more aware of current design and what is actually happening in the studios. In uni, I didn't really research into what studios were doing cause that isn't really why I was there in a sense so I'm definitely on all of the blogs more recently …
Interviewer:	And try and build up a picture of what the design industry really is. Is that in general or specific to Bristol or just like everywhere in general.
Graduate:	General design. I'm quite a crafty person so I do do a lot of workshops in my own time. Tactile things rather than computer, so I guess that is personal development at the same time.
Interviewer:	What skills have been most useful to you in the design industry since you've been here and it could be something you've learned from university, it could be your own personal skills. What are the things that you think are most useful and have been the most helpful.
Graduate:	Probably something that I haven't mastered yet but just the confidence of speaking exactly what you think. Most times I'm thinking "Oh god, that doesn't work" or this should be there or that sort of thing but I don't really say it and then somebody next to me would say it and they would be like "Yeah, you're right" and I'm just like "Oh gosh, you just said it." So the confidence in that probably.
Interviewer:	What about the things you've learned at university, have they been really helpful?
Graduate:	Yeah [inaudible 00:10:43] was very ideas-based. Everything was idea generation. More so than craft of the final thing and idea generation generally is very fast paced here. You don't have long at all. Just having the ability to find ideas quickly and in different forms probably helps the most.
Interviewer:	I'm gonna ask you flip side questions, so has there been a major positive since you've been here and how do you perceive your learning and development and has there also been a bit where you thought that I messed it up or something. Like a super high where you've been really excited by your development and somewhere where things have gone wrong and you've doubted yourself.
Graduate:	Yeah. Probably a super high would be, we had a super, super fast project come in where something had fell down on their side and they needed the studio quickly pick it up. Within 24 hours. I didn't think I'd be able to physically deal with the stress of that and I think it was like my second week or something but it came round really really well and my group was picked and it all went through. So that was definite high and I was like "No, I can do this." Because I'm quite a methodical person so I do feel like I have to sit down and plan and I wasn't given that at all and it was just throw it all in. That was definitely positive.
Graduate:	Negative. Maybe just little things about getting the wrong end of the stick sort of thing where you had recently a client come in and you had to idea generate for the day and it was about performance but I saw performance as sort of sporty when it was performance more like creatively and all of my ideas were knocked.

And I was like "God, if I had just asked." Or could somebody topline what this is. So I did feel a little bit wasted and nothing went through which was really annoying.

Interviewer: But I guess that you've already mentioned that you will probably learn from it. You've identified what went wrong and next time you'll ask.

Graduate: Yes.

Interviewer: So mistakes are okay to make as long as you learn from them.

Graduate: Next time hopefully it won't happen again.

Interviewer: And, this is a general question, not necessarily about yourself but what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates?

Graduate: Advantages are definitely, you can test out studios but more like people-wise because I've been to many places which have done amazing work I've been awe of for a really long time and I got there and they are not my sort of people at all. I could just imagine myself saying yes to a job and then you get there and you're like "I do not fit in here at all." So that is I would say is the positive main thing that you can just see if you fit in and if you would enjoy it.

Graduate: Negative, it's hard being a new person every two weeks and it's just reestablishing yourself again, the confidence knock is quite regular. I always personally need a base, I need to go home and airbnb-ing for six months isn't ideal.

Interviewer: So when you went to London, how you felt as well going and just feeling like…

Graduate: Yeah I couldn't go home, it was quite unsettling.

Interviewer: That's fair enough, I wouldn't want that too. That's all the questions really, I was just going to ask one more about, in your cohort that graduated with you. The people you know about and keep in touch with, are most of them working in design now?

Graduate: Yeah. I feel like 95%. Some are completely different types of design. But then I would say maybe the people that aren't publicizing that or making it vocal so maybe I wouldn't know but yeah, the majority of them [crosstalk 00:15:36]

Interviewer: Okay, that's great.

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD2-TX

Interviewer: Okay, normally this is about 20 minutes. So, yeah.

Graduate: Okay.

Interviewer: So, how did this role come about and describe the process that it took.

Graduate: So, I kind of outreached to Taxi when I graduated and they do this thing called Fearless Academy. And, I used a past brief which was to kind of brand myself as a route into packaging. So, I did that to kind of get my portfolio up to scratch, because I felt when I left Uni it wasn't quite what I was hoping it would be. I showed them that and then I asked if they had any internships or anything going on. They said they'd be happy to schedule me in for four weeks. So, then, I took the four week internship and it went really well. And, then at the end I had, like, a portfolio review and they offered me a job. So, I said yes.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. Amazing. So, obviously you really enjoyed the four week placement?

Graduate: Yeah, yes, I loved it.

Interviewer: Cool. And, are you from Bristol?

Graduate: I'm originally from Nottingham and then I moved to Manchester last year of University. And, then, didn't enjoy it that much. So, I moved back home and then came to Bristol.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: And, then starting in the second year I did that year in Bristol.

Interviewer: Oh, cool.

Graduate: And, then, like stayed after that.

Interviewer: Yeah, so you feel comfortable in Bristol?

Graduate: Yeah. (laughs)

Interviewer: Cool. And, so, how long have you been at Taxi now?

Graduate: So, I joined in November. Well, that was my internship, so actually joined in December.

Interviewer: Cool, so you've been here a good time. Almost six months, really.

Graduate: Yeah, it's gone really quick. It doesn't feel like-

Interviewer: It probably just feels like you started the other day.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you imagine that after graduating this would be the path you'd take?

Graduate: I guess in my head I was like, "I really want to work here." Like this, I'm kind of-

Interviewer: In Bristol or at Taxi?

Graduate:	In Taxi, yeah, I kind of had it as my A. But, then, realistically I was like, "I'm not actually gonna get to work there." So, it was a shock. So, yeah, I had it in the back of my head that I wanted to stay in Bristol, at least, anyway.
Interviewer:	So, you had an idea about the location you wanted, well, you actually had a really specific thing. You must be the first person that I've given a talk to that wanted to know where they wanted to work and ended up working there. So, if this potentially hasn't gone to plan. I mean, what were you going to say?
Graduate:	I was gonna say I should probably mention that the reason why it's so specific is because I did this scheme at Uni with Design Buddies and I had, like, a mentor, who was Pete, who works here. So, that kind of, I guess, helped in a way. Because, I'd come into the studio a few times before I'd actually graduated and, like, seen the location and how the studio felt and stuff.
Interviewer:	So, you already had a good idea of what was going on, it wasn't just a random kind of thing.
Graduate:	Exactly, yeah. (laughs)
Interviewer:	Was it Pete, did you say? And, he was like a mentor to you at University or buddy that you could talk to about various projects.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And, how did you find that?
Graduate:	I found it really helpful, actually, especially towards the end when I felt a bit, like. Because my post was quite conceptual and Taxi's quite like a commercial graphic design agency. So, I found it sort of helpful to direct my kinda airy fairy work towards something that was more like a product or something that I could put in my portfolio and show people. So, I found that really helpful.
Interviewer:	Cool, excellent. Good. What were your expectations for this role before you started?
Graduate:	I kind of thought it was gonna be, I don't really know. I'm not sure I thought about it extensively cause I didn't actually think I was gonna get the role. But, I thought it was gonna be kind of what it is. So, image searching for stuff, helping support other people with projects. I don't know, I'm not sure.
Interviewer:	That's fine.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And, how is it going? Is it how you imagined it to be?
Graduate:	It is, yeah. It pretty much is how I thought it was gonna go, apart from it's been nice surprise that they give you quite a lot of responsibility. Because it makes you feel more, kind of, able within the projects you feel like you can speak up and think of an idea. And, even though you're a junior, it might actually be used. So, that's a nice surprise.
Interviewer:	So, you've got more responsibility than you thought you would?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And, so your, kind of, design thinking creative voice is taken seriously?
Graduate:	Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer:	And, they make you feel that you are valued in that way?
Graduate:	Yes, definitely.
Interviewer:	And, how are Taxi helping you learn and develop in the workplace?
Graduate:	So, they have a training and inspiration which is kind of assigned to every person in Taxi, which is really helpful, because they don't just organize events that everyone goes to. It's kind of like, everyone's different so something that isn't inspiring to you might be something that's inspiring to someone else. It's different. So, you can kind of go out and find something specific that you want to do. That's really helpful. Also, they have a really good line manager system. So, you have one to one catchups with people and get to tell them specifically how you're getting on or any worries and stuff.
Interviewer:	And, do you use that or do you not really need to use that?
Graduate:	That is something that is in the structure, so everybody has to use it.
Interviewer:	Oh, right, you can't get out of it.
Graduate:	(laughs) But, it's good.
Interviewer:	It's a good thing.
Graduate:	Yeah, it's really good. It's very informal. It's more like a catchup.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so it doesn't feel like an overworked HR scheme or anything.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	It feels completely normal and you value it.
Graduate:	Yes, definitely.
Interviewer:	And, have you spent your budget?
Graduate:	Yeah, I think it renews in the end of this month, actually. I've used the one before that for a public speaking course, which is very helpful.
Interviewer:	Oh, amazing. It sounds like they've got a lot of really good systems in place, but is there anything that you'd like to see happen that you're not. Do you think there's anything more that could happen for your learning and development or are you happy with what's on offer?
Graduate:	I feel like they do a really good job with it. I feel, maybe, if I was gonna be brutally honest, there could be more, kind of, workshops or activities that happen more regularly. They do happen, but, I mean, ideally every week, you know, a workshop. Like with more, kind of, hands-on like a massive variety of different things, that would be great.
Interviewer:	That sounds great. And, what skills have you brought to Taxi that have been the most useful to bring to the design agency that might be the influence from the University, that might be your own personal skills, it might be from something else in your life?
Graduate:	I guess I bring a fresh perspective because my background, particularly, is different from other people's. Like I said, naturally before my course was very conceptual. I guess I'm kind of bringing that to the table, where it's kind of coming from more of an art background rather than a product background.

Interviewer:	Yeah. So, your University course has definitely shaped you in the way you think.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	And, even though you felt, possibly, when you graduated your portfolio might have been a bit conceptual and you wanted to do some more real world projects. Has that actually, in hindsight, been something you see is now a strength? The conceptual work that you were doing?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	But, at this time, you [inaudible 00:09:52]?
Graduate:	Yeah, I certainly felt a bit like I didn't know if anyone would get this. (laughs)
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:10:01] (laughs) So, and is there anything that you've done yourself to support your own learning and development since you've been here?
Graduate:	Good question. I started watching Ted Talks, which is kind of coming from the back of the train [crosstalk 00:10:27].
Interviewer:	Is that the public speaking one?
Graduate:	Yeah. I don't know if this is, it's probably complete your own [inaudible 00:10:40] reports. (laughs) That's got to do with work, but
Interviewer:	No, it shows you're interested in doing stuff. Some people would just log out and say, "[crosstalk 00:10:55]" So, have you felt that most of your learning since you've graduated has taken place in the workplace, or have you moved in other places. So, like going to courses, or?
Graduate:	It's definitely developed by me in work the most. Just, like, learning from other people and just picking everything up from everywhere and everyone.
Interviewer:	Yeah, has it been, I don't mean overwhelming in a bad way. But, is [crosstalk 00:11:34] it so much to learn? These people are doing these new things all the time, so.
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely, especially right at the beginning. It's completely overwhelming because it's so different from University and it actually matters, as well. So, the responsibility, it's a good thing. But, also, you've been plunged into the deep end, in a way.
Interviewer:	And you felt like you were fine in taking that on? You were ready for it?
Graduate:	Yeah, the good outweighed the bad. And, also, there's a massive support system, as well. So, if you do feel a bit lost, you can just be, like, "Wait, what am I doing?"
Interviewer:	Just need a bit of fresh air on this.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. So, it's a good support system in place. And, I'm going to ask you two sides of these. So, since you've been here could you tell me something suitable [inaudible 00:12:34], a real career highlight, in your book that was really good? And, also, the flip-side, which is where you've gone, "I've missed out." And, what have you learned from both of those things?
Graduate:	So, something really positive. I was asked to put myself through for a Young Designers Award. Which, I felt that was amazing because I would never think to do that myself, but they're pushing me to do it.

Graduate: And, something negative. Trying to think of something constructive. (laughs)

Interviewer: Well, you might have learned from it, but at the time you might have-

Graduate: I guess I got to a point a few months ago where I was, like, "I feel like a number of tasks that were quite mundane." But, that was when I went to my [inaudible 00:13:28] and she made me kind of [inaudible 00:13:30] that I need to kind of, when I get a bit of downtime, [inaudible 00:13:35] that I could be doing on the side. Or, I could kind of push myself forwards in my developmentary study. So, that was kind of a learning point.

Interviewer: And, was that, through talking about it, that you figured out, maybe, how to move forward on that. Was it the talking that brought that to the floor or were you kind of thinking about that anyway?

Graduate: No, it was the talking, yeah.

Interviewer: Have you put yourself forward for this competition?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, and are you waiting to hear back?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: That sounds pretty exciting. This is a general question about graduates and internships. But, what do you see as the positives and negatives of internships for graduates?

Graduate: I guess the positives would be that it, obviously, in the beginning learn stuff, [crosstalk 00:14:44], and you get into kind of the routine. It [crosstalk 00:14:49] to get into that routine, I feel like, going to work everyday. Which is something that can be kind of a shock when you're a student because you kind of work at any point in the day. And, getting to know people within the industry and gaining competence in dealing with people, getting your ideas out there and stuff like that.

Graduate: Negatives. I don't know if there are any negatives to it, because if you're not enjoying it then it won't last forever. So, I can't really think of any negatives. I feel like it's really a positive thing, unless you're not enjoying it.

Interviewer: Cool. I think that's all.

Graduate: Oh, cool. That was quick.

Interviewer: Was it? Yeah, I know.

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD3-TX

Interviewer: Okay. It doesn't go anywhere, it's just for my own personal use.

Graduate: Yeah, of course. So you know.

Interviewer: So what university did you go to?

Graduate: I went to Falmouth University.

Interviewer: Another one.

Graduate: Yes. I was actually in the same … so we had like group crit sessions. I was actually in the same group crit as Kiera who's here as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, so you obviously know each other beforehand.

Graduate: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Ended up at the same place. How did this role come about? Could you describe the process you went through?

Graduate: Yeah. Basically, when I was in university, we actually had a section in our curriculum called Transitions, so focused very much about what we did after university. Part of that was that we had a load of studios that came to the university and did a load of workshops. One of the workshops, they're currently doing at the moment actually, the last week, was this Cider brief, where they essentially just did some workshop between us and we all have a stab at the brief, send off work too them. And from that they kind of sort of decide who they'd like to bring in for an interview and whether that can lead to a placement. I got on really well with Sam, you've met Sam. I chatted to him a bit about my work, and then I was able to actually go in and have an interview. That lead to a placement.

Graduate: So yep, that was one, and then I secured another placement as well prior to that, in London. I don't know whether you just want me to talk about that, or both of them. I did have a third as well, but sadly the actual study I was meant to be with had to cancel all of their placements. So it's just the two.

Interviewer: So did you go to London to do that placement?

Graduate: Yes, I went to London first and did that placement after university [inaudible 00:01:52]. I was there for four weeks, and it was a good first experience but obviously because it was my first experience I didn't really know whether I fully liked it, or fully hated it because it was my first reference point. So you're just kind of putting the feelers out.

Interviewer: Are you from London?

Graduate: No not at all, I'm actually from Cornwall actually.

Interviewer: Oh right okay, so it's not like you're from Bristol or London.

Graduate: No so it was quite a big change. Cornwall there's barely anything, to then London, it was a bit mental. But I really enjoyed it, it was a great experience. I lived with a couple of friends as well who were also on placement. So I was there for four weeks, then finished that and came here. I absolutely loved it here, just the whole atmosphere, the sort of attitude everybody has. For me I'm a massive people person and I feel like I need that sort of social aspect. So for instance we have a table tennis table upstairs, and a pool table.

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Interviewer:	Sounds great. When did you start at Texty? How long have you been here?
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Interviewer:	I know what I want to do, I just can't do it.
Graduate:	That's it, it's great to have this support network that's here in terms of everyone else being able to chip in, and just constantly bugging people with questions so that's good.
Interviewer:	Are you happy to do that? You know ask questions, get people opinions?
Graduate:	Absolutely yeah.
Interviewer:	You're just using people-
Graduate:	Yeah, I'm just a big old user.
Interviewer:	You're using people to learn yourself, and they're happy for you to do that.

Graduate:	For sure everyone's really supportive. If anyone can help in any way. People offer to take time out of their day and actually show you the proper process of doing something. If you do something wrong, they're more than willing to show you how to do something properly.
Interviewer:	Definitely. Do you have a specific person that you go to to do this, or is it just anyone?
Graduate:	It's mainly the guy that's sat beside me, Sam actually. I sit by Sam so I'm constantly bugging him for questions but obviously you try and be aware of when people are busier than usual. Try and pick your moments.
Interviewer:	You're understanding of the fact that you can't sit there all day.
Graduate:	If it's concerning the project itself then it's the other people that I-
Interviewer:	On that team. So in a collaborative kind of environment you'll ask the other team members.
Graduate:	For sure, if somebody's works on specific projects on the past it's probably more relevant to ask them about an issue with the file then it would Sam sat beside me, who's not got a previous background to it.
Interviewer:	How is Taxi helping to support your learning and development as a designer?
Graduate:	They do a lot. Other than just the support that I spoke about, they also have a little budget for training inspiration which is fantastic. Basically we can spend that money on what inspires us specifically as opposed to sort of having a training day that everyone goes too. It's very much individual with everyone and line manager meetings are every month, and on top of that I've just had my three month review, where they properly take the time to give you the, not what you're doing wrong, but what you do well, and areas of improvement, which obviously when you start that list can be as long as your arm. You're always trying to improve.
Interviewer:	I'm sure it's not that bad. Did you spend your training and inspiration budget, have you spent that? Have you done anything with that so far?
Graduate:	I haven't spent it yet, because I wanted to think about what would best suit me in terms of what to do. But I think for me, when I mentioned earlier about the technical aspect of it, I think I'll probably spend that on software. Adobe CC for instance for the year, just so in my own time I can actually go away and work on a lot of my own projects, and just pick up certain skills from that.
Interviewer:	Cool, when you have to do things like your three month review and talking to your line manager, do you find that it's very relaxed? Do you find it helpful? What do you think about it?
Graduate:	Absolutely, I think it's good to have that opportunity. Quite often we meet up and we chat, I'm happy, he's happy and if there's anything to flag up he'll flag it up but it's nice to have it so regularly because if something did go wrong I wouldn't want to feel as thought I'd have to wait three months to blag it. To be honest if something was going drastically wrong then I would flag it up straight away rather than wait until my line manager meeting, but it's nice-
Interviewer:	Until someone else brings it up.
Graduate:	It's nice to have that opportunity though, it's kind of like a support network again.
Interviewer:	That makes sense. Is there anything that you'd like to see being done to help you learn and develop more, or are you happy?

Graduate:	I'm really happy with how it's going at the moment to be honest. I think we're always trying to think of ways to implement more opportunities for training, especially with placement programs and stuff coming into place, like how we can best utilize that. When I came in on placement there was a conscious effort to put me on a small project, a big project, different stages, and they also offer this portfolio review with the founders at the end of the actual placement. The founders are very very busy, so it was really nice that they do that, they really are from the ground up as opposed to-
Interviewer:	Taking the time out.
Graduate:	Yeah for sure.
Interviewer:	So you felt valued at that point that they were taking time out to do that for you?
Graduate:	Yeah for sure. As a placement you don't expect that ... you are bottom of the food chain, and that's fine, you have to accept that when you leave uni. I think some people leave uni and they think I've spent seven years in education, now I'm a big dog. It's like well no, you still know nothing really, you know nothing of how its run in industry and that sort of stuff. So it's lovely to have that sort of attitude, and for them to sort of work from the ground up as I say.
Interviewer:	What skills ... your own personal skills, have been most useful since you've been here? It might have been skills that you've developed at university, they might be your own personal skills, or it might just be something else that you've brought that you feel has made a real impact in your development in the workplace.
Graduate:	I'd say for me it's sort of confidence in presenting. I think it's a shame sometimes where you can see someone has a really good idea but they may not be able to present it properly. It's something that I'm obviously very much working on improving, but from going in placement I think that's one of the key things they picked up on, was I try not to have the inhibitions in terms of presenting to a group. I think that's really important, especially because it's not just always what you're like as a designer, it's about what you're like as a person. I think even with placements, we all want to take as many opportunities to be remembered and have a presence. I'm not saying go in there with a megaphone, and just go screaming everywhere, but just make as many cups of tea as you can, and just chat to as many people as you can.
Interviewer:	Basically be nice and be helpful.
Graduate:	Absolutely, work hard and be nice to people.
Interviewer:	Obviously you've met a lot of people through that process as well.
Graduate:	Yeah definitely.
Interviewer:	You're kind of building up an informal network as well. I know that you have talked about what the agency are doing for you to help your learning and development what have you done yourself to help support and develop your own learning as a designer?
Graduate:	In terms of outside the studio?
Interviewer:	Any way you feel like you're pushing yourself and doing things personally towards your own learning.
Graduate:	Yeah definitely. So they have some projects within the studio which if you're particularly passionate about, more social, I can't actually say what projects they are but you can take the time yourself, I've stayed behind a few evenings, or worked through lunch some times, just to essentially do something justice if I really feel like I haven't properly communicated what I've done, then I'm more than

willing to take extra time to do that. But that's something that the studio don't put any pressure on me to do, or ask you to do that. That's purely down to-

Interviewer: Self initiation.

Graduate: Absolutely, it's how far you want to push it.

Interviewer: Do you do anything like go to design talks or get involved in the design community in any way?

Graduate: Yeah absolutely, so down at the Arnolfini they'll have west of England design talks and we quite often bundle down as a studio to that, so it's not likely a compulsory thing or anything like that, but it's just the opportunity that I quite like to go. Other people ... obviously be we have the same interest in design, we've been to two or three of those talks now. They're fantastic, because at university they had visiting lecturers as well, and I really enjoyed those talks because it wasn't just about giving me an insight into industry, but it's just what everybody else is doing as well. I think, especially being in Bristol there's this sort of conscious, back of your mind, people being in London where there's kind of larger demographics of studios. It's nice to still have that connection to the rest of the country and the other creative hubs.

Interviewer: I'm going to ask two interrelated questions. So could you tell me of something that's happened since you've been at Taxi that you had a little bit of a career high, where you felt you learnt something really positive, and really well, and then the flip side to that is another time where you thought, that's just a really, I've really ballsed that up or something, and what have you learnt from both of those things?

Graduate: Career high. I would say there was a project in the creative conception stages, which is my favorite part of it, and one of my ideas got taken forward to go into research for a certain project. For me that was just great to see ... what was really lovely about it actually is that I pitched the idea quite early on, and it didn't feel as though it fitted the brief effectively. I did a bit of work on it, spoke to another designer about it, and got them to help with the design to actually bring it to life. I felt that I couldn't effectively communicate what I could imagine, I couldn't effectively communicate technically. He helped me with it, and he just did exactly what I wanted for it, and really bought it to life. If was fantastic for me to see that the idea was a must and to see that somebody else, with that help, can do that. It would have just been gutting if I couldn't properly communicate what I could see. No one's going to get that now because somebody else did that, and it actually went forward which is fantastic.

Graduate: Then in terms of a low, I would say more of a frustrated moments for myself where I feel like I just want to be faster, I want to be better at what I so. Quite often you come up with a quick idea, and you'll go "I already know what it looks like in my head," and then you have to take hours to show it. It's a shame that what you think is not in real time, just plug into a screen and be like, what about this, what about that. The fact that you have to that time if you don't the technical skills behind it, which is what I'm working on improving, that can be frustrating because you feel like you're not doing an idea justice, you're not fully communicating where you see it going.

Interviewer: Do you think that you have ... obviously you have identified what you need to do there because you talked about that you'd like to do some software sort of thing so those processes have actually made you realize where your strengths and weaknesses lie, and what you need to work on. You've become more aware of that.

Graduate: Yeah absolutely, for sure. I think from being here, the theory and everything at uni that you get it begins to be tested, and you stress which elements are more appropriate, and which are wrong. But I would say actually from being at Falmouth they're really good at pushing your creative conceptual stage. I think there's a risk that when you leave you're like, oh God, because it's a skill that's not really

tangible. In terms of ... "I'm an ideas man." To put that on the CV is just kind of like, that's not actually a physical thing, and part of you is a bit self conscious about that.

Interviewer: Your own, how you explain things and articulate things, I think most design employers are looking for that, that intangible thing they can quite put their finger on.

Graduate: No but there's always that risk when your mum or your grans like, "what's the key thing that you've taken out of it?" Ideas, ideas.

Interviewer: They probably still don't even know what you do.

Graduate: For sure, my grandma definitely doesn't. But yeah, I think there's kind of a fear that that isn't appropriate when you leave, and then it's really refreshing when you go somewhere it is still very much about that which just reinforces everything you've learnt which is lovely.

Interviewer: That's good. Just one last question really, it's about graduates and internships in general, you can draw on your own experience. What do you think is the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates.

Graduate: Okay I think any experience internship wise, within reason obviously, is a good experience. Even if you have a terrible time that gives you a reference point of what you don't like, then because of that by process of elimination you can begin to see what you do like.

Graduate: So for instance at the place I was at before, they had a pool table, they had this big space, social space but when it got to lunchtime everyone was still working, eating lunch at their desks, head phones in. There was no music playing. Loads of little things, but for me they're really important. That gave me a rough idea of what I need a studio which is more social, that for me when I came here just clicked instantly.

Graduate: In terms of ... sorry what the question again?

Interviewer: Advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates.

Graduate: Okay so obviously disadvantages, if you haven't been able to work over the summers and build up that sort of blanket of money then it can be really tough, especially in central London. It's so expensive, thankfully because of Air BnB that's how I've stayed with a few friends and split the cost but if you don't know anyone, and if no one happens to be on placement when you're on placement then it's a very difficult thing to do cheaply, it can get very expensive. That's not something to do with ... that doesn't really reflect the studio or work or anything like that but it's just a logistical thing that you need, the reality of it is that needs to be considered.

Graduate: So that's a massive disadvantage sometimes, is the pay. I'd say sometimes it can be a little isolating because you're thrown into the deep end. You're the only placement there whereas at the moment we've got four juniors at Taxi so you have this support network of other people who started at a similar time. Whereas quite often when you're on placement it's kind of a double edged sword. You're the only one there they sort of emerge you but then you also don't necessarily have as much of a support network because there's no one else in the same position as you.

Graduate: I'm trying to think of other advantages and disadvantages.

Interviewer: There is something I did want to talk to you about, which is it's quite unusual to have four kind of designers at the same level together at the same time. I know you probably don't have anything to compare it to but has it been really nice thing

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	to all be together, and use each other to talk to and experience the same thing at the same time.
Graduate:	Absolutely, I think it's nice. If any of us feel a little out of our depth in any area … it's great having that support network of people that are above you but it's lovely having everyone on the same level, it's just a bit different. I think they're more understanding of the position you're in because obviously they've gone through it themselves, and they're still going through it.
Graduate:	So yeah it's fantastic, I'm so grateful that happened. I think although I was saying it's really supportive I can see it being more difficult going in solo with that, and it being a more intimidating experience no matter how nice people are. It's fantastic, we all talk to each other about it, and we try and have sort of meetups every now and then between ourselves. It's not just the junior designers, it might be the junior client side, and it's just nice to be able to catch up with him and get his insight on things as well.
Interviewer:	That sounds great. That's all the questions I have.
Graduate:	Cool. Brilliant. It's lovely to meet you.

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD3-TX

Interviewer: Okay. It doesn't go anywhere, it's just for my own personal use.

Graduate: Yeah, of course. So you know.

Interviewer: So what university did you go to?

Graduate: I went to Falmouth University.

Interviewer: Another one.

Graduate: Yes. I was actually in the same ... so we had like group crit sessions. I was actually in the same group crit as Kiera who's here as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, so you obviously know each other beforehand.

Graduate: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Ended up at the same place. How did this role come about? Could you describe the process you went through?

Graduate: Yeah. Basically, when I was in university, we actually had a section in our curriculum called Transitions, so focused very much about what we did after university. Part of that was that we had a load of studios that came to the university and did a load of workshops. One of the workshops, they're currently doing at the moment actually, the last week, was this Cider brief, where they essentially just did some workshop between us and we all have a stab at the brief, send off work too them. And from that they kind of sort of decide who they'd like to bring in for an interview and whether that can lead to a placement. I got on really well with Sam, you've met Sam. I chatted to him a bit about my work, and then I was able to actually go in and have an interview. That lead to a placement.

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Interviewer:	I know what I want to do, I just can't do it.
Graduate:	That's it, it's great to have this support network that's here in terms of everyone else being able to chip in, and just constantly bugging people with questions so that's good.
Interviewer:	Are you happy to do that? You know ask questions, get people opinions?
Graduate:	Absolutely yeah.
Interviewer:	You're just using people-
Graduate:	Yeah, I'm just a big old user.
Interviewer:	You're using people to learn yourself, and they're happy for you to do that.

Graduate:	For sure everyone's really supportive. If anyone can help in any way. People offer to take time out of their day and actually show you the proper process of doing something. If you do something wrong, they're more than willing to show you how to do something properly.
Interviewer:	Definitely. Do you have a specific person that you go to to do this, or is it just anyone?
Graduate:	It's mainly the guy that's sat beside me, Sam actually. I sit by Sam so I'm constantly bugging him for questions but obviously you try and be aware of when people are busier than usual. Try and pick your moments.
Interviewer:	You're understanding of the fact that you can't sit there all day.
Graduate:	If it's concerning the project itself then it's the other people that I-
Interviewer:	On that team. So in a collaborative kind of environment you'll ask the other team members.
Graduate:	For sure, if somebody's works on specific projects on the past it's probably more relevant to ask them about an issue with the file then it would Sam sat beside me, who's not got a previous background to it.
Interviewer:	How is Taxi helping to support your learning and development as a designer?
Graduate:	They do a lot. Other than just the support that I spoke about, they also have a little budget for training inspiration which is fantastic. Basically we can spend that money on what inspires us specifically as opposed to sort of having a training day that everyone goes too. It's very much individual with everyone and line manager meetings are every month, and on top of that I've just had my three month review, where they properly take the time to give you the, not what you're doing wrong, but what you do well, and areas of improvement, which obviously when you start that list can be as long as your arm. You're always trying to improve.
Interviewer:	I'm sure it's not that bad. Did you spend your training and inspiration budget, have you spent that? Have you done anything with that so far?
Graduate:	I haven't spent it yet, because I wanted to think about what would best suit me in terms of what to do. But I think for me, when I mentioned earlier about the technical aspect of it, I think I'll probably spend that on software. Adobe CC for instance for the year, just so in my own time I can actually go away and work on a lot of my own projects, and just pick up certain skills from that.
Interviewer:	Cool, when you have to do things like your three month review and talking to your line manager, do you find that it's very relaxed? Do you find it helpful? What do you think about it?
Graduate:	Absolutely, I think it's good to have that opportunity. Quite often we meet up and we chat, I'm happy, he's happy and if there's anything to flag up he'll flag it up but it's nice to have it so regularly because if something did go wrong I wouldn't want to feel as thought I'd have to wait three months to blag it. To be honest if something was going drastically wrong then I would flag it up straight away rather than wait until my line manager meeting, but it's nice-
Interviewer:	Until someone else brings it up.
Graduate:	It's nice to have that opportunity though, it's kind of like a support network again.
Interviewer:	That makes sense. Is there anything that you'd like to see being done to help you learn and develop more, or are you happy?

Graduate:	I'm really happy with how it's going at the moment to be honest. I think we're always trying to think of ways to implement more opportunities for training, especially with placement programs and stuff coming into place, like how we can best utilize that. When I came in on placement there was a conscious effort to put me on a small project, a big project, different stages, and they also offer this portfolio review with the founders at the end of the actual placement. The founders are very very busy, so it was really nice that they do that, they really are from the ground up as opposed to-
Interviewer:	Taking the time out.
Graduate:	Yeah for sure.
Interviewer:	So you felt valued at that point that they were taking time out to do that for you?
Graduate:	Yeah for sure. As a placement you don't expect that ... you are bottom of the food chain, and that's fine, you have to accept that when you leave uni. I think some people leave uni and they think I've spent seven years in education, now I'm a big dog. It's like well no, you still know nothing really, you know nothing of how its run in industry and that sort of stuff. So it's lovely to have that sort of attitude, and for them to sort of work from the ground up as I say.
Interviewer:	What skills ... your own personal skills, have been most useful since you've been here? It might have been skills that you've developed at university, they might be your own personal skills, or it might just be something else that you've brought that you feel has made a real impact in your development in the workplace.
Graduate:	I'd say for me it's sort of confidence in presenting. I think it's a shame sometimes where you can see someone has a really good idea but they may not be able to present it properly. It's something that I'm obviously very much working on improving, but from going in placement I think that's one of the key things they picked up on, was I try not to have the inhibitions in terms of presenting to a group. I think that's really important, especially because it's not just always what you're like as a designer, it's about what you're like as a person. I think even with placements, we all want to take as many opportunities to be remembered and have a presence. I'm not saying go in there with a megaphone, and just go screaming everywhere, but just make as many cups of tea as you can, and just chat to as many people as you can.
Interviewer:	Basically be nice and be helpful.
Graduate:	Absolutely, work hard and be nice to people.
Interviewer:	Obviously you've met a lot of people through that process as well.
Graduate:	Yeah definitely.
Interviewer:	You're kind of building up an informal network as well. I know that you have talked about what the agency are doing for you to help your learning and development what have you done yourself to help support and develop your own learning as a designer?
Graduate:	In terms of outside the studio?
Interviewer:	Any way you feel like you're pushing yourself and doing things personally towards your own learning.
Graduate:	Yeah definitely. So they have some projects within the studio which if you're particularly passionate about, more social, I can't actually say what projects they are but you can take the time yourself, I've stayed behind a few evenings, or worked through lunch some times, just to essentially do something justice if I really feel like I haven't properly communicated what I've done, then I'm more than

willing to take extra time to do that. But that's something that the studio don't put any pressure on me to do, or ask you to do that. That's purely down to-

Interviewer: Self initiation.

Graduate: Absolutely, it's how far you want to push it.

Interviewer: Do you do anything like go to design talks or get involved in the design community in any way?

Graduate: Yeah absolutely, so down at the Arnolfini they'll have west of England design talks and we quite often bundle down as a studio to that, so it's not likely a compulsory thing or anything like that, but it's just the opportunity that I quite like to go. Other people ... obviously be we have the same interest in design, we've been to two or three of those talks now. They're fantastic, because at university they had visiting lecturers as well, and I really enjoyed those talks because it wasn't just about giving me an insight into industry, but it's just what everybody else is doing as well. I think, especially being in Bristol there's this sort of conscious, back of your mind, people being in London where there's kind of larger demographics of studios. It's nice to still have that connection to the rest of the country and the other creative hubs.

Interviewer: I'm going to ask two interrelated questions. So could you tell me of something that's happened since you've been at Taxi that you had a little bit of a career high, where you felt you learnt something really positive, and really well, and then the flip side to that is another time where you thought, that's just a really, I've really ballsed that up or something, and what have you learnt from both of those things?

Graduate: Career high. I would say there was a project in the creative conception stages, which is my favorite part of it, and one of my ideas got taken forward to go into research for a certain project. For me that was just great to see ... what was really lovely about it actually is that I pitched the idea quite early on, and it didn't feel as though it fitted the brief effectively. I did a bit of work on it, spoke to another designer about it, and got them to help with the design to actually bring it to life. I felt that I couldn't effectively communicate what I could imagine, I couldn't effectively communicate technically. He helped me with it, and he just did exactly what I wanted for it, and really bought it to life. If was fantastic for me to see that the idea was a must and to see that somebody else, with that help, can do that. It would have just been gutting if I couldn't properly communicate what I could see. No one's going to get that now because somebody else did that, and it actually went forward which is fantastic.

Graduate: Then in terms of a low, I would say more of a frustrated moments for myself where I feel like I just want to be faster, I want to be better at what I so. Quite often you come up with a quick idea, and you'll go "I already know what it looks like in my head," and then you have to take hours to show it. It's a shame that what you think is not in real time, just plug into a screen and be like, what about this, what about that. The fact that you have to that time if you don't the technical skills behind it, which is what I'm working on improving, that can be frustrating because you feel like you're not doing an idea justice, you're not fully communicating where you see it going.

Interviewer: Do you think that you have ... obviously you have identified what you need to do there because you talked about that you'd like to do some software sort of thing so those processes have actually made you realize where your strengths and weaknesses lie, and what you need to work on. You've become more aware of that.

Graduate: Yeah absolutely, for sure. I think from being here, the theory and everything at uni that you get it begins to be tested, and you stress which elements are more appropriate, and which are wrong. But I would say actually from being at Falmouth they're really good at pushing your creative conceptual stage. I think there's a risk that when you leave you're like, oh God, because it's a skill that's not really

tangible. In terms of ... "I'm an ideas man." To put that on the CV is just kind of like, that's not actually a physical thing, and part of you is a bit self conscious about that.

Interviewer: Your own, how you explain things and articulate things, I think most design employers are looking for that, that intangible thing they can quite put their finger on.

Graduate: No but there's always that risk when your mum or your grans like, "what's the key thing that you've taken out of it?" Ideas, ideas.

Interviewer: They probably still don't even know what you do.

Graduate: For sure, my grandma definitely doesn't. But yeah, I think there's kind of a fear that that isn't appropriate when you leave, and then it's really refreshing when you go somewhere it is still very much about that which just reinforces everything you've learnt which is lovely.

Interviewer: That's good. Just one last question really, it's about graduates and internships in general, you can draw on your own experience. What do you think is the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates.

Graduate: Okay I think any experience internship wise, within reason obviously, is a good experience. Even if you have a terrible time that gives you a reference point of what you don't like, then because of that by process of elimination you can begin to see what you do like.

Graduate: So for instance at the place I was at before, they had a pool table, they had this big space, social space but when it got to lunchtime everyone was still working, eating lunch at their desks, head phones in. There was no music playing. Loads of little things, but for me they're really important. That gave me a rough idea of what I need a studio which is more social, that for me when I came here just clicked instantly.

Graduate: In terms of ... sorry what the question again?

Interviewer: Advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates.

Graduate: Okay so obviously disadvantages, if you haven't been able to work over the summers and build up that sort of blanket of money then it can be really tough, especially in central London. It's so expensive, thankfully because of Air BnB that's how I've stayed with a few friends and split the cost but if you don't know anyone, and if no one happens to be on placement when you're on placement then it's a very difficult thing to do cheaply, it can get very expensive. That's not something to do with ... that doesn't really reflect the studio or work or anything like that but it's just a logistical thing that you need, the reality of it is that needs to be considered.

Graduate: So that's a massive disadvantage sometimes, is the pay. I'd say sometimes it can be a little isolating because you're thrown into the deep end. You're the only placement there whereas at the moment we've got four juniors at Taxi so you have this support network of other people who started at a similar time. Whereas quite often when you're on placement it's kind of a double edged sword. You're the only one there they sort of emerge you but then you also don't necessarily have as much of a support network because there's no one else in the same position as you.

Graduate: I'm trying to think of other advantages and disadvantages.

Interviewer: There is something I did want to talk to you about, which is it's quite unusual to have four kind of designers at the same level together at the same time. I know you probably don't have anything to compare it to but has it been really nice thing

	to all be together, and use each other to talk to and experience the same thing at the same time.
Graduate:	Absolutely, I think it's nice. If any of us feel a little out of our depth in any area … it's great having that support network of people that are above you but it's lovely having everyone on the same level, it's just a bit different. I think they're more understanding of the position you're in because obviously they've gone through it themselves, and they're still going through it.
Graduate:	So yeah it's fantastic, I'm so grateful that happened. I think although I was saying it's really supportive I can see it being more difficult going in solo with that, and it being a more intimidating experience no matter how nice people are. It's fantastic, we all talk to each other about it, and we try and have sort of meetups every now and then between ourselves. It's not just the junior designers, it might be the junior client side, and it's just nice to be able to catch up with him and get his insight on things as well.
Interviewer:	That sounds great. That's all the questions I have.
Graduate:	Cool. Brilliant. It's lovely to meet you.

INTERVIEW ONE: GRAD4-TX

Interviewer	How did this role come about and describe the process it took?
Graduate	I was emailed by Sam who oversees the intern programme asking if I'd like to come in for an interview. From this I had an interview for a placement. I had a two week placement that was extended by another week, making it three, as I had an extra week so asked if they wanted me for longer! I was then offered a job after my three weeks as a junior creative.
Interviewer	How long have you been at Taxi?
Graduate	7 months.
Interviewer	Did you imagine this would be the path you would take after graduation and why?
Graduate	Not completely. I had 4 other internships lined up after Taxi (which was my first) which I had imagined to be the expected path. Being offered a job after my first internships was daunting as I hadn't experienced the other agencies (all of which were in London) other than 3 placements in the summer of my second year. I had expected to have all 4 internships to be honest and may have then have to find more after to see if they'd offer me a job.
Interviewer	What were your expectations of this role when you started?
Graduate	I imagined it to be like the placement I had which covered lots of projects and lots of areas within packaging design. I did however have the perception that juniors are put on less interesting tasks that simply need to be done.
Interviewer	How is the role going – is it how you imagined it to be?
Graduate	It is less varied than the placement which was a slight surprise when I started but I am used to now. I guess this is because the placements here seem to be a condensed experience which isn't exactly how the day to day goes. My learning and development of skills is continual and nurtured (more than expected) by the team which is the best thing about the role.
Interviewer	How is the design agency helping to support and develop your learning?
Graduate	We have a training and inspiration budget each year to use which I have invested into a brush typography course as this is something I would like to learn but don't necessarily have the opportunity within projects. Also each project usually has a team of diverse roles with different levels of experience and this is definitely a good way of learning from others in a collaborative environment. We also have coffee catch ups with our line manger monthly where we can feedback on how we're doing, any issues, what we'd like to be doing more of etc.
Interviewer	How could your workplace learning be supported and developed further?
Graduate	It's pretty damn good to be honest!!!
Interviewer	What skills have been most useful to you in the design agency? (e.g.: from university, personal, previous experience)
Graduate	People skills definitely are near the top especially at Taxi where the team are chatty, friendly, enthusiastic and this is always considered during the hiring process to make sure people are 'Taxi' and gel well with the team and our mantra. University prepares you with design basics in the sense of software, idea, wit etc, but when you're in work in real life you really how much there still is to learn and you become and sponge!
Interviewer	How have you supported your own development while at the design agency?
Graduate	Being proactive and using the opportunities to voice what Id like to do, change, develop skills in etc through line managers and generally having an approachable team. I have also, along with other juniors, set up a session where we get our

	hands on creative tissue stages of projects so we can develop this quick thinking skill whilst being in the know of what's going on in the studio.
Interviewer	Where has your learning taken place – e.g.: in the workplace, external courses, other or, a mix?
Graduate	A mix. Uni, workplace, talks we go to (Thread, WEDF, etc), workshops and talks at the studio and our training budget.
Interviewer	Could you tell me what a major positive so far in your role?
Graduate	The opportunities to learn and how Taxi nurtures this is definitely the biggest positive.
Interviewer	Has there been a low point in your role so far?
Graduate	I have felt unsupported at times in my first few months, where starting your first job is overwhelming enough and this isn't necessarily recognised by all the team.
Interviewer	What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of internships for graduates?
Graduate	You get to see what being in a studio environment is like and the kind of projects you will work on. You see how teams are structured (which I think is very different to uni). Disadvantage is that sometimes they don't plan your time and therefore you aren't benefitting much or not getting any work! (previous experience at another agency). Another is that, although its good and exciting, a placement gives you a condensed version of what a few months may look like in an agency which isn't as varied as it is in 'real life'.

INTERVIEW TWO: DA-TX

Interviewer: ... for my own reference.

Design Agency: Yep.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it's pretty much the same as last time. It just talks about how the graduates have generally been doing. How have the four graduates generally been developing in their role since I last spoke to you in March?

Design Agency: Generally all doing pretty well, really. I think it's kind of at a time for them, I think, well with Taxi, business is changing a little bit, the way the teams are structured and they're getting to the point where they are kind of having to do a lot more work, but that's, I think, from just being really busy. So I think they're all doing really well, but I think it's gotten to that point where they're realizing, yeah it's gotten quite busy and it's a bit knuckle down at the minute for them.

Interviewer: They definitely all mentioned that they have been really busy.

Interviewer: Hello?

Interviewer: I didn't know if it was me or you. Yeah, so you said it's been really busy and ... Hello?

Design Agency: Yeah, you still there? Oh I can't [crosstalk 00:01:23]

Interviewer: Oh sorry, you said you've been really busy and you'd been restructuring the` groups.

Design Agency: Yeah, so, yeah I think they're all improving and all growing into their roles, but yeah, it's gotten a lot busier so I think they're finding the pressure's on a little bit more now for them. But yeah, they're adapting to that quite well, they're all still mega-enthusiastic and eager to learn stuff, and they're still doing their junior hour thing, they're little thing that they started. They're still doing that and picking up some good briefs from that, so on the whole I think they're all still doing pretty good, really.

Interviewer: Cool, that's really good news. So, overall, do you think your expectations of them have been met in terms of their role in what you should expect from someone at that level?

Design Agency: I think so. I think the one thing, because I did a couple of their P.D.R., there's a few stages of it, but you have an initial chat with someone first, and I did a couple of theirs, and I think they're all doing really well and meeting expectations in terms of the day to day stuff. I think, just in general, they all just need to push it more, creatively, and I think it's that, almost like naivety, I think, we want a little bit more of. Like showing us the really really cool stuff, I think, keeping that going as you move out of uni and stuff, keeping an ear to the ground on the more crazy, creative stuff.

Design Agency: I think that's what they just need to keep pushing, not getting bogged down in the day to day stuff. I think some of them have essentially taken on a little bit too much work, but really they should be concentrating on ideas and stuff. But yeah, on the whole, I think they're all doing really, really well.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it's just in those situations, you're just guiding them back on track so that they don't thunder off into the wilderness.

Design Agency: Yeah, yeah, exactly. I think, naturally, some of them do want to know everything about the project, and some simply just want to concentrate on the ... Like, you just do the ideas, you're the guy doing the ideas now. But that's just a learning

curve kind of thing. But yeah, on the whole I think they're all still doing really well [inaudible 00:03:53].

Interviewer: Cool. That makes sense.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: And what type of ... Well, you mentioned that have a little chat to them if they're going off track a little bit, but what type of support, in general, do you offer to graduates when these type of events are taking place? When they need a bit more support.

Design Agency: Yeah, so at the minute, yeah as I mentioned the teams have kind of been restructured in a way, so we've kind of got, almost like support teams in the studio now, so we've all moved around. So you all kind of sat in your support teams, so everyone is in a group with an A.C.D., and then are line managing that group. So, from the day to day, although you're not working with that person, particularly, on a project, that sat near you. So any quick questions where you're struggling or anything, you can turn to the person next to you and get help that way. So, I think that's really going to improve that support network, almost, just being in the vicinity of people that you're in a little team, almost. Although you're not in a team working with anyone in particular.

Interviewer: Yeah, was that restructuring specifically because of the juniors, or was it a general company decision?

Design Agency: No, just a general one, really, in terms of, like, we're growing just the way we handle development. Yeah, I think it's just [inaudible 00:05:22], really. So yeah.

Interviewer: And that's just one of the outcomes of it, is that it is quite good for that situation at the moment, as well, with the juniors being able to have a support team, so it's one of the benefits of restructuring it like that.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool.

Design Agency: And then yeah, like we said last time, they've still got the training and inspiration budget, stuff like that. I think some of them are trying, I'm not sure whether they'll get it yet, but have half the day a month to do just day of online training and stuff like that, so I think what has come out of some of those P.D.R.s is that maybe their technical skills aren't quite there yet.

Design Agency: But that's just like, using Photoshop and Illustrator and things like that, which you learn on the job, but the more well they do, the more that they're expected to just know that kind of stuff, so I think hopefully some of them are going get put in that area of literally just online tutorials and brushing up on those skills, because we work so fast sometimes you're kind of just ... You kind of bodge it, for lack of a better word, or get someone else who can just do it quicker.

Design Agency: So I think, yeah, with the training and inspiration budget, and hopefully something will get them more time to learn in that way.

Interviewer: Yeah they also mentioned that you've got a budget for some courses online, so they all seem quite happy with that, so yeah, cool. So basically, it's just giving them a bit more to learn and cope with so they can kind of apply it themselves. It's a support thing as well as something that is helpful for the company, as well.

Design Agency: Yeah, yeah definitely, and I guess, because obviously the more you learn the more you're comfortable in your role as well, and they'll kind of stick their hands up for more things and get involved in more things, hopefully, the more they learn and

the more they feel comfortable, I think. Because I think that's the one thing you learn from getting juniors in, is the confidence thing.

Design Agency: So we've got a placement that's just started as well over the last three weeks, a design placement, and she's really good but not confident at all in Photoshop, and there's been times where you've left her for a couple of hours and she's sat there and struggled and come over like, "I can't do it, I just haven't got the confidence with it". So I think, yeah, that's what you learn from ... Probably with the more technical stuff. Confidence and stuff like that, they need to build, and some of that is through just learning new skills and stuff.

Interviewer: Cool, and can you tell me, just in a general thing, have there been some positive experiences that you've had with any of the graduates, or maybe it's more than one in terms of possibly something they've done at work that you thought was really amazing, or it took ... It doesn't necessarily need to be directly linked with a client or job, it could be something they've done in the design agency that you felt was a really positive thing.

Design Agency: Well, from the junior hour initiative that they set up themselves, so they take themselves a way for an hour a week, during a lunch hour, and they'll either [inaudible 00:08:55] a brief [inaudible 00:08:57], just a little hour brief, and then see what comes out of it, so through that they recently worked on a project, so on a live project, came up with, between like four or five of them, I think, were in that meeting, came up with like ten really rough concepts and one or two of those went through and presented them to the client, so that was really a good moment for them. I think that what they're doing is worthwhile and still worth doing.

Design Agency: And then Keira presented that super quickly to the team, who I was working on to that project. Just kind of stood up in front of people who had not really worked on the project before and just quickly ran through the idea. So that was quite a good moment, I think, for them and for her as well, because I think it can be quite daunting, even though we're all really friendly and everybody kind of gets on to standing up in front of the creative director and A.C.D., and all of these other people in a group, talking about something you've only had an hour of takes a bit of guts, really.

Interviewer: A bit of guts. Yeah, definitely, and is there anything that you've possibly noticed that isn't negative, but possibly needs a bit more support or help with any of them?

Design Agency: Yeah, well I think the schedules thing is definitely, like, now they're getting and being given more tasks. Yeah, you can definitely see holes in some of their more technical skills, so that just needs to develop, the more they're given, basically. And I think in general, there's just been a couple of things... Like, with any job, there's some things you don't enjoy as much as others, and I definitely felt this when I was a junior, when you get to a point where you're not quite enjoying something that's maybe a little bit more mundane and a little bit more ... maybe not as creative.

Design Agency: I think it's just keeping that enthusiasm and getting on with the job, kind of, area. I think that it's that transition for anyone from ... They just need to keep up basically, and that's not ... You know, that's kind of rare, but there are times where they're like, "Ugh", you know? And I've got that as well, and I think everybody's like that.

Interviewer: So it's not specifically a graduate thing, it's just possibly more apparent when you're a recent graduate.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, cool. And how have Taxi as a company ... How have they been helping the graduates learn and develop during the time since we last talked?

Design Agency: Well, yeah, the P.D.R. process, that whole development reviews, catch up with line managers, that kind of stuff, that basically ... You go through that process and that

kind of sets you goals for the year and gives you a kind of rating, almost like a score, to where you're sitting, how far you're off the next job roles, stuff like that. So that should give them all a really clear idea of what to improve on next, I think that's probably the main thing.

Design Agency: The training budget thing, that's all kicked in again, so another pot of money's open for that so they can start using that. That's good, and then they're just, all of them, hopefully, getting opportunities on live jobs, I think that's probably the best way you learn, and they've all been on really, really good creative projects, I don't think ... Not one of them's been on the same thing. Maybe the same brand, but different projects within there.

Interviewer: Sure.

Design Agency: Yeah, and hopefully now, we've kind of moved the studio around a little bit. Hopefully that'll encourage a bit more support, kind of close hand, I think, just like the general day to day asking of questions and getting a different perspective on what they're working on. Hopefully that'll help them grow and develop a bit as well.

Interviewer: Cool.

Design Agency: Trying to think what else, really. Yeah, that's kind of it, don't you think?

Interviewer: Yeah, that sounds popping, it's all good. And how do you ... In terms of the graduates and the skills that they've got, what skills have been the most useful in the work environment, do you think? I mean, I know you've talked about, perhaps, there's problems in their software skills, but are there other skills they've got that actually are really valuable?

Design Agency: Yeah, I think they're all quite different, so they've all got different skills I think they all bring, but I think above all it's just their enthusiasm for it. Actually, sometimes it can be a bit lacking, but I think that's just, from time to time you don't enjoy some jobs as others, but I think when you work with them, when you talk to them about design and they all come over and want to know what you're working on and that kind of stuff.

Design Agency: I think that's really valuable, especially because, like I say when I go out and speak to students, you have to have an answer for something if they're like, "Oh, why have you done that?". Then you have to almost explain, whereas when you're working with someone who has been in the industry a bit longer, you almost assume a little bit and maybe you don't ask those kind of questions. So that curiosity, I guess, that is really valuable, I think, that we all get from them.

Design Agency: And they're all just super hard workers as well, I think. I think that they all muck in and as much as something, they can find it difficult. I think it's just difficult, it's just hard at the studio at the minute because it's so busy, but they all muck in and graft and put their hand up to do extra work and help out when people are late in the studio. So again, that's probably an enthusiasm thing, and a kind of drive to help out in the studio. So I think that's really good.

Design Agency: And then, yeah, like for the example I used before, like coming up with ideas. I think, hopefully, they've grown in confidence with that, and bringing fresh thinking to the studio. I think they've definitely all kind of bought ... They've definitely all had a kind of idea of theirs that's gone through to the client, has informed an idea which ... I think Keira's been the longest now, so she's like nine months, so to have that quickly, really, they've all had stuff that's contributed that's informed work, that's quite good, because I think within the industry you kind of ... I don't know whether it's true or not, but you say you don't get anything from juniors for like six months, it's just all learning and then they might come up with something, but they've contributed, I think, as well.

Interviewer: You know when you mentioned they've all had an experience with a client where their ideas have gone through, have you noticed that their confidence or enthusiasm may have increased at that point, or have you noticed the way they deal with things is slightly different?

Design Agency: Like if their idea gets picked?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- yeah, yeah. Like, do you think it gives them a boost, or not unless they show it?

Design Agency: I think they probably ... I think it does, I think when it ... So they probably don't get to see the client side, so much, like in terms of sitting in meetings and stuff like that, but if it gets picked internally they're definitely really, really pleased. Because it's not that it's rare, but the majority of ideas won't be by them, because they're the newest, you have to realize, because they're probably not as well thought out, because we work on big grand sort of strategy and stuff behind them, so they [inaudible 00:17:46] was too simple, or missed the mark quite strategically on things. So yeah, they definitely get excited like we all do when your idea goes through.

Design Agency: But they're all very good at picking up other people's work and other people's ideas as well, and I think in general, at Taxi, we're quite good at that mentality of it's not your idea, it's the studio's idea, and it's a group effort, and I find it a bit ... Like, I like when my idea's go through, but I find it a bit uncomfortable when you get credited with an idea, always, because it's always ... It's never just one person. I've always been like, "Oh, well, it wasn't really all mine, it was like, you know, everybody".

Interviewer: Yeah, there was a build-up to it before that point.

Design Agency: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely. Cool, that's okay. And, sorry I'm just going to that cat through the door before it tears down the door. Sorry.

Design Agency: It's fine.

Interviewer: And this is just general question, it's basically could you reflect on when all the juniors started at Taxi, I know they started at slightly different times, and then compare it to now, the current time. How do you feel, overall, how do you feel their learning and development has generally happened, or what is the most important perspective they're learning in development in that time that you've noticed?

Design Agency: I think the biggest thing ... I think they all started off really well, like in terms of ideas, they all kind of hit the ground running. So I think the main thing they've learned is understanding how brands work, and understanding how to tackle a brief that's got a lot more behind it than a university brief would.

Design Agency: So, like, an [inaudible 00:20:00] sort of strategy, and like understanding what a brand proposition is, and things like that which you just don't get exposed to at uni. So I think they're understanding of brands and how packaging works, actually, because I don't think many of them did proper packaging projects at uni, so I think they're understanding of packaging has probably improved a lot.

Interviewer: It's quite intense.

Design Agency: Yeah, I don't have to say much, I didn't have any packaging last time.

Interviewer: No, it's not something people really concentrate ... I think it quite put people off, to be honest, at university. I'm not saying it's bad, it's just very intricate, some of it.

Design Agency: Yeah, yeah, I think ... Yeah I think, well uni, you're kind of ... I don't know, branding was always the main thing. I guess that comes into packaging, but yeah you're a bit more out there, I think, at uni, aren't you? Kind of a bit broader than designer bowls or something. See, I think that's probably the biggest improvement that you can see in them, really.

Design Agency: And just in terms of building ideas. I think, although they're all brilliant at coming up with ideas, I think, like building concept boards, and how to talk about their ideas, as well, I think they've all probably grown at. Because I think they're learning that's as big a part of it as the idea is, the selling of it, as well, and that's just internally, that's not even to the client, per say. I think that's ... They probably learned to build better ideas, or just explain them a little bit better, or even ...

Design Agency: There's also a ... You can see from the girl we've gotten in a minute, who's on placement, their ideas, or just general studio ideas, there'll be more reasoning behind it over a style, whereas some stuff that she's coming up with, because she's fresh out of uni, it's like, "Oh I kind of worked for you and did something like this", and it's just like a style or something rather than building meaning into it. So I think, hopefully, they've all learned that. You can see that they've learned that, actually, I think, whereas when they came up fresh out of uni it was kind of, "Oh, I like this. I don't really know why, but it looks cool so we'll use this kind of thing". I think that's almost gone now, a little bit.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it's learning more context rather than pure style, which I guess goes back to how brands and [inaudible 00:22:31] work, so ... Cool, and I know that you've talked about the fact that you do P.D.R.s and have catch-ups and things about the goals and aims for the future, but do you have any ... In your own head do you have any idea of what you think they should be doing in the near future? So probably within a year or even closer to the next few months.

Design Agency: I think just taking on more ... I guess they're at a point now where they can start taking on more projects and seeing them through a little bit further, because I think when you start as a junior, especially, you're darting around on quite a lot of projects. So I think, not overseeing, but being at the idea stage and then being up a the development stage where you've kind of got a vision for an idea and you see it through.

Design Agency: Often when you're a junior you're ideas will go through as scamps or doodles and stuff and then someone else will develop them, so I think, as they move forward into the next job role, that's what they need to do more of. But with all of them, I think we just want to see more ideas and showing us new stuff all the time. That's really, really valuable as a business, to see fresh thinking, so I think for all of them that's always what we want to see more of really, as well as the skills side of things and that kind of stuff.

Design Agency: And there'll be more of stuff like working with freelancers and briefing in illustrators and all of that kind of development stuff, which is a bit more like mentoring for us. They move up and we get new juniors and that kind of stuff. But yeah, I think the most important thing for them is the ideas side, still keep building on that kind of thing, really.

Design Agency: And then yeah, I'm hopefully going to be handing over the placement stuff and uni visits and all of that to them, and give them the opportunity to go back to the juniors and do talks and workshops and whatever like that, so hopefully this time next year they'll be doing all of that and talking in front of people, and going back and mentoring students and stuff, which only helps them further down the line.

Interviewer: Yeah, so there is kind of a ... You have a plan in mind and the process that they can, kind of, generally follow, so yeah, it's organic, but ... Yeah, cool.

Interviewer: And, the last two questions I'm going to ask aren't specifically about the junior designers that you have at Taxi, it's more just about how you feel about the design industry and, possibly, graduates and university. But how do you feel ... Do you

think the design industry has a responsibility to recent graduates to help them into the design industry?

Design Agency: Yeah, definitely, I think hopefully there's people like me and other people who run placements, and just all creative directors or anybody in the design industry, I think. We're, like, the link to the universities, and I think, like, we've been invited to loads of degree shows and portfolio events and stuff like that, and they're the kind of places where you meet graduates, and where you get people in for placements and stuff like that, so I think without that it's really difficult to see what kind of students are out there and for people to get a foot in the door, really.

Design Agency: And most of it is just meeting people and going out there and seeing what people are like, as well as running workshops and one day briefs and things like that, or just going out and offering advice, and looking at work, and chatting to students. I think that's the most valuable thing you can do, really, because I think that it also proves that it's not a big, scary industry that's really hard to get into, it's just being accessible to students, and offering any advice that you can, really.

Design Agency: Because, you know we've all been through that process and know how hard it can be, at times, to get an email back from someone, and I'm sure I haven't emailed back people and got back to them and stuff like that, but yeah, I think it's our duty, really, to give back what we can and offer as much as possible, really. Because as great as universities are, I think some courses don't offer... Well, it's kind of a bit harsh. They don't offer the relevant experience for what we do, for what Taxi do, and for what branding and packaging agencies, more commercial agencies, maybe, do. So I think it's up to us as an industry to go and make sure people are given the option, really, because I think some universities, although they offer great courses in conceptual thinking and stuff like that, some of them don't concentrate on the commercial side, which if that's something you don't want to do then that's fine, but you should at least be given that option and given that insight into that world, I think.

Interviewer: Cool, and ... No that actually was the last question. I was going to say there was one more, but there's not. So yeah, that's it, really.

Design Agency: Great.

Interviewer: So, thank you very much.

Design Agency: That's fine.

Interviewer: So yeah, that's it, I don't need to talk to any of the ... Like Keira, or Andrew, or Lillian, [inaudible 00:28:33] any more, and I won't bother you any more. So yeah, I was just going to say, I'll drop you a email, probably, I know it sounds silly, but next year just to say ... Because I'm going to be writing everything out in the next, well probably sixth months and stuff, but ...

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD1-TX

Interviewer: Okay, that seems to be working, cool. So how's everything been going since we last talked?

Graduate: Yeah, no good. It's definitely gotten busier studio-wise, project-wise. That's probably been the biggest test since last time.

Interviewer: How have you found it when it's been busier?

Graduate: I feel ... Because there's four juniors, I think we're very much like ... Looks like we're okay because we've got each other and stuff, so I'd probably say a little bit less support when it's really, really busy because everybody's so hectic. I think maybe sometimes it's forgotten that we are still juniors and it's like we're all on different things so it's like-

Interviewer: But you're not working, all four of you together? [crosstalk 00:00:45]

Graduate: We never work together, no.

Interviewer: You never work together, but it feels like because you're there, you-

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Like it's a group.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: They look at you as a single designer.

Graduate: As a ... Yeah, definitely, rather than individuals on it.

Interviewer: Cool. And I guess that's got its benefits, and its downside as well.

Graduate: Yeah, definitely. Yeah.

Interviewer: Are your expectations of your role still being met, then, or has that opinion shifted at all?

Graduate: I'd say expectations are still the same. I think all of us together have probably set the bar quite high. So when it is really busy and it gets harder, it feels like you're dropping, but it's probably not, it's probably just leveling to the level you should be. We've had a bit of a studio change structure-wise recently, very recently, where we're now in teams rather than...

Interviewer: Right, so they're almost permanent teams.

Graduate: Yeah, and they've called them development teams, so you sort of have a middleweight above you, a senior above you, and that sort of system now.

Interviewer: So there's a logical hierarchy within each team.

Graduate: Yeah, and we're sat with the teams and stuff as well. So, for me, that's affected me a little bit, but...

Interviewer: In a positive or a negative way?

Graduate: I'm not sure yet, it's only been a week.

Interviewer:	Is it because it's a different way of working?
Graduate:	Yeah, different way of working and it was quite daunting at first, that maybe we were on client teams, so we wouldn't have as much variety, but that's been cleared up, that we're not.
Interviewer:	So you were more worried about the type of work you'd be doing-
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	...and [crosstalk 00:02:16]
Graduate:	And also just sitting with the same people and just being around your team all the time. Creativity wise, having somebody next to you that's not on the project you're on is quite useful. And we've all shifted and moved seats, so it's the first time since I've started that there's been a little bit of a routine change.
Interviewer:	I know it's only been a week, but do you feel that once it settles down it'll feel better or are you still [crosstalk 00:02:42]
Graduate:	I hope so. I hope, I don't think there's going to really, when it settles down, be any major day-to-day changes apart from line managers and stuff are going to be within your support team now. But yeah, I just go up quite a support system and to the people I was sat around anyway, and that's all been dispersed now. It's kind of feel new again.
Interviewer:	You're sort of missing it [crosstalk 00:03:08]
Graduate:	Yeah definitely, I'm definitely missing it.
Interviewer:	Cool. How is your role developing further, and has it changed at all, or do you see it changing?
Graduate:	We've had our first development reviews. Two other people in the studio who you work with closely review you with these like 360 forms and stuff. That has made me think a bit more about people have started to notice the things I'm enjoying more and that I'm not enjoying. I would say it's probably changed a little bit that people are starting to get to know me a little bit more, and maybe like, oh Kira would be better on that, which is quite nice, because I'm still super unsure on what even I want to do.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	What my specialty is. I think other people are starting to pick up on things, which is nice. I'd say in the job role, that's probably changed a bit.
Interviewer:	Was it quite interesting to get other people's thoughts on how you were developing? [crosstalk 00:04:07]
Graduate:	Yeah, it was definitely interesting. Both people kind of had the same comments, which is quite nice, because I feel like when they're different it's like, okay this is a bit different.
Interviewer:	Continuity is a good thing.
Graduate:	Yeah. What they were saying, I was like actually that's quite true, and that sort of stuff. Some really good points for development and that, which was nice.
Interviewer:	Does it make you feel like your perceived strengths can be your more interested in working ...

Graduate:	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	So that was a good thing as far as you weren't going, "Oh that's not really what I want to do."
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Does that make you feel more positive about going forward with that type of work?
Graduate:	I think so. I still don't really want to be put on hold at the moment. I still want to try a little, so I hope it isn't that narrow that they're going to be like, "Go down that route." I still would quite like to explore other routes.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so you feel it would be too early to ...
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely. Definitely too early.
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:05:04]
Graduate:	100%. I'd quite like to be competent in all the areas that we'd work on, and then specialize, which I guess would come middleweight sort of area.
Interviewer:	How has Taxi helped to support and develop your learning since I last talked to you?
Graduate:	Probably like the change that has just happened. It's, at first, so I was very unsettled about it, because I was like I don't want to be in a team I have. I want to be in the whole team. There's going to be a lot more ... Because you're working with your development team. They can see what you struggle on, they can see what you're good at, and I think that for me is going to really help, because I was sat in a group where we were all really busy on individual projects, and nobody was really honing in on what you were actually doing, so we've each been assigned a creative director who will be in control of that, so I would say development wise that is going to really help me, because ...
Interviewer:	You've got almost a specific team then.
Graduate:	Yeah. It's almost like rather than me thinking, "Oh I'm bothering next door by asking for help," it's sort of now it's like that's what you're supposed to do because it's been said.
Interviewer:	Sure, yeah. [crosstalk 00:06:22]
Graduate:	If that makes sense.
Interviewer:	That team, the one that you're in now is all going to be working on the same project [crosstalk 00:06:27]
Graduate:	Mainly, yeah. [crosstalk 00:06:28] at the time.
Interviewer:	Even if say you're working on a specific, but no one else is working on it that would have had experience [crosstalk 00:06:34]
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely. They know that this is the new development team, so it's like it's all going to feed into that. Even now when, the girl I sit next to now is a middleweight, and when she finds something new on the program, she automatically tells me.
Interviewer:	Right.

Graduate: That's sort of how the structure works now. I'd say that's probably how Taxi are …

Interviewer: Flow of information is fluid now.

Graduate: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Cool. Have you done anything yourself to support your own development as well?

Graduate: I've signed up for Skillshare, which is an online sort of forum where lots of professional designers upload like tutorial videos and stuff. That's on the inspirational budget that Taxi give us. That's cool.

Interviewer: So it cost money to join?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:07:17]

Graduate: Like a membership sort of thing. It's basically like a youtube for designers I guess. Then I also use some of my budget on the Birmingham design festival, which is four days of talks, which was just amazing, and definitely opened my eyes more to what I want to do.

Interviewer: Was there anything that really caught your eye?

Graduate: It was more the … There was a particular designer there, Aaron Draplin, and he spoke more about morals in design, and more about ethics, which is like where I want to sit in a way. It was just refreshing to have such a big sort of designer … I can only describe him as like the Lionel Messi of football, he is like that of design.

Interviewer: Did you find when you were talking about [inaudible 00:08:08] was it how he approaches design, or is it in design for clients?

Graduate: How he approaches design, I'd say.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: Yeah, he just sticks to exactly what he believes in, which at the moment is quite hard as a junior in an agency to sort of have that moral impact, if you know what I mean. He was just super, super keen on like side projects. That's how you'll fulfill how you're feeling. His just approach to, and the way he spoke about morals and ethics and stuff was just really refreshing, rather than just most of the big designers just went through their work. It was quite egotistic, and his was more like I want to show you the workings of my work, rather than …

Interviewer: Definitely.

Graduate: Which was really inspiring.

Interviewer: Cool. Did you see anything else while you were over there, or did you …

Graduate: Yeah, there was 110 speakers in Birmingham, and they sort of split up the city into the design zone, product zone, and digital zone, which was quite nice to even it up. I went with two other people, Sam and Lily. It was quite nice. We did a couple in the design section, but we more wanted to go to the ones we wouldn't normally go to.

Interviewer: Normally, yeah [crosstalk 00:09:33]

Graduate:	Which was really interesting, because everybody was super creative anyway. It was like five talks a day or something, and then we did a workshop with Aaron Draplin on Sunday, which was more like a hands on sort of. It was really, really good.
Interviewer:	It sounds amazing. That's what you spent your budget on along with the membership.
Graduate:	Yeah, that was last year's [crosstalk 00:09:54]
Interviewer:	Cool. Are the videos useful as well, or have you ...
Graduate:	Yeah, I've done a couple of them. Definitely. I'm much more like when people are showing me on the computer, I can repeat it for like five minutes, but when I come in the next day I'm like, "Oh god, I have to ask them again."
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:10:08]
Graduate:	Being able to do that in my own time as well would be just a nice thing.
Interviewer:	Since we last talked, could you tell me a positive experience you've had at work about work or maybe it's other team members. It doesn't necessarily have to be specifically design.
Graduate:	We had a particularly tight deadline a couple weeks ago that was, there was three of us on it, and I think there was like a couple of days, and none of us had been on it before, and it wasn't really any of our skill sets, so it was quite daunting. We were all sort of working on it, and it was a bit like, "Oh, is this right? We don't know if this is right." We were sending it off, and it was just a bit like ... But at the end, each and every one of us had messaged the other person's line manager to say how well they coped. We all did it without knowing the other person was going to do it, and I just thought that was really nice that we'd all three of us had noticed that we were doing something we usually wouldn't or shouldn't be doing, and at the end we'd all decided to give a little nice note to the line manager, which I think was really ...
Graduate:	I think that's what shows the spirit of Taxi quite a lot. We could have quite easily have just been like, "Oh god, that was really hard," and move on, but everybody sort of stopped to reflect on it and just to give praise in quite a tricky situation.
Interviewer:	Cool. It was almost like the team coming together made you feel ... [crosstalk 00:11:37]
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	But also that you got noticed [crosstalk 00:11:42]
Graduate:	Yeah, especially when I was like, "Oh god, I'm not doing this right at all." I feel honestly...
Interviewer:	Did you feel out of your depth?
Graduate:	100%.
Interviewer:	It almost came as a shock?
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	Has there been anything that's just been opposite of that for you, just about ... That didn't work out so well [crosstalk 00:12:01]

Graduate:	Yeah, because the studio is so busy at the moment, like absolutely hectic. Each Creative director has so much on their place, so when you're getting work reviewed it could take a couple of hours to get the time or whatever. I've been, I think that, yesterday I couldn't get reviewed. The review got pushed on hour by hour by hour, and I felt so useless. I was just up there in such a busy environment, like five hours, like I'm not doing anything. I'm just waiting for review. Just the feeling of like I'm useless...
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:12:35]
Graduate:	Yeah, yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	-worst thing to have.
Graduate:	Yeah, it was just a bit like I wish that could have been managed a little bit more.
Interviewer:	Do they, I'm not quite sure who, but is there anything you could ... Other people could do about it, or is it just one of those things that just sometimes works out like that?
Graduate:	I'm not sure. I did feel a bit like maybe I could have been dropped on, if people are so busy, then drop me onto something else whilst I'm waiting for a review, but people were like, "No, it's your workflow. Stick to your project." I'm just a bit like, I'm really not good at not being helpful. I want to feel like I'm adding something to the team, and yesterday I was just like I may as well not have even been here today.
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:13:20] really busy [crosstalk 00:13:25]
Graduate:	I'm like I know I could help you, but ...
Interviewer:	It's almost ...
Graduate:	It was frustration.
Interviewer:	I guess it's not necessarily anyone's fault, either.
Graduate:	It wasn't, though.
Interviewer:	It was just the product of some situation.
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	How do you feel Taxi are helping you learn and develop your skills on the job since we last talked?
Graduate:	Probably again the team structure thing. We've been getting quite a lot of opportunities to go to loads of talks around Bristol at the moment. They just sort of booked tickets for us to go to that sort of thing. Probably having a line manager now that's a creative director, rather than a mid or a senior, would probably be ... Yeah.
Interviewer:	Do they have to review your work or anything like that, or is it [crosstalk 00:14:30]
Graduate:	Now, yeah. I guess the creative director I'll be working with would be my line manager, so things sort of marry up more now.
Interviewer:	It's a more natural fit because before, didn't you have a mentor or a line manager that was someone else? They weren't necessarily ...

Graduate:	Yeah, which I did kind of like that in a way because it was quite a fresh, when we used to meet up for catch-ups, it would be quite fresh, and now I feel like I'm going to be talking about the work that they're on as well. If it's negative, it's like I can't really do that as openly.
Interviewer:	I guess you could talk to other people about that, couldn't you?
Graduate:	Yeah, just not officially.
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:15:04] no.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	I see what you mean. In one way, both of them have got their positives and negatives.
Graduate:	I know this is like the first week, and it is like a trial and error thing, so they might find out that actually maybe having an team line manager from another team might help more. I kind of see it as like maybe we should have a line manager, and then a development manager. I don't know.
Interviewer:	Yeah, I guess so.
Graduate:	[crosstalk 00:15:34]
Interviewer:	The four of you who are newer, it might be more important to have that?
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Somebody who's a middleweight probably doesn't need the support of larger team?
Graduate:	Yes, definitely.
Interviewer:	Cool. How do you imagine that your role is going to develop further now at Taxi?
Graduate:	I could imagine it's going to speed up quite a lot. I've already learned loads sitting next to like the new team anyway. I hope it's not pigeonholed so much to the client teams that it was perceived to be. I definitely think it's going to speed up a lot.
Interviewer:	Yeah. In terms of moving forward in job roles, do you see yourself changing job titles in the near future?
Graduate:	There's definitely like an opportunity to with the four of us. I think we have something like nine seniors, two middleweights, and four juniors, so I can imagine that would happen. I definitely wouldn't be comfortable doing that for probably another year.
Interviewer:	What skills are turning out to be really useful for you in your job?
Graduate:	Definitely more digital computer skills. I'm much more of a sort of ideas person, but coming in with just the ideas, the people who review it are very visual, so they don't see ... If you don't show them how it's going to look, then they'll just dismiss it. That's been happening a lot when I'm really trying to sell the idea. Like I know this would work, but visually they can't see it yet. If I gain more skill in that, then I feel like more ideas would go through the development stages.
Interviewer:	There's kind of like a disconnect between the concept and how ...

Graduate: Then how I can ... My actual knowledge on the computer to bring it to life.

Interviewer: The middle bit.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: The bit [crosstalk 00:17:41] fill it in.

Graduate: Yeah. I feel like when I fill that in, I will be able to progress a lot faster.

Interviewer: When you say digital skills, are you talking about anything in particular?

Graduate: Just visualizing, mostly software skills.

Interviewer: Yeah, sure.

Graduate: I'm naturally much, I'm quite crafty, so I naturally tend to draw anyway.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:18:09]

Graduate: I need to switch it up a little bit.

Interviewer: If you could reflect on when you very first started with Taxi, even as an intern to now, how do you feel that the development has been?

Graduate: Definitely so fast-paced that sometimes I feel like I haven't developed, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: In a way where I probably forgot what I knew and didn't know before because it's so fast up there. Everything is just moving. Sometimes I feel like I don't have time to learn.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:18:53]

Graduate: I don't learn, but I'm doing it. Definitely pace probably, just the pace that I'd work on a project usually to now is probably like quadrupled.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you're almost comfortable moving faster now, or do you still feel sometimes out of your depth?

Graduate: No, I do. I do still feel like I've just joined sometimes. I do feel about of my depth probably 80% of the time, but I probably know what to do with that feeling better, rather than dealing with the pace better. I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Sure.

Graduate: It's kind of become normal now to feel a bit like oh my god, I can't do it.

Interviewer: Yeah [inaudible 00:19:33] Whereas at first you just go ...

Graduate: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:19:37] then you don't do it.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:19:38] I'm falling into it, and now kind of aware that that feeling is probably how I'm supposed to feel.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer:	Or how to handle it.
Graduate:	Definitely.
Interviewer:	What happens when you feel like that would you say?
Graduate:	I probably now would check in with someone, probably more on like a personal level than a work level where I just sort of feel that I'm not coping with this at all. Usually, 90% of the time, Taxi are then very good at sorting that out. I guess they don't know until you tell them that it's … I feel like a lot of the time people forget that we are juniors, and that we are there for the first year just to learn, trying to absorb, when at the moment we're like doing, doing, doing. Electronic devices quite a lot, which is great. Things do develop quicker, but sometimes I think I just need to reflect back a bit.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Do you feel that almost they need to be reminded sometimes that you've only been working a while?
Graduate:	Yeah, 100%. Absolutely.
Interviewer:	It's less than a year.
Graduate:	Yeah, I have like … This time last year I was graduating, so …
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. It's so quick.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Do you have any goals and aims for the immediate future, talking kind of like the near future?
Graduate:	Yeah. Probably what I was saying about the software development. That's my main thing that I feel like once I've got a couple more parts to my kit, I'll be able to have the ideas in the initial stage, build them, and then see my ideas come to life, rather than building someone else's idea. That's quite hard as a creative person to sort of delve into somebody else's idea when you knew yours right in the beginning could have been at the same stage if you had …
Interviewer:	So the ability to bring your concepts...
Graduate:	Yeah, even if it's just a basic level, just to …
Interviewer:	That means that you'll be more evolved from the beginning in process
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely. Working on it through the whole system.
Interviewer:	These two questions are not really about you in particular. Just as a recent graduate looking back on your experiences, do you think the design industry have a responsibility to recent graduates in any way?
Graduate:	Responsibility on the …
Interviewer:	It can be whatever you interpret it to be.
Graduate:	Okay. I would definitely say a responsibility to guide us generally through design rather than their version of design, because the last thing you'd want to do is come out of your first job and you've been crafted as like a Taxi minion, maybe, and then you're going into somewhere else, and it's like extremely different. It's more of a step. I do feel like I'm being crafted as a designer rather than … I know that quite a lot of, whether it's design or not, quite a lot of people like fresh graduates because they can train them just how they want.

Interviewer:	Definitely.
Graduate:	Yeah, I definitely say a responsibility on that, and just a responsibility, design is so different to uni courses. The industry is so brutal.
Interviewer:	More cutthroat.
Graduate:	I would definitely say just responsibility like probably mentally, like your mental stability. Definitely. It is such a culture shock to leave three years of uni to move city, to move house, leave everybody behind, all of your friends are dispersed, you're like in a brand new job. I do feel like they do have a responsibility to look after you a bit in that way.
Interviewer:	Would that, how would you, if you could choose how that would happen, how would you ... A good way of doing that would be?
Graduate:	Probably just more reflection time. We do have a really good development review system, but you're doing it at the same time as your week. There isn't like set times to reflect.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Graduate:	Like everybody has the same coffee catch-ups, where may juniors could have a couple more development catch-ups or something, just like rather than once a month, maybe like twice a month just to get a couple more check-ins, I'd say.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Graduate:	Yeah, because a lot can change in a month. Mainly my coffee catch-ups have been more like how I'm coping mentally with life, rather than how I'm finding the job.
Interviewer:	Yeah. It's almost like you can do the job if you can [crosstalk 00:24:30]
Graduate:	Yeah, so maybe if there was more reflection time for us, then we'd be able to maybe talk about the job more, rather than [crosstalk 00:24:37] yeah.
Interviewer:	So a bit more condensed.
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	If you had a bit more time, more often.
Graduate:	Yeah, of course.
Interviewer:	It means that you won't have to concentrate on [crosstalk 00:24:49] specific thing some time.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	That's cool. That's really interesting. Do you have any advice for the new lot of graduates that will be leaving about now?
Graduate:	I would really just say it is ... You do get shot down a lot. That's going to happen, and you're going to build a thicker skin, but stick to what you believe in. You can be pushed over like that with quite a few things, but it's more respected to stand up and be like ... Even if it is wrong, just to be like, "No, I think this is right because ..." I've learnt the more I do that, the more respected you are, and then the more people get to know what you believe in and what you're not going to stand for, and what you are going to stand for. It's helped us because it's four of us. If I was in here by myself, I do feel like maybe I would not speak up as much as I do,

because we kind of speak up as a group. We're each known as very different personalities, which is really nice. People know …

Interviewer: You're not seen as the juniors.

Graduate: Junior. No, we're like individuals.

Interviewer: Individuals [inaudible 00:26:00] the force comes through.

Graduate: It just definitely helps as having more juniors. I do feel like if I was alone I would sort of just back down a lot more. That's more, that's not like fighting for what I believe in. That's more like when we're in creative reviews and it's like, "No, I think that looks better. I think this should be like this." I just feel a lot more confident doing that …

Interviewer: When someone's got your back, then you feel that … Yeah. Cool. And that's it.

Graduate: Cool.

Interviewer: Perfect.

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD2-TX

Interviewer: Right. I'll just go straight into it.

Graduate: Sorry.

Interviewer: That's all right. How is everything going since we last talked?

Graduate: Yeah, great.

Interviewer: Yeah, cool.

Graduate: [inaudible 00:00:10].

Interviewer: That's good. That's good. I've just got to change your name. What's made you feel more settled?

Graduate: I think it's probably just like time, getting used to everything, to know everyone better, like getting to know the way that it works.

Interviewer: Sure, so you feel more comfortable as well?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Are your expectations of the role still being met? Do you feel like you're happy in your role?

Graduate: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, and what do you think your next plans are? I'm not talking about long term. I'm just thinking about in your role at Taxi and what you're doing. Do you have any personal ideas of what should be happening in the near future?

Graduate: Yeah, definitely. I think in the future, like say in the next year or so, I would like to be taking more ownership of projects and kind of ... Not leading them, but having more of a sort of leadership role within it, more so than I am now.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you feel that you are being involved right from the beginning and taken through, but you'd like to be slightly higher up the chain in doing that?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. How's Taxi been helping you in supporting your development and learning since I've last talked to you?

Graduate: We've had like a few talks and stuff, which is good for like keeping our inspirations. They started a new ... Have you heard of skill share?

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah, Keira was talking about it.

Graduate: Yeah, introducing like a new account Skill Share.

Interviewer: Yes. You can access it at work and at home?

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: So whenever you want really.

Graduate: Yeah, and also being allowed to kind of join in on calls and-

Interviewer:	Client calls, yeah.
Graduate:	Yeah, which is great experience in terms of listening to what goes on.
Interviewer:	Yeah, how a lot of those decisions ...
Graduate:	Are made.
Interviewer:	Come to those conclusions. You often think, "Why are we doing that?"
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	It opens up a whole new world, I have to say.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	You're like, "Oh okay." All those kind of experiences are helping you feel like you're learning more and that's also helping you feel more comfortable and settled as well.
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	Have you been thinking or doing about your own skill development as well in learning yourself and pushing yourself?
Graduate:	I have, yeah. I haven't put anything into place yet in terms of what I'm going to do, but there's certain skill courses and stuff that I have my eye on.
Interviewer:	Yeah, you've identified them.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Are they a specific area or are they quite random?
Graduate:	They're more kind of like skill based and like craft based as well, just more I suppose inspirational than it is development maybe.
Interviewer:	Not really.
Graduate:	I suppose they could go 100 rounds, yeah.
Interviewer:	Because you're quite good at illustrating and crafting work anyway, so are you thinking ... That's what I've been told, but is that kind of trying to bring more skill into it that you can apply in a work situation as well?
Graduate:	Yeah. I suppose it's kind of like keeping my juices flowing in terms of creating stuff and then how I can translate that into like digital concepts.
Interviewer:	Sure, yeah, so you're trying to explore your own interests in kind of a commercial sense, I guess.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	It's almost extending what your strengths are really, isn't it?
Graduate:	Yeah.

Interviewer:	Could you tell me, have you had a moment recently, since I've last talked to you, where something has gone really well and you've thought, "That was really cool. I liked that."? Just a really positive moment that you felt about work.
Graduate:	Did we speak about the Up stuff last time? The charity sign stuff?
Interviewer:	No.
Graduate:	Basically I branded it, which was amazing.
Interviewer:	Oh wow, amazing.
Graduate:	They were really pleased with it and they'd actually like to go forward, so that was like a massive like high for me.
Interviewer:	Oh wow, yeah.
Graduate:	That they actually liked some of my work and it's gone through, yeah.
Interviewer:	Basically your optional route was chosen and being pushed forward.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Are you working on that to completion?
Graduate:	It's sort of got passed around a bit in the studio. That was quite nice to see, like what people did with it. Then I got to work on the video as well, so I have been involved but I haven't necessarily taken over, but that's a bit nice because it's been like a shared thing.
Interviewer:	Okay, so it's been brought to life and you've seen it and that's been really exciting.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. Has there been ... On the flip side of this without sounding negative, has there been any moments where you've thought, "I'm really out of my depth here," or-
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	"I'd like some help."?
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely. I guess working on really technical things like back of pack design and how it affects the impacting and stuff that's really important and not really knowing what I'm doing with it.
Interviewer:	Right, because I imagine there's a lot of legal stuff that needs to go on things like that.
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	It's not necessarily just design.
Graduate:	Yeah, exactly.
Interviewer:	It's probably quite dry, I imagine.
Graduate:	Yeah, but really important, so yeah.

Interviewer:	It's almost ... You identify something that's really cool and big and kind of the fun bit of design [inaudible 00:06:42] but the stuff that's a bit harder to deal with is the more day to day or functional stuff?
Graduate:	Yeah, the technical and detailed bits.
Interviewer:	Technical, yeah. I guess once you've worked through it a few times do you feel like it becomes easier?
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely. I think if I knew, if I'm more familiar with the process and how it should look, then at least if it was tedious at least I'd know I'm doing it right.
Interviewer:	Yeah, so you can do a good job of it.
Graduate:	Yeah, exactly.
Interviewer:	I guess in that moment what support have you had? Because obviously people you're working with must know that you haven't probably done things like that or are not that experienced. How have they supported you through situations like that?
Graduate:	I guess just asking around whoever is free or like always lend a hand or point me in the right direction of someone who knows.
Interviewer:	Okay, and has that been okay, or sometimes you go, "I just wish someone would tell me."?
Graduate:	Yeah, it's a bit like that sometimes because we've been so busy recently.
Interviewer:	Right.
Graduate:	It's almost like you don't want to go and hassle people.
Interviewer:	Right, so yeah, it sounds like it's been really busy.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Sam and Keira both have mentioned it, so I guess when it's super busy everyone is quite stretched.
Graduate:	Yes, exactly.
Interviewer:	In those moments I guess you're fine until something like that happens, and then you just really need some support.
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Are they the points where you felt a bit out of depth?
Graduate:	Yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	Okay. How does it make you feel when you feel out of depth?
Graduate:	It's not great, but then you've always got those moments where you remember that you're really lucky to be there. It's like a temporary thing. You're only on it for not really long anyway, so yeah, I suppose it's just the balance of those jobs coming in and having more fun, more creative stuff come in.
Interviewer:	You've kind of realized that it's not always like that.

Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Good. How do you feel ... No, sorry, that's what we just talked about. How do you imagine you will develop your role further in the next few months at Taxi?
Graduate:	I think I'd like to progress to midway because I think they are like super supportive and keen for your development, like grants, so I think that's definitely within my means.
Interviewer:	Yeah, but do you have a timeline for that, like in your head?
Graduate:	I've got a list. Yeah, maybe like within the next year and a half, two years.
Interviewer:	What do you think you would have to do to get to that? Hi, Sam. How are you?
Sam:	Hello. We're going to head down to the pub, so if you want to meet us there.
Interviewer:	Oh, cool.
Graduate:	Okay, I'll meet you there.
Interviewer:	Can I just have 5 more minutes or do you need to go?
Graduate:	I'll just meet you down there.
Sam:	Yeah, I'll talk to you later.
Interviewer:	Yeah, cool. No worries. Thanks, Sam. Do you want to walk down later?
Graduate:	No, no, it's fine. No, honestly it's fine. I'll meet them down there.
Interviewer:	I really probably only have like hardly any more questions.
Graduate:	That's fine.
Interviewer:	All right, I was just going to ask you what skills do you think of yours that you've come to Taxi with turned out to be really useful in terms of-
Graduate:	Skills. I think ... This is a really loose one, but just like creating ability. I don't know if this is a skill, but like willingness to learn.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	And like accepting that I don't really know anything, so learning it there.
Interviewer:	That's not true. Otherwise they wouldn't have taken you on. It's probably the willingness to learn is why they took you on, but there's obviously something behind it. Yeah, I guess that's basically it. Can I just ask, do you feel the design industry have any specific responsibilities to recent design graduates?
Graduate:	Yes. I think they need to encourage more people to be doing the arts in general in education, in schools. I think they have a massive responsibility to be more conscious of hiring people of different ethnicities and backgrounds and not necessarily from university background. Obviously like equal genders and, yeah, making more of an effort with the people and generally getting more involved with education.
Interviewer:	Doing more like this.

Graduate: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: And link to education. When you say education, are you talking about schools and universities, or are you talking more about-

Graduate: Yeah, I'm talking about schools and universities, I think, because I think the earlier you plant the seed the better it will grow.

Interviewer: Cool. One quick, last question. Do you have any advice for graduates who are leaving university now?

Graduate: Advice for graduates. Work really hard and, yeah, don't get put off too easily. Be really brave, but also be really polite to everyone.

Interviewer: True.

Graduate: Yeah, then something will happen.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's hard telling them, isn't it? When you know what it has taken.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: All right, that's cool.

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD3-TX

Graduate: Okay.

Interviewer: I'll just get straight into it then.

Graduate: Sure. Yeah, let's do it.

Interviewer: So, how's everything been going since we talked last?

Graduate: I'm trying … When did we speak last? Was it-

Interviewer: It was in March.

Graduate: It was March. Okay.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: 'cause I was trying to remember, was it before or after the snow? But, I can't remember.

Interviewer: Oh. Do you know, it was around … that time.

Graduate: It was around that time.

Interviewer: Because think … I was lucky that I got through.

Graduate: Okay, right. Yeah. Good. Yeah, I definitely feel more confident.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Graduate: I think one of the main things is like your ability and [inaudible 00:00:27] around … it's a very steep learning curve. I think I mentioned that last time, when you start. But yeah, I definitely feel that that curve is gradually … it's less severe.

Interviewer: It's stabilizing.

Graduate: Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. And, is that because you feel more comfortable here, or you think your skills are improved, or it's a bit of both?

Graduate: I would say a bit both. Yeah. I think … obviously, within time you feel more settled in to the place that you are. At the moment, we've had a bit of a scene plane change up, so that's changed the dynamic a little bit, just from our last week. But, yeah, it's good. And, yeah. Definitely in terms of the skills side, you just know more, you just pick up so many more … especially from what we do. Something like a short-cut, if you don't know it, can take … can add another 15 minutes to a job that you're doing. So, yeah, the more that you learn the more streamlined your process becomes, which is nice.

Interviewer: Are you asking as many questions still, or are you …

Graduate: I'll tell you what. I'd say I'm asking … Well, I think you always … you should always ask questions.

Interviewer: Different questions.

Graduate: Yeah, I think.

Interviewer:	Yeah. Different, [crosstalk 00:01:32].
Graduate:	But, yeah. Less obvious ones, should we say, now. Before it was more, "How do I do this? How do I do that?" Whereas, now it's kind-of questions more around building upon the process, rather than the foundation of it, which is good.
Interviewer:	Yeah. So, the questions are getting more in depth about design thinking rather than actually asking short-cut skills and things like that. So, it's the content.
Graduate:	Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. It's less literal.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Yeah, it's kind-of more the thinking around, as you say. Yeah.
Interviewer:	Cool. Yeah.
Graduate:	The less tangible stuff, I suppose.
Interviewer:	Yeah. Cool. And, so, I guess that means the expectations of your role are being met as in terms of your work. You feel like you're progressing.
Graduate:	Yeah. In terms of improvement, yeah, I would say so. I think there's always room for improvement, especially when you're starting out, and there's loads I still want to improve. But, definitely, from when we last spoke I feel like, yeah, I've definitely improved a great deal.
Interviewer:	Cool. And, how's Taxi helping you learn and develop, at the moment, when you're at work?
Graduate:	So, I'm trying to remember what I mentioned last time so I don't repeat something too much.
Interviewer:	You were talking ... I know there's been the budget for training
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	... and you've been having meetings with your line manager and things.
Graduate:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	So, [crosstalk 00:02:45]-
Graduate:	So, they've actually start trialing ... They're trialing an initiative now, actually, which is about having me in a new groups within Taxi. So, where we sit, that ... We have different people at different levels settling around us. So, for each section has a junior, and each section has a senior, and an associate design director, as well. And, essentially, the idea behind that is just to have support within all levels in everything that you during.
Interviewer:	Sure. Yeah.
Graduate:	And, trialing having the ACD's becoming the more ... the line managerial position. So, you've got a sort-of head directly from the top. So, they're definitely experimenting with different ways of how to solve ... improve that process, and sort-of throw the book at it a little bit as well, which is really lovely.
Graduate:	Other than that, it's just the general culture I would ... I'll just build on what I said last time, which is that everyone's very willing to teach. One of the main things about life changing on the scene plan at the moment is just the ... you're sat with

different people. So, you learn different skills from different people. So, generally, you just become more rounded, which is really lovely. So, you don't get too fixed. Because, obviously, if you sit with the same people all the time, you might know their skills in an hour and get their skills down to a T, but ... by mixing it up a little bit, you just get to cherry pick the sort-of ... they key skills.

Interviewer: Keep you on your toes.

Graduate: Absolutely. Yeah. It keeps it dynamic and pushes you to grow, I think.

Interviewer: Cool. Very good. And, have you been doing anything that you feel that you're doing yourself to support your own learning and development?

Graduate: Yeah, for sure. We have these ... So, there's design talks. Industry talks, and women ... Oh, no. Not women. West of England design talks as well.

Interviewer: Oh, yep. Yeah.

Graduate: Which we actively go to. And, Taxi really gave us support in that as well. They've basically just sourced the tickets, and now we just to go to them, which is really lovely, 'cause that's outside of studio time. I've also been cracking on with my training inspiration budget, which is spent on Adobe CC for the year.

Interviewer: Oh, cool.

Graduate: So, basically you're just at home experimenting with motion and other bits and bolts, which ... I don't necessarily have as much on day to day here, but when it comes that I could have an opportunity, I'll be like, "Ah, actually, I've managed to have a bit of time on that at home, and now I know."

Interviewer: You could be that person. Yeah. So, you're self-teaching. Yep.

Graduate: For sure.

Interviewer: Yep.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. And, do you feel that keeps you kind-of inspired at work? And, also, you're in the back of your mind going, "I might be able to pull out a new trick here," or something? Do you feel like ... obviously, you'd eventually, you'd like to be at-

Graduate: I would ... Yeah. I wouldn't say at this stage, I'd say, as I've just sort-of begun learning bits and bolts. But, it'd be nice a few months down the line if I could just be like, "Oh, actually, you know." To show that progression, to show what I've done from this point, which would be nice.

Interviewer: Cool. And, has there been a moment at work ... that, recently ... since we last talked, actually ... where you've thought, "That went really well. I'm really happy with that?" That there's something that you've been involved in, or ...

Graduate: I'm trying to think what I spoke to you about last time. What are the projects I had been working on really ... Oh, whoops. I was really happy with ... Trying to think in the most recent iteration.

Graduate: Yeah. We had a ... a project came in about a month ago where ... It was a really exciting project. It was really fun ... a fun client. I'm afraid I can't tell you too much about it. But, yeah, for sure. There was an opportunity to present to one of the top people in the ... in Taxi level, the founders. And, that's always a good opportunity to sort-of ... you don't really get opportunity like that ... It can be nerve wracking, as well, 'cause you're like, "I just want to prove myself in that way." And, I didn't just

	present the visual designs or the concepts. We talked about the visual world around it and how that would translate into environments, and stuff like that.
Graduate:	And, yeah. I just seemed really cohesive in what I presented. Whereas I'd say, like a few months ago, one of my meetings, they described me more of like a shot-gun, whereas I need to become more of like a laser beam in terms of ... Rather than saying, "Oh, it could be this. It could be this. It could be this," confidently presenting, "This is what our new idea is. I've looked at various points of view, but this is what I'm gonna show you." Being a bit more like how we present it to a client, I suppose. You wouldn't present to a client like, unless it was a really early stage session, you wouldn't present loads little itty bitty ideas. You'd have those in your back pocket in case they turned around and said, "Oh, well have you thought about this?" But, you just wanna present the one strongest idea.
Interviewer:	So, that advice you've taken on board, recently.
Graduate:	Absolutely.
Interviewer:	And, it's worked. And, when was that advice given to you? Was that in one of your ... team talks, or kind-of coffee chat?
Graduate:	That was in one of the coffee catch-ups, actually.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Yeah. So, we've actually had PDRs in that recently as well, which has been really lovely just to sort-of get that additional feedback on your work. 'cause, I've had a lot of feedback. 'cause, obviously I started, and then have my three on probation, and then directly after that it was PDR as well.
Interviewer:	You've been at quite a lot. Yeah.
Graduate:	It's just like, "Oh my god." Yeah. So, it's been really good. And, yeah, it was in one of those coffee catch-ups that we discussed sort-of how I was working and how I could streamline that process a little bit more.
Interviewer:	So, the coffee catch-ups are really informal, aren't they?
Graduate:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	It's literally ... it's literally where we're sat now. We just come down here, grab a drink, and then just spend 15 minutes, half an hour just chatting through-
Interviewer:	Cool.
Graduate:	... how to get on.
Interviewer:	Well, it sounds really positive.
Graduate:	Absolutely.
Interviewer:	And, has there been any times where you've just gone, "Still out my depth. I'm still struggling."
Graduate:	Oh, god. Every day. Not every day. There's the odd time where, maybe if I'm ... If I open a particular file, and I feel, "Oh, god. I have no idea how this is set up, or ..."
Interviewer:	Yeah.

Graduate:	You still come across that. Quite often they'll be different effects and such that you're just like, "Nope. I do not know how to change this." But, luckily, you're in an environment where everyone's really receptive. And, you just ask the person that last worked on it. And, we've got great visualizers as well, so if there's any ... Just yesterday, actually, there was a visualizer took time out of his day to come over and just show me a couple tricks, which was really nice. So, yeah. It's fantastic.
Interviewer:	So, are you less daunted by those times where you go ... "What?"
Graduate:	I think so, yeah. I think-
Interviewer:	[crosstalk 00:08:59] it ...
Graduate:	I think when you're in placement, or when you just start, you feel very much like you need to prove yourself. And, I think it's more daunting to ask ... I think you put that pressure on yourself and you feel as though it's more daunting to ask for help, 'cause you wanna sort-of, "Oh, no. I wanna present myself as this independent wiz kid that knows it all." But, that doesn't really wash, really.
Interviewer:	No.
Graduate:	People realize that when you start, you don't know and there's questions. And, I think they actually respect you more for asking them. So, I think you kinda realize that over time, and you take it with a pinch of salt. Quite often you'll open something, and my attitude now is, "Oh. I don't know how this works. That's not ..."
Interviewer:	You still have those now, to be honest.
Graduate:	You know, it's my responsibility to pick ... Yeah, absolutely. You know? So, it's not my responsibility to know everything, but I've just gotta make sure I'm brave enough to ask for help really.
Interviewer:	You've run files in different ways as well, don't they, so, it's not-
Graduate:	Yes. Everyone has their preference. Yeah. So, that's always fun. Yeah.
Interviewer:	And, how do you feel that, when you've been working through these kind of moments, that Taxi have helped support and ... support you in kind-of positive moments. You know, in positive moments? I know that you talked about the coffee catch-up giving you advice. But ... And, what kind of other moments where you feel a little bit out of the dip, how do you feel the support is?
Graduate:	I think what's very important is ... even if the deadline is an hour or two away, it you're in an environment where somebody can see that you're struggling but still taking that time to sort-of ... Even if it's just a few minutes, just to say, "Don't worry. It's fine." I've had that happen. You know, seniors come over when they've seen if I looked particularly stressed to try and meet a deadline, they'll say, "Don't worry about it." I think there's one thing they said ... What did one senior say? He said, "You know, at the end of the day, no one's gonna die. What we do ... It's great what we do. It's great fun. Just enjoy it." And, obviously, when there's deadlines-
Speaker 3:	[inaudible 00:10:52].
Graduate:	So sorry?
Speaker 3:	Should I take it upstairs?
Graduate:	Yes, please. That'd be great.
Graduate:	Yeah. It's just to make sure you've got people around you that you know, if you're stressed, will just still take that time for you, and not prioritize work over people. I

think, for me, I'm a massive people person. I just think they should come first, really.

Interviewer: And that's how it feels at Taxi?

Graduate: Yes. For sure. Yeah. There's like ... definitely people in particular, which ... I can think of for those moments, as well.

Interviewer: Yeah. And, so you've got people to turn to for support at work here?

Graduate: Absolutely. Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer: So, you've got a support network at work?

Graduate: I would say so, yeah.

Interviewer: Even if it's ... different reasons. So, you have a more personal support network and a work ... You know what I mean? Like, a design based network?

Graduate: Yeah. Some of it's like a small network for skills, whereas sometimes it's more emotional, in terms of how you're getting on just generally. Yeah. So, it's nice to sort-of have those different people to turn to, rather than just having the same ... group all the time.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

Graduate: I think it's important to have that dynamic.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:11:56].

Graduate: 'cause, if one small group wasn't there, then you've always got another one to sort-of pick it up, as well.

Interviewer: Yeah. Cool. And, what skills do you think have turned out ... your own skills, have turned out to be the most useful since you've been working?

Graduate: Yep. Do you mean in terms of the skills that I've picked up since being there, or ...

Interviewer: It could be both. It might be things that you brought along with you.

Graduate: Yep.

Interviewer: It might be things that you've really taken off and developed since you've been here. But, it's something that you think, "That's something that I'm really ... yeah. That's been really useful for me."

Graduate: I would say clarity is, like ... I know that's quite an ambiguous thing to say. But, by that I mean ... So, for instance, my project management, especially at uni ... God, when I think back to how I saved files, and just generally did different stages, like, this has been a massive learning curve in terms of the different stages of a project, and how to save your files, and communicating back to the people they've sent a brief to ... is vital. If there's anything, any issue, that comes up, if you keep quiet about it and forget to tell somebody, then it can massively effect ... It can have a bit of a domino effect in terms of how your day goes and how everyone else day's goes. So, yeah, putting design to one side, I think, in terms of how you manage everything ... that's really important. Making sure everyone's clear on where you are and where you're going.

Interviewer: Cool. And ... cool. That's really interesting. And, if you reflect on when you started to know, how do you feel that you're learning and development has happened?

	Or, how do you feel it's advanced? Or ... Overall, if you could picture yourself then and now-
Graduate:	Yeah, yeah, yeah. God. I'd say a lot across the board, really, generally. I would say ... Something that I had when I started was I wasn't really sure what to expect. I didn't really know ... what ... 'cause, I think you do ... I didn't do any placements 'till second year, so when you're at university, I think ... you learn all the theory, and you have an idea of what the industy is gonna be like, but you don't really know until you're there.
Graduate:	And so, for me, it's just a better understanding of how it all works ... is crucial. 'cause, it gives context to the sort of work that you do. 'cause, quite often, the work you do at university. "You know, I think this just goes here. Everyone here that's sat around me thinks it's a good idea." But, you don't really know until, you know, when you have that test where it's like, "Here. You do an idea." And, everyone might think it's a lovely idea, but it might not be appropriate for the brand. And, you realize ... setting more hurdles that you didn't anticipate but sort-of pop up. But, it's good, 'cause that's what makes it more challenging. And then, when you do get a solution that nails it across the board it's even more satisfying. It's less easy to attain, I suppose.
Interviewer:	Yeah. I know what you mean. And, I guess that has kind-of to do with the client side of things as well.
Graduate:	Yeah. Sure. 'cause, there's kind of ... There's not a lot of that at uni at all, really, in terms of ... I think relevance to brand is a massive thing. I guess part of the new making your own groups at university. So, the client is kind-of your perspective on what the client should be, as opposed to ... I don't know. I think if you get if they were more like clients, and more feedback at university, just to better understand.
Interviewer:	Yeah. So, there's a lot of live client projects at university, but the clients often just look at the end result. They don't actually come in and go, "That kind-of is good, but what we wanna see ..."
Graduate:	Yeah, yeah, yeah.
Interviewer:	So, it's almost backwards and forwards.
Graduate:	Yeah. There's not a relationship at all.
Interviewer:	Yeah. So it's a-
Graduate:	It's kind-of like, "Here's final delivery. What do you think?" And then you get the feedback. Whereas, like ... obviously, you have group crits and everything where you pick apart work and develop it. But, it'd be nice to get that from a completely objective, kind-of brutal point of view, actually. Yeah.
Interviewer:	Yes. Definitely. Cool. And, just a couple more questions.
Interviewer:	How do you ... This is not particularly about you, it's as a whole.
Graduate:	Okay.
Interviewer:	So, how do you feel the design ... Or, do you feel the design industry have ... a responsibility to its recent graduates in any way? Like, design graduates now?
Graduate:	That's an interesting question.
Graduate:	I think if they ... I think for the future of the design industry to flourish, it makes sense for the next wave to be held in high regard. Because, if you don't, then I don't really understand ... I don't really see a future. I think when you hear these

stories about certain agencies not treating their interns very well, not paying them very well, I just ... I don't really understand the thinking behind that. It's very short-term, and you're only thinking about the three weeks that you have that intern.

Graduate: Whereas, Taxi really pride themselves on ... even if they've not got any jobs available, or anything like that, they will try and give that placement as much opportunity as they can within that time, and get them across the board. And I think they know that even if that ... placement in particular won't be at Taxi, they'll be a better designer for it. And, therefore, the industry's better for it. So, yeah. No ... I think there is a responsibility there. And, kind-of like parent to child relationship in my eyes. Definitely.

Interviewer: Yes. Yeah. Raise them right.

Graduate: Yes. That's it. Absolutely. Yeah.

Interviewer: And, do you have any advice for graduates who are graduating now?

Interviewer: Entering the industry?

Graduate: I would say to try as ... Get as much experience as you can, regardless of what that might be. Like, I've had friends who have done ... quite odd design jobs in ... One was a bike business, like a bike helmet business. It was 3D rendering of...

Interviewer: Really niched interning. I see.

Graduate: Yeah. Very niched. But, it's ... I think the more reference points that you have, the better understanding you'll have not only of the industry, but also what you want from the industry. So, yeah. I'd just say ... As much experience as possible, I'd say. For sure.

Interviewer: Cool.

Graduate: Cool. Is that all right?

Interviewer: Yep. There you go.

Graduate: Lovely.

Interviewer: Yep. That's it.

INTERVIEW TWO: GRAD4-TX

Interviewer: How has everything been going since about March at work for you?

Graduate: I have been on the same client.

Interviewer: Yup, which is quite long term?

Graduate: Yeah, yeah. But that's funny enough changing today, changed yesterday. But it's one of those things that you ... it's one of those brands where knowledge is one of the most important things.

Interviewer: Right, yeah.

Graduate: And that's why I've been on it quite continually because if you get someone else on you, then kind of in a way transfer all of that knowledge over. But within that project, I've learned even though it's been one kind of client, I've learned so much within that, and there's been a variety of touch points within that, so posters and packaging, all that kind of stuff. And yet, now I'm on a ... I'm starting today, well have done today and starting a different one this afternoon, a different project, which is really cool.

Interviewer: That's exciting.

Graduate: Yeah, and I think it's good because I learned a lot within the kind of client I have been on and now I'm learning the stuff I haven't been kind of pushing I guess you'd say. Kind of more the fast and very late stage whereas what I'm going into is very early stage, initial ideas, stuff like that, yeah. Yeah, kind of gets that variation back into my learning.

Interviewer: It would be quite good for you to kind of get back to that point where....

Graduate: Definitely.

Interviewer: Cycle I guess.

Graduate: Exactly, and I think it's actually a bit daunting as well because I kind of feel like I've been out of the game, if you know what I mean? But I think a lot of people feel like that even at any new project. You always kind of feel like you're a bit out of your depth.

Interviewer: And I guess probably once you start working on the new stuff you realize how much you learned in hindsight on the longer-

Graduate: Totally.

Interviewer: Cool, and are your expectations of your role at Taxi being met, so do you feel happy in your role?

Graduate: Yeah, definitely. I think, like I said, wanting to have a go at doing the earlier part of the process and that has been heard, and therefore that why I'm kind of on it now, which is really good. I feel like just in general they try to do that. They're not going to know if you don't tell them, and yeah, so I have and it also makes me happy, which is good.

Graduate: I think I've also been told by a few people that sometimes I've acted a bit as a middleweight in the project that we had just because of balance and pressure and stuff like that, which is nice to hear because I didn't break under the pressure too much. It all went out the door. So, I guess in that sense, yeah, that kind of exceeds ... well, it's a different expectation because at the time it's overwhelming, but actually after it you feel that you've achieved much more and you've paced

yourself and you've taken on more responsibility. If anything, having that has now made me be more, I'm like, give me more, give me more.

Interviewer: Yes, you felt like you've stepped up and you know you can do it.

Graduate: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: When you said you'd mentioned that you would like to move on and to serve a new client, how was that brought up and discussed?

Graduate: Well, because we have kind of a few different processes here. We have our line manager, which we're actually transitioning. There used to be someone who's just a level or two above you, so I'm a junior and I have a senior. Now, it's the ACDs, another line manager for the whole team, which is a lot of pressure for them. A lot of forms to do.

Graduate: But yeah, so one way of approaching it as line manager, another one was just through someone I really trusted to talk to, and was also a senior, and yeah, you just kind of feel a bit more comfortable. The other is, I think I mentioned to the project that I wanted to work on, the new one I mentioned it to the people that are on it, client services and also the workflow, so the people who decided who's going on what.

Graduate: It's just that case making. Making people aware that it's just something you'd really love to do, and I kind of emphasized that it's not anything negative about what I have been doing, it's just I've learned a lot from that and actually I'd quite like to learn a bit more, exactly bring those skills to the front end of it and learn to pick that up to the quality that I have learned from the past six months or so.

Interviewer: Yeah, cool, and you felt comfortable doing all those things? It's not anything's been-

Graduate: I think it is a bit of an uncomfortable situation in the sense that you feel like people might take it in a negative way, which is why I've had to emphasize that it's not that. It's not that I don't like what I had been doing. It's that I just, we also have PDR goals we set, and we have those yearly, but I came in after the ones were set so I kind of set my own with my line manager, and one of those was doing more of the front end of the project, stuff like that, which is more reason to get on it.

Graduate: Yeah, like I said, it's always a bit awkward because the team that you're on trusts you and appreciate you and you are a bit of a knowledge bank, but I had to just keep emphasizing that it is nothing negative. It's just you want to have a go at other things, pretty much, and especially as a junior. It's your time to just literally get your hands in all of the jars.

Interviewer: Yeah, definitely, fair enough. How has Taxi supported you and developed you and your learning during this time?

Graduate: I think, again like I said, line managers help set, I say fake, not fake goals but ones that weren't official. Unofficial ones, that's it. We have coffee catch ups as well, I don't know if the others mentioned that, which is a good time to kind of voice how you're feeling. If anything from home is affecting you, that kind of stuff. It's always good to stay above that because that's a massive thing I've noticed is this is my first job, and how much your work affects your home and your home affects your work.

Graduate: I think Taxi are very good at understanding that and making you feel comfortable to say it's okay for me to tell you about my home life because it's going to affect work, or vice versa. Yeah, in that sense you kind of feel supported and also, now we've got this new team structure where we've got, in my team, I've got two seniors and an ACD above me. Therefore, you've got someone to look up to, to talk to, yeah, that kind of thing.

Graduate:	Yeah, if you get on with her it's much better obviously, then you feel a bit more comfortable talking to them.
Interviewer:	Definitely.
Graduate:	I think it was that aim of doing the new team structure is so you feel that support and development, and rather than a bit like how I have done before is going through all these different people, I can tell my ACD and he can be at the forefront of when they decide who to put who on what.
Interviewer:	You and what you've been working on.
Graduate:	Exactly, a little bit like they've got you in your head of what you want to do, anything like that, so when the ACDs have meetings, they can be like, oh, she's wanting to do this. Do you want her? She's really good at this, maybe she could have that, or vice versa, say that I've got a new project and I know that blah blah blah wanted to go on it, we can have them on our team.
Graduate:	Yeah, it will be interesting to see how effective that is in the studio.
Interviewer:	Sounds positive though.
Graduate:	Yeah, yeah, definitely.
Interviewer:	Have you done anything to help support your own development?
Graduate:	Yeah, well I don't know if the others mentioned about the inspiration and training budget we get?
Interviewer:	Yup.
Graduate:	I've used that. I blew all mine on one course, which is a sign painting course. I've always loved typography and it's kind of been something that I don't necessarily do all the time but I'm really interested in it, so I did a sign painting course. A really famous sign painter called Mike Myers, and it was four days in London.
Interviewer:	[inaudible 00:08:09].
Graduate:	Yeah, four days in London trying out loads of different methods in that, and I'm really hoping that can then translate a lot into it. Again, the PDR goals reflect what I want to do, what I think I should do and you end up merging the both of them. We have had reviews in the past couple of months, so hopefully coming out of that I'll have some solid goals and things that combine what I'd like to develop, which can for me be like visualizing things better, trying out different categories, stuff like that. Then things maybe that other people have noticed.
Graduate:	I think as a junior a lot of our feedback was just quite the same in a lot of it, in the sense that it's like keep asking questions, keep asking how it's best to do this, keep doing that and someone just reaffirming that has made me want to do it more, if that makes sense?
Interviewer:	Cool. Can you tell me something positive that's happened at work that you've experienced in the last few months that was really cool or really feel good there?
Graduate:	I think probably the thing I mentioned to you earlier, when I was told I was working as a bit of a [inaudible 00:09:30], not necessarily being told that I was working as it, but just feeling at the end of the project I could see how much effort and time and how much I'd invested into it, and it all went smoothly. It all went out the door, like that kind of thing that of course you have hiccups along the way, and it was fed back to me that I was briefing freelancers and trying to manage some time,

and yeah probably things because of taking on a bit more of that role, I didn't maybe say, I don't know, explore designs a bit more because it often clouds you.

Graduate: I'd be like, oh, I've got to get this done, get this done.

Interviewer: Yeah, you were so focused on that job.

Graduate: But, I think just having that coming out of that and people being like, you pretty much had at least a 50% hold on that project, and yeah, kind of made me feel pretty good and now that's what's making me want to do it more.

Interviewer: Yeah, so basically everyone ... the people that obviously saw it have fed back into you that you did a really good job and you did really well, and have given you great feedback on it.

Graduate: Yeah, and I think exceeded maybe their expectations, but also I guess I exceeded mine as well.

Interviewer: Yeah. Cool, and has there been any moment where you've felt a bit out of depth recently or how have you been supported through those moments?

Graduate: I think my most out of depth parts are when I feel unfamiliar with things, so either if I feel unfamiliar with a brief or even today, for example, I've had to start combing stuff together, and I think it's with people I haven't worked with, and going back to what I said before is I've learned lots of the skill in the past six months, and now I need to learn some more, and it kind of falls into that second half of it. It kind of makes me feel a little bit uncomfortable, but there's also a bit of pressure that someone's asked you to do something and also, I think, a vital part of that could be that it's someone new that I'm working with, and therefore they don't yet know me.

Graduate: Whereas, the team I've been working for for six months kind of have seen what I'm good at, what I'm not, etc. etc, and knowing what I've been able to develop and not develop. I think that's probably ... and even just starting a new project today and tomorrow, that just immediately [crosstalk 00:12:05] you kind of feel a bit out of your depth if you haven't been doing it, but I'm up to the challenge.

Interviewer: Yeah. I guess perhaps if that had happened several months ago before [inaudible 00:12:18], it would have been more out of depth or because you've got the confidence for what you've done in your previous few months of working, you know that you're probably going to be able to handle it.

Graduate: Yeah, I guess it's like a bit of a see saw, because like you said, if it was a few months or six months ago, I would have not had the skills I learned, but also if it was six months ago, I'd of had less time out of game, as they say, and therefore I might have a bit more confidence in myself.

Interviewer: Right, yeah.

Graduate: Whereas because I hadn't done that part of the process, when it now comes to the creative concepting stage, I'm a bit like, oh, I haven't done this for a while. That is one of my main reasons for doing it, is I want to be able to develop my skill everywhere and not end up being just a master of one thing.

Interviewer: Definitely, well you've identified it and you're working on it.

Graduate: Yeah.

Interviewer: How do you feel that Taxi helped you learn and develop skills, through to now? How do you feel they're doing their job? How are they helping you?

Graduate:	I think a lot of the people in the studio are always very receptive to questions. I don't think I've ever been refused help, or someone might have said I don't have time right now, then I've gone to ask someone else, but people would always either say a solution for you to then try or will sit next to you and try and crack through it. That kind of thing, so that's really good.
Graduate:	They let us know of programs, like I don't know if you've heard of Linda.com, which is like the video website. I've not used it myself, but they kind of were making us aware of it for when we need it. What else is there? Me and the juniors have a thing called junior hour as well, I don't know if they mentioned it to you, just kind of something that means that we can get our teeth into more projects and be more aware of what's going on in the studio, and the fact that when we thought of it, pitched it to the creative partners and the MD, they were so receptive to it. They were so on board, they said let's have a see how it goes. It might be that we'd be able to fund some stuff later on.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	Them showing their enthusiasm in that and then wanting us to do it makes you want to do a bit more, and that you're doing the right thing.
Interviewer:	What skills have turned out to be the most useful to you since you've arrived at Taxi?
Graduate:	Do you know what, I actually think it's nothing to do with design. I don't know if that's a bit radical thing to say.
Interviewer:	It's not.
Graduate:	I actually think it's your transferrable skills, so people skills, I'm quite like a chatty person. I don't know if you can tell? I think all of those mean that it breaks down a lot of other walls, enabling you to then progress and develop in terms of the design, so the role that you're in.
Graduate:	I think being enthusiastic is probably one of the most important as well, because that is a massive part of your role as a junior and also being a team player, and if you're enthusiastic and you're a team player, which I like to think I am, then everything else becomes much easier after that.
Graduate:	I think if you can kind of bring the people side to it, then Taxi can help you develop the design stuff that you don't know. Obviously it's great to have basic knowledge of programs, you know, they hire you for your ideas, stuff like that. I think that's a really core attribute to bring.
Interviewer:	Definitely, that's cool. If you reflect on when you very first started at Taxi to now, how do you feel … if you looked at when you first started [inaudible 00:16:08] I've learned so much, what do you think? It's been okay-
Graduate:	No, I think-
Interviewer:	How do you think your development's going?
Graduate:	100% feel completely different, like even just things from confidence and you're more comfortable with other people. Going up to people, asking questions, all that kind of stuff, I think, often that comes with time and therefor that naturally happens and you can't expect to have that at the beginning.
Graduate:	I think that also doesn't just come with time, it's something that as you learn, and like I said, as you become confident that you've achieved something somewhere else, you can then take that forward to something. A little bit like you said earlier, you've achieved that and therefore when you're doing this now, you have the confidence that you've got more of the skills.

Graduate: I think when I started this first job, like I said to you, you're kind of unbeknown to whatever's going to happen, and it literally just feels overwhelming. You feel a bit like you're kind of, not even in the deep and you're just like in the middle of an ocean.

Interviewer: There's no land.

Graduate: Yeah, there's no land anywhere. It sounds silly, but menial things feel massive and I actually think that's probably one thing that studios don't necessarily understand, is that for a lot of people it's their first job, and things like keeping your time sheets becomes a really stressful task, which it shouldn't, you know what I mean?

Graduate: It's something you do every day, it becomes like brushing your teeth now, but at the time things like that. I had to move. I didn't have a house when I first had my job. All of that kind of back end of it, I don't think necessarily they're aware of. Some people are, and I think, again, it's like if you don't say they're not going to know. In your first job, you kind of don't want to break down in front of your new members, do you know what I mean? I'm homeless.

Graduate: Also, I think that's where the line managers come in, because I think I did that with my line manager many times.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, they seem to understand that and are receptive to that?

Graduate: Yeah, and it's different obviously across different line managers, but I was lucky to have someone that really totally got it, and was like, I totally understand why time sheets seem like the biggest thing right now.

Interviewer: It's just weird things like filing-

Graduate: Yeah, exactly. Filing, what do you put after that? Yeah, totally. It's frustrating when you start because you think, I really want to get into everything else and that's overwhelming my mind.

Interviewer: Yeah, why am I stuck on filing?

Graduate: Yeah, totally.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's cool. Right, so these are a couple of pictures about the design industry in general. Do you feel the design industry have a responsibility to recent design graduates in any way?

Graduate: I would 100%, like 100% of responsibility obviously, but 100% believe they do have a responsibility. I say we, me being a junior now but also people at uni now, are like the next generation of design, and it's going to always be like that. If anything, I think I've really noticed, I went to my college the other day where I was four years ago, and the talent and skills have grown so much since I was there.

Graduate: The caliber of work that I see when they're at college looks a bit like you in your first year. I think that's often because the creative industry is much more accepted now as a job. I remember going to a university and saying, "Do you do graphic design?" She said, "No, sorry, but well done for choosing that type of course." And you kind of go, "What?"

Graduate: Do you know what I mean? Because it's not an academic ... people say it's not an academic course, and I think just that perception is completely changed now. Not everyone has, but yeah, it's much more accepted. I think that allows people to develop quicker. It means you have more facilities, people, probably schools and education systems will give you more funding towards it knowing how valuable they are. People are just becoming more aware.

Graduate:	Therefore, I think it just means you're getting more and more people, and therefore you have a responsibility. A little bit like me going to my college, even though people say, "Oh, we're not going to be able to hire them because they're not graduates." I'm like yeah, but, they're going to be the ones who choose to go to university, and then you might hire them as graduates.
Interviewer:	Just to be involved and to [crosstalk 00:20:39].
Graduate:	Yeah, I think that's it, and when you're an intern or when you're a junior, they have a responsibility because they are your employers. But, in terms of before, I do think that they should just be involved in the process of setting live briefs, doing talks, letting people come in, have a look at the studio because that is something that people don't really know about.
Graduate:	People can look at places online, they can see the work that goes on, but they don't actually know what the day to day studio life is about.
Interviewer:	Yeah, definitely. Cool, and do you have any advice for graduates who are leaving university now?
Graduate:	It sounds silly, and you never do at the time, it's probably very hypocritical of me, but it's just don't panic. It's not the be all and end all, and I think everyone does that. I was always told I was very conscientious student. I would always panic over GCSEs and then GCSEs are over and I was like, why was I panicking?
Graduate:	Then university, it's the same thing. Obviously put in effort and hard work, but it's not the be all and end all, and things like luckily I fell into a job straight out of uni. It was my first internship. I had three others lined up, but I took the job here and I think whereas I know people who have interned for a year or two years, and it's okay. I think as long as you can get by, then that's fine.
Graduate:	So, don't panic about going straight into a job and make your portfolio great. Talk about the projects that you are confident in talking about and that you really feel convey the best sides of you. Yeah, just don't panic about that whole first job thing.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Graduate:	It's cool to be an intern. I kind of want to be an intern now sometimes.
Interviewer:	Cool, and that was it.
Graduate:	Perfect. Thank you.
Interviewer:	That's all my questions.