# **Final Reflective Report**

#### Hongshuo Liu 30837685

#### URL of my webside: https://2025.macd.work/hl2v18

This report will follow the DIEP framework and reflect on my design learning journey and growth based on my experiences this semester. During this period, I systematically explored UX design, user interface design, and participated in various hands-on projects, including 4 RRR tasks and classroom design thinking exercises and demonstrations. These activities enabled me to learn on multiple levels by integrating theory with practice. I gradually completed a comprehensive user design process, transitioning from initial observations of user behavior to the detailed design of functional features. This approach allowed me to closely merge design theories with practical applications, deepening my understanding and enhancing my design skills.

# Describe

I gradually perfected my APP design process through these projects and tasks and mastered integrating design knowledge into practical operations. PACT analysis (People, Environment, Activity and Technology) is an important concept that I have never been exposed to before, and it has made me realize that interaction design is not only user-centric, but also needs to be a coherent design process that considers various related factors. PACT analysis guides the overall logic of the design by connecting the relationships between people, environment, activities, and technology, ultimately helping users achieve a certain goal efficiently. This made me deeply understand that interaction design is not simply about meeting users' needs but about fully understanding users' real needs and usage situations. Through this learning, I gradually clarified the process from user research to actual design. In the practice of the project, I gradually realized the importance of every step of the design process. In particular, through combining theoretical learning and practical practice, I gradually formed a clearer framework for design thinking and realized the importance of the design thinking system. Whether the research and analysis in the early stage or the function implementation and user feedback in the later stage, each step is closely related and is an indispensable key to the design's success.

### Interpret

Looking back on my previous studies, I realized that my knowledge in the field of UX design was not comprehensive. Previous design work tended to stay at the surface level, focusing too much on visual design, such as the color matching of the interface, typography structure, and visual aesthetics, and lacking a systematic understanding of the profound logic behind the user experience. The shallow visual design and in-depth user research made it difficult for my design to solve practical problems comprehensively, and the user experience was limited. This limitation made me realize there were obvious deficiencies in the previous design thinking and methods, and the design was not holistic and systematic. This semester's study has made me significantly

improve in this area. For example, I have gained a more comprehensive understanding of the basic aspects of interaction design through user research and PACT analysis. These sessions played a fundamental role in the design project, helped me clarify the design direction, and guided the overall tone. Through PACT analysis, I learned to understand the complex relationships in design from multiple perspectives. I gradually moved away from focusing one-sidedly on the aesthetics of the user interface. I paid more attention to the interaction between the user and their environment, activities, and technology. This systematic design thinking has had a profound impact on my design work.

Sketching is also an important part of my design process. I realized that sketching, as the most direct, obvious, and quick way to express itself, is especially important in the early stages of design. Specifically, sketching is important in three ways:

1. It can quickly display design ideas so that designers can clarify the design direction in a limited time;

2. Sketch design can help to find and solve key problems in design quickly;

3. The sketching process is also a process of divergent thinking, which can spark new ideas and design inspiration. Although I have made progress in many projects, there are still some shortcomings in practice. For example, in project two, I lacked adequate user feedback testing. Although the overall design meets the basic requirements and purposes, some specific functions do not fully meet users' needs. This made me realize that user testing is integral to the design process. Through user feedback, designers can

identify problems in the process and optimize the design promptly. Therefore, in future design work, I plan to incorporate user testing into the design process from the early stage of the project and continue to collect user feedback during the project process to ensure the completeness and practicality of the design.

#### Evaluate

In the Materiality project, I learned that a simple word can lead to various design solutions from different perspectives. I've benefited a lot from this way of learning that breaks the mold and is open to receiving information. Through this process, I realized that design is not static but a flexible exploration process. The essence of design lies in innovation and openness and cannot be limited to established methods and modes of thinking. The Materiality project made me realize that when faced with complex design problems, you must look at different angles, explore the hidden possibilities beneath the surface, and use innovative thinking to find solutions.

In addition, I learned the importance of empathy in UX design through Cory Lebson's UX design course. In the "Focus Buddy" project, I learned to understand how audience users connect with the outside world through their inner thoughts by observing their interactions with their surroundings. The designer's task is to capture these key points, deal with the problem feedback, and solve it through the design language. In the process, I changed from "what I want users to get out of my design" to "what users want to achieve through design." This cognitive shift led me to rethink design's core values and

combine functionality with emotional support.

Through this study, I have a deeper understanding of the concept of user-centered design. Functional design is important, but so is emotional support. Users not only want design to solve real problems but also to provide them with emotional satisfaction. Therefore, in my future design work, I will pay more attention to the combination of function and emotion and strive to create a more meaningful user experience.

# Plan

Through course learning and project practice, I have developed a deeper understanding of design and a clearer direction for my future endeavors. I have come to realize that design is not about striving for a universally perfect solution but rather about finding the most suitable solution tailored to specific situations and user needs. This requires a designer to remain flexible and adaptable, continuously refining and optimizing the design process in response to the evolving requirements of their target users. Moreover, I have recognized the importance of delving deeply into the inner needs and emotions of users, as understanding these aspects is crucial for creating meaningful and impactful designs. Enhancing the user experience through continuous design improvement has become a key focus and the direction of my future efforts.

Specifically, my goals for the future include the following three areas:

1. Cultivate an open mind: Observe life with an open mind, actively understand the relationship between the environment and people, discover potential problems in life, and propose solutions through design. An open mind helps me understand user needs from a more diverse perspective and brings more inspiration to my design work.

 Develop divergent thinking: Explore solutions from multiple perspectives, especially in complex projects, and quickly find the best path through flexible thinking.
Divergent thinking not only helps me broaden design possibilities but also leads to breakthroughs in innovative design.

3. Continuous learning and growth: Constantly expand your design boundaries and learn design theory and practical skills in depth. Through more hands-on projects, students apply theory to practical problem-solving while refining their design methodology through reflection. Ultimately, through continuous hard work and learning, I will become a good designer who can flexibly respond to complex problems. My goal is not only to provide users with practical designs but also to create experiences that are emotionally resonant and meaningful. In this process, I also hope to achieve a win-win situation for personal growth and professional development and lay a solid foundation for future design work.

### **Reference List**

RMIT Learning Lab, n.d. How to use DIEP. RMIT University. Viewed 12 January 2025, Available at: https://learninglab.rmit.edu.au/assessments/reflective-writing/howuse-diep/.