

Developing Empathy in Young Designers: Enhancing Designer-User Interactions in the HCD Process

INFO 4400 | Group 11

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Motivation & Goals



The Problem

Empathy is highlighted as one of the **most crucial qualities** for UX designers. But...

- applying empathy theories to real-world situations can be **challenging**
- young designers **lack practical experience**



Goal

Help young designers **cultivate empathy** to extract deeper, more heartfelt, and transferable insights from interactions with users and solve problems in a well-grounded and progressive manner.



Background Research

Empathy could be divided into 2 distinguishable kinds:

- **Affective component:** involves natural emotional responses
- **Cognitive component:** involves perspective-taking

Methods & Findings

Method I - Ethnographic Study

What We Did:

- 1 co-design workshop
- 1 ethnographic study

Why We Chose It:

- To examine how designers interact with their users in **natural settings**
- To capture **rich data about their behaviors and interactions** that can't be captured in contextual interviews



Ethnographic Studies

Method II - Cultural Probe

Empathy Bullet Journal

(Art) Supplies

Sticky Notes

Coffee Coupon

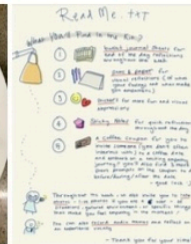
Emoji Sticker

Guide

Tote Bag



Our Cultural Probe Kit



Guide for the Probe

What We Did:

- Distributed probe to 3 designers over the course of 1 week

Why We Chose It:

- To gain more **detailed rationale beyond professional settings**
- To examine how **situational factors** influence empathy cultivation

Findings



Design & Prototype

An "art therapy" using the **Empathy Deck** that **fosters a trusting bond** and create a comfortable dynamic for further interaction designers and the participants



The Empathy Deck also serves as a **checklist** for designers to **increase awareness** of empathy and **carry out post-interaction reflections**.

