



A service that cultivates empathic communication through tools that enhance the practice of the Nonviolent Communication method among students working on collaborative projects at UAL.



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# Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who supported and guided me throughout the development of this work.

First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Male Lujan Escalante and Dr. Rachel Clarke for their invaluable guidance, encouragement, and trust, which were instrumental in shaping this project. Your expertise and mentorship have been a constant source of inspiration.

I am also deeply thankful to MA Service Design for providing the necessary resources and a supportive environment that made this work possible. It has been a roller-coaster journey but a life-changing one.

To my colleagues and peers, thank you for your helpful discussions, collaboration, and encouragement, which have enriched my learning experience.

I am forever grateful to my family and friends for their unwavering support, patience, and belief in me throughout this journey. Your encouragement has been my driving force.

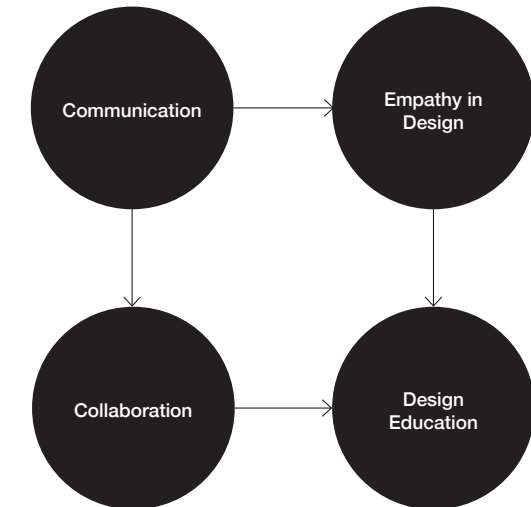
Lastly, I am immensely grateful to have had the privilege of education and to have met so many incredible humans along the way that believe that a better world can indeed exist.

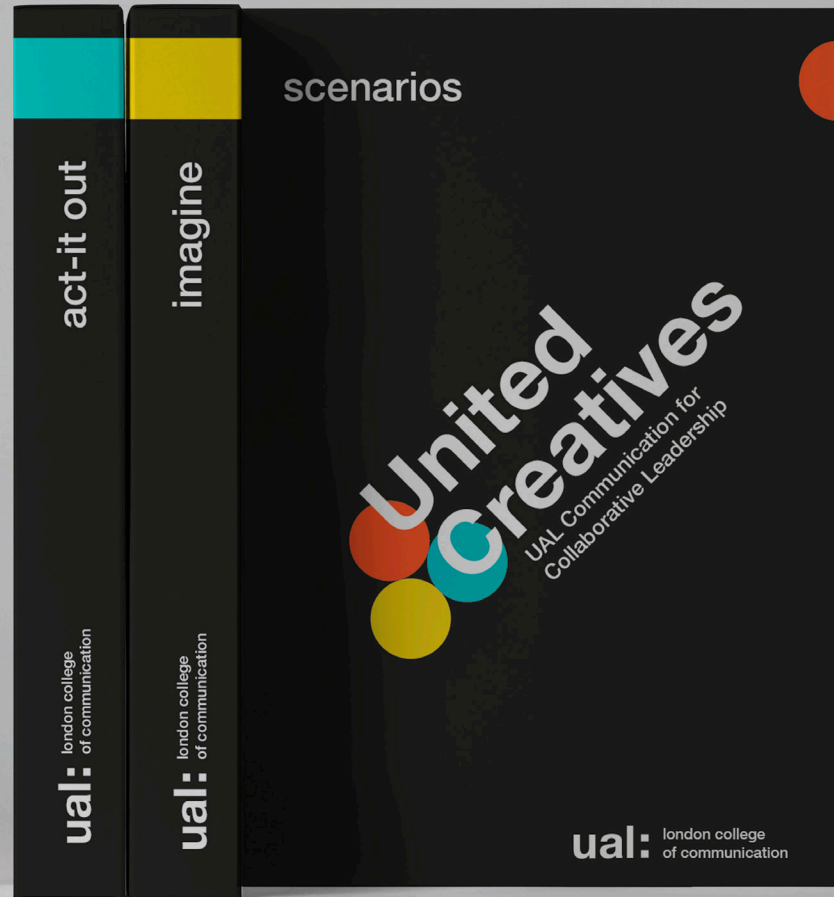
**United creatives** project centres around design education, collaboration, communication and empathy.

United Creatives is informed by direct interaction with stakeholders in this case students, staff and Nonviolent communication (NVC) facilitators at the BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication (UAL), following in-depth interviews, review of student submission work (submitted in year 2024) from year 1, 2 and 3, participant observations, arts-based evaluation methods.

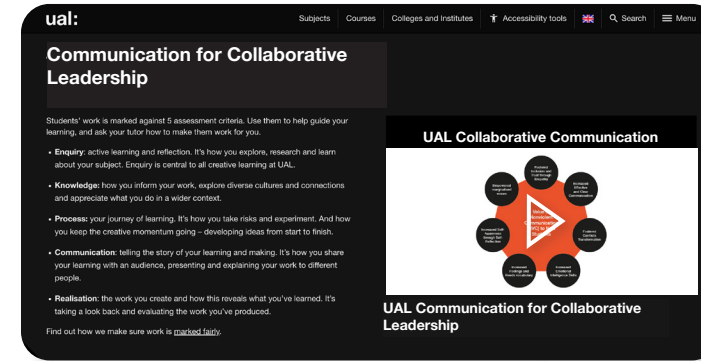
This research contributes to the development of practical tools for fostering empathic dialogue in teamwork and provide universities with a tool for education around communication in collaborative team environments.

United Creatives is in partnership with Dr. Rachel Clarke course leader at the BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication (UAL).





1 United Creatives Team Activities



2 Value video



3 Value brochure



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# Introduction

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## Motivations: *be the change...*

“Be the change that you want to see in the world.” Throughout this project, I reflected deeply on this quote from Mahatma Ghandi, which reassured me that even though design cannot solve everything, we are still in control of how we choose to show up for one another. This led me to ask myself:

“What can I do with the capacity I have?”

Watching the recent dehumanizing conflicts around the world, I felt a need to reconnect with what I believe are the essential qualities for humanity: compassion, understanding, and connection. Taking on the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) evaluation project has given me a chance to evaluate a communication method that aligns with these personal values.

With my expertise in the design industry, particularly in interior design, for the past eight years, I have personally observed a need for designers, especially leaders, to improve their communication and collaboration skills. I have both witnessed and experienced unkind and unhelpful communication from senior staff members toward design teams.

I was especially inspired by the former BA Design for Art Direction course leader, Tara Langford, and her initiative to introduce a more empathetic approach to communication in design education. I am excited to be part of this process, exploring the potential impact this approach may have on future design and creative practices.

**“Design is something far more pervasive and profound than is generally recognised by designers, cultural theorists, philosophers or lay persons; designing is fundamental to being human – we design, that is to say, we deliberate, plan and scheme in ways which prefigure our actions and makings ... – we design our world, while our world acts back on us and designs us”.**

Anne-Marie Willis, “Ontological Designing,” Design Philosophy Papers 4, no. 2 (2006)





# Field of Study

Design is inherently a collaborative process. Theories such as Design for the Pluriverse and Design Justice highlight the importance of inclusivity in design. Communication and collaboration go hand in hand when working with and for others.

Human-Centered Design emphasizes empathy to the point where it has now reached a saturation point. There is a growing need for designers and educators to understand practical ways in which academic staff and students in design education can learn and practice 'how to' be empathic.

Communication within the creative industries, especially during the creative process and collaborative efforts, is often overlooked, with the focus typically remaining on the end product. This is especially crucial in design education, as it can help shape a future for the creative industries where toxic communication practices are mitigated or addressed.

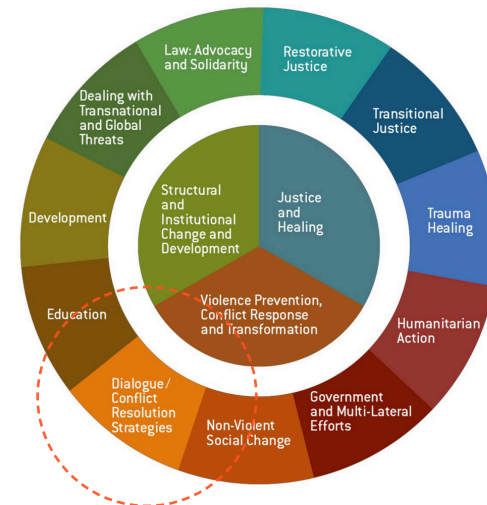
Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a communication approach developed by psychologist Dr. Marshall Rosenberg. The NVC approach to communication is based on practicing empathy with the intention of creating meaningful emotional connections rooted in compassion and understanding.

Through formative and summative evaluation, I studied the experiences—including challenges and impacts—that staff and students at the BA Design for Art Direction have encountered with the implementation of the NVC communication method in the course.

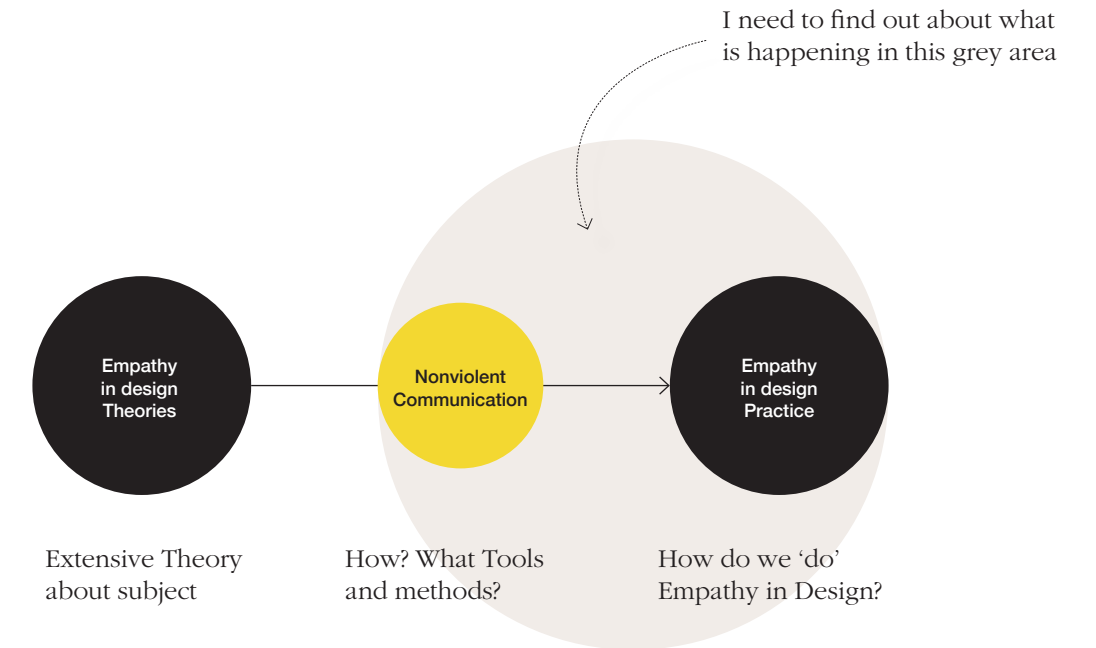
Ultimately, the goal is to communicate the value of NVC to new students and the Design School, and to illustrate why this approach is important to the future of design practice.

Additionally, the deliveries of this project include a tool for students to practice Collaborative Communication and Self-Advocacy.

## Strategic Peacebuilding Paths



Strategic Peacebuilding Paths | John Paul Lederach and Katies Mansfield, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies



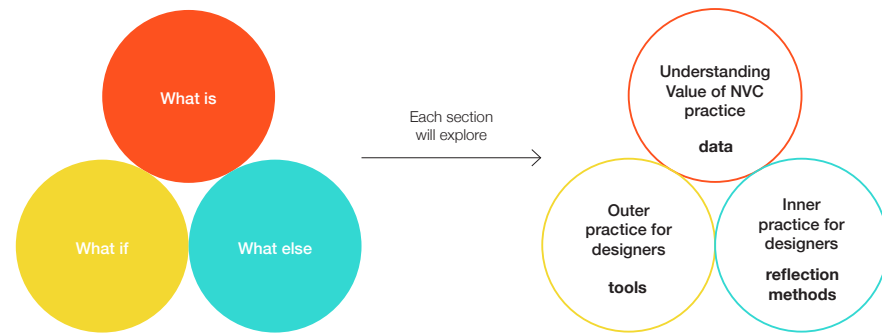
# Report Structure

The individual sections on this report and the research has been structured into three sections or levels or concentric circles which expand as we become more curious about the topic.

The first section is **‘What is’**. We ask this question to understand the value of the implementation of Nonviolent Communication in the teaching program at the BA Design for Art Direction.

The second is **‘What if’** section which explores a series of tools and methods developed to better implement NVC principles at the BA Design for Art Direction Communication for Collaborative Leadership bootcamp.

And the third is **‘What else’** section of the project which is the more speculative and and reflective part that unpacked what are the other ways and impact that NVC had that go beyond communication.



- Identified main motivations for introducing NVC in the course.
- Identified value of learning NVC for students and staff at BA Design for Art Direction.
- Identified main challenges of learning and implementing NVC for students and staff at BA Design for Art Direction.

- Identified and communicated value of implementing NVC in BA Design for Art Direction to Design School.
- Conducted research through design creating low fidelity prototype.
- Developed tool to practice NVC in class.

- Explored what other impact NVC has had on students, staff and researcher.
- Gathered insights in the context of Future Design Practice.
- Explored others ways to gather evaluation insights (Arts-based methods)



# Theoretical Frameworks

## Designs For The Pluriverse

Patriarchal cultures value competition, hierarchies, power, growth, appropriation, procreation, the negation of others, violence, and war. In this culture, modern humans seek certitude though control, including the control of the natural world. Conversely, historical matristic (sic) cultures were characterized by conversations highlighting inclusion, participation, collaboration, respect, sacredness, and the always recurrent cyclic renovation of life. They required awareness of the interconnectedness of all existence. (Escobar, 2018)

I am particularly interested in:

Radical interconnectedness of all life & historical matristic (sic) cultures

“Design has developed a new sensitivity to the environment and to human predicaments, and is more attuned to its ability to contribute to creating a better world; it becomes a medium in the service of society rather than solution-making expertise in the service of industry.”

(Escobar 10).

Role Playing in design

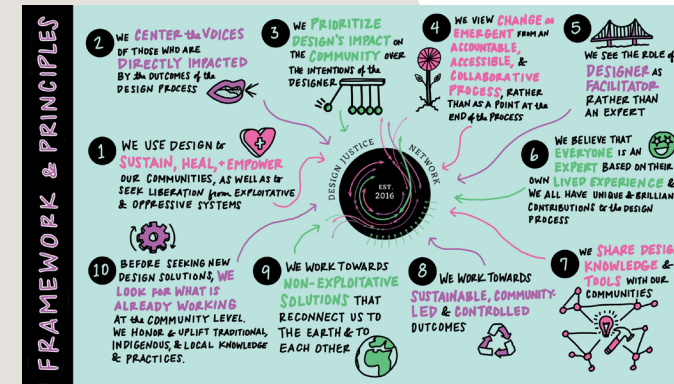
Theatre of the Oppressed

## Design Justice: Building The Worlds We Need

A design justice framework can help shift the conversation so that each time an instance of racial or gender bias in technology design causes a minor scandal, it will not be seen as an “isolated incident,” a “quirky and unintentional mistake,” or even used as fodder for an argument that “someone on the design team must have been racist/sexist.” Instead, design justice argues that such moments should be read as the most visible instances of a generalized and pervasive process by which existing technology design processes systematically reproduce (and are reproduced by) the matrix of domination. (Costanza-Chock, 2020)

I am particularly interested in:

Apply the framework to understand my own positionality as a designer



(Sketch notes of Tamra Carhart during the Design Justice Principles in Philanthropy Workshop, April 2021)



# Methodologies Overview

## Thematic Analysis (TA)

Thematic Analysis (TA) is a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. (Boyatzis, 1998). I have used TA to analyse qualitative data from In-Depth interviews, Students unit submission work and my Autoethnography.

### Where?

→ In-Depth interviews of staff and students at the BA Design for Art Direction.

→ 165no. Student unit submission work from BA Design for Art Direction + Research and Process writing and visuals.

## Participant Observations

“A method of research in anthropology which involves extended immersion in a culture and participation in its day-to-day activities” (Calhoun, 2002). I participated at the Communication for Collaborative Leadership for students and staff at BA Design for Art Direction. I have decided to use this method of research to be in my target user ‘natural’

### Where?

→ Communication for Collaborative Leadership NVC bootcamp.

## Arts-Based Evaluation

Arts-based evaluation is an effective way to engage people and uncover meaningful, valid results. I have chosen to run an arts-based evaluation method as I wanted to experiment with an alternative way to run the evaluation and ask students how did they feel at the bootcamp while it was happening. I also wanted to use the method as it is a non-verbal way of evaluating on a communication method (NVC) that encourages to ‘feel’ emotions.

### Where?

→ Communication for Collaborative Leadership NVC bootcamp.

## Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a post-modern research method that emphasises the potential for insight that can be found in the interaction between personal experiences on the one hand and the social, cultural and political context on the other (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner Citation 2011). I have used autoethnography in the form of collecting photos, poetry and personal reflections, in order to monitor the impact that learning about NVC has had on me personally as a designer and researcher.

### Where?

→ Writing reflections after attending NVC training.  
→ Monitoring personal reflections on NVC for the ‘What else’ part of the project.



# Ethical Impact Assessment

## 1. Health & Safety – **Humanity, Fairness, and Stewardship**

Since I will be working with a diverse group of people with different cultural backgrounds, I should ensure that all stakeholders are treated equally and with respect, accounting for their own cultural understanding. I should avoid reproducing or reinforcing stereotypes or making assumptions about how users feel about the challenges and barriers when using non-violent communication.

I will interview students and academic staff and should ensure that everyone is treated equally regardless of their position. I should give particular attention to the most vulnerable and those whose data is less represented. I should treat everyone with compassion, especially those who have seen fewer benefits from the use of non-violent communication in their practice.

The critical mass of participants that I will interview from the BA in Design for Art Direction will be the right amount to represent every student and staff voice and experience. The number of the cohort every year is 55-60 students. From this number, I will be interviewing 5 students [number to be discussed with Rachel Clarke] to gather qualitative data through in-depth interviews. There are 5 members from the teaching staff

team + 2 staff members who have never done NVC before + 2 research-led people; I will interview at least 2 people from this group [number to be discussed with Rachel Clarke].

Regarding my own safety and the participants' safety for this project, I will issue a Participant Information Sheet explaining the purpose of the study, why the interviewee has been invited, what will happen during the interview, clearly state that there will be no monetary retribution for participants, and explain to the interviewee the benefits of taking part. This sheet will include my supervisor's contact details in case there is a problem.

Possible risks for this project could include not having consent for data to be used in the research or interviewees wanting to withdraw from the research. In this case, I will not use and will delete all data collected until that point and will inform individuals requesting this. Another anticipated challenge will be participants' concerns about how and who will have access to their data. I will make sure that I have consent to quote any participants and ask them if they want to be kept anonymous in the report. I will also only use the data for research to answer the project brief, which can also be explained in the Project Information Sheet.

## 2. Data Management – **Anonymity & Consent**

UAL students and academic staff are passionate and protective about their work. When talking about how non-violent communication has impacted their practice, I should make sure that their feedback will remain anonymous, and I should assure them that our conversation is confidential.

I will provide a Project Information Sheet and a Consent Form to ensure I can record the data collected and take photos during co-designing sessions with participants. Participants will be asked about consent at key stages of activities. For example, before an interview, participants will receive a consent form that needs to be returned to the researcher before the interview can take place. Participants will be asked for consent at key stages of the process, for example, in the middle of a co-design session if videos, photos, or recordings are being shown. Participants can withdraw their consent at any point during the research process, and researchers will delete all data.

All data provided to me as a third party will be stored securely in a university provided one drive folder where only myself and my supervisor can have access. I will discuss with my supervisor which space could work best for this. No system backup will be

used to store the original data; however, a security copy will be stored securely in the same folder as the original file to prevent IT failures.

When analysing data, persona's can be created to keep data anonymous, as well as fictional user journey scenarios.

## 3. Methodology - **Service design / Primary research / Secondary research / In-depth Interviews / Workshop / Auto ethnography**

The NVC method has been made available to a diverse group at the BA Design for Art Direction. During my evaluation project, it is crucial to allow all differences to be visible in the research. Only by having a diverse group of people take part in the evaluation can I really capture and map the most accurate findings. I will use different methods that can be inclusive to a diverse group of participants. I will use anonymized data collection methods such as online surveys or paper-based surveys and in-depth, open-ended conversations with participants to explore their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Since the participants will all have an art and design background or are artists and designers, the methods should be engaging and more experimental. I will use speculative or more interactive methods to

collect data during a focus group workshop for example. As a reference, I am thinking of the Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal. I believe that more interactive, alternative methods will be more engaging and increase the number of participants. I will also keep an auto ethnography reflection diary as I will experience and practice first-hand the non-violent communication methods.

## 4. Positionality – **Non-discrimination**

Design Justice is one of the theoretical approaches I will refer to: the idea that when designing things or services, everyone should be considered so the final product or service is more inclusive. Design justice is a mindset that should be part of the design process from start to finish, to actively check in that the design meets everyone's needs. As designers, we should progress in cultural awareness and address internalized biases. I will actively be working on acknowledging and addressing power imbalances during my whole process. I have come to know about NVC methods just recently and I am discovering the benefits of the process. I will become more informed about NVC methods and different context applications by interviewing facilitators and reading "Non-violent Communication: A Language for Life" by Marshall B. Rosenberg. I will develop

language sensitivity to make sure that when we communicate, speak, and use my body, I will use words that are non-discriminatory (I will work on my unconscious bias) and that don't reinforce power imbalances.

## 5. Open Collaboration – **Collaboration**

I will be collaborating with different groups, including UAL students and staff, NVC facilitators, experts in culture change, and ways of working. Students might not feel free to talk about their experiences if teaching staff are also participating in their interview. I will ensure that the interview setting is a comfortable environment for students to feel comfortable collaborating and discussing challenges. This could also be in the form of a focus group where students can fill in their reflection anonymously if they want to.



# Research questions

30 Nonviolent  
communication  
(NVC)

32 Empathy in design

34 Critical design  
thinking

# Research Questions

I have divided my HMW question into three smaller questions to reflect each section of the 'What is', 'What if' and 'What else'. I kept this structure when planning for data collection and analysis.

- What is the value of implementing Nonviolent Communication in the teaching and learning program for students and staff in the BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication (LCC)?
- What if designers could co-create tools and experiences to facilitate the delivery of Nonviolent communication methods while also finding new ways of practicing empathy?
- What else happens in the process of self-discovery with Nonviolent communication for designers? What inner work needs to be implemented that goes beyond thinking and teamwork?

My intention with keeping three smaller questions was mainly to bring more clarity around how I thought and approached the research project. It was also a clear structure for me to navigate the analysis of the data and outcome of the research.



## WHAT ELSE

..Happens in the process of self-discovery with Nonviolent communication for designers? What inner work needs to be implemented that goes beyond thinking and teamwork?

## WHAT IF

..Designers could co-create tools and experiences to facilitate the delivery of Nonviolent communication methods while also finding new ways of practicing empathy?

## WHAT IS

..The value of implementing Nonviolent Communication in the teaching and learning program for students and staff in the BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication (LCC)?

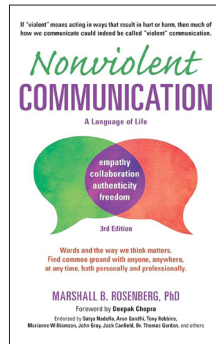
# Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

## What is Nonviolent Communication?

Nonviolent Communication (NVC), developed by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg in the 1960s, is a method designed to improve interpersonal communication and resolve conflicts peacefully.

It aims to foster empathy, clarity, and mutual understanding by focusing on the feelings, needs, and observations of each person involved in a conversation rather than on judgments or demands.

This communication model is often used in relationships, schools, workplaces, and even international conflict resolution.



Rosenberg, M. B. (2003). Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life. PuddleDancer Press. 2. Gavrielides

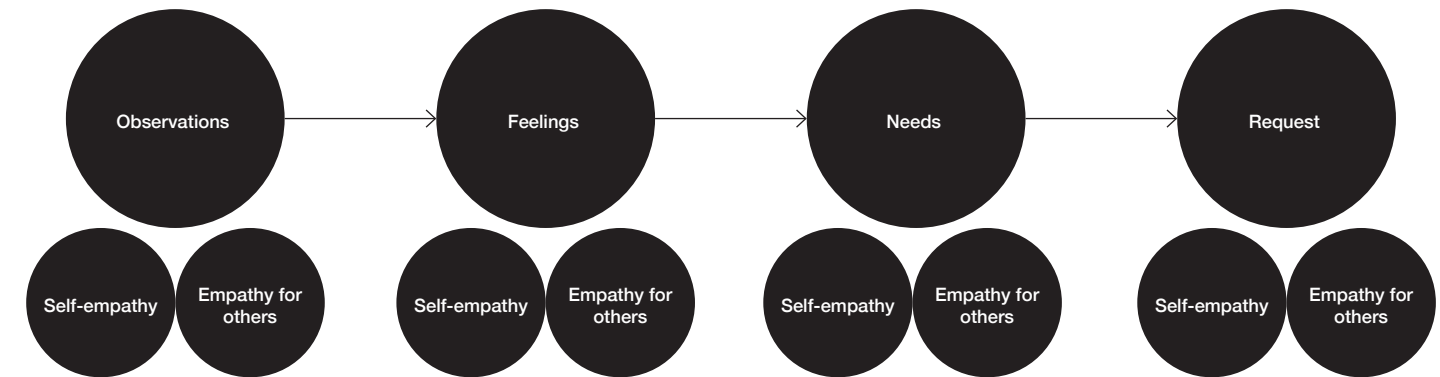
## Why 'Nonviolent'?

The term “nonviolent” in NVC is inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of ahimsa, which means non-harm or nonviolence. NVC seeks to reduce violence not only in physical form but also in language and intention.

According to Rosenberg, many everyday forms of communication—such as criticism, blame, or defensiveness—can be considered “violent” because they often provoke feelings of defensiveness, misunderstanding, or even resentment.

By centering on empathy and understanding, NVC aims to transform these potentially divisive interactions into opportunities for connection, collaboration, and compassion. Gavrielides, T. (2018). The Psychology of Non-Violence and Aggression.

Below, the four main steps of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) approach to communication:



Observations: “This involves describing situations without judgment or evaluation.”

Feelings: “Here, we express our emotional responses to situations, encompassing both positive and negative emotions.”

Needs: “Here we identify what unmet needs are hiding behind the way we feel about a situation or conflict”

Requests: “Finally, we articulate clear and positive requests to meet our identified needs.”





# Empathy in Design

## 1.4.3 Gaps in “How” to be empathic

In their article, Challenges of Doing Empathic Design: Experiences from Industry, Postma et al describe case studies in their analysis of empathic design in practice. Their overall view was that while it is an extremely valuable human-centred approach, the gap exists between the theory and application of empathic design principles in an industry context (2012, p. 69). There is a need to bridge the gap between theory and practice around empathy in design and find ways to translate the empathy in design principles in actionable outcomes.

## 1.4.2 Empathic Modelling

Empathic modelling (experiencing with your own body the physical situations of others) is a strategy that helps to stretch a person’s empathic horizon. Within this process, there are multiple layers in the empathic modelling experiences: gaining a surface understanding of another’s point of view, developing a deeper understanding through a more thorough empathic modelling process, gaining empathy with another human, and developing an emotional connection with another human being. (Thomas and McDonagh, 2013) The use of the body to ‘sensations’ in the body in order to recognise a certain feeling and eventually to empathize with the other has been central in the development of United Creatives activities.

## 1.4.3 Empathy and design tools

Krznaric (2014) identifies ways in which one can cultivate **personal empathy** by focusing on various personal habits, including: (Eriksson and Barnes, no date).



The development of personal **curiosity** about strangers, which allows one to listen and gain the ability to understand another person.



Challenge **personal assumptions**, prejudices and be open to discover commonalities.



**Immersing oneself** in another’s life to gain a fuller, more complete understanding of another person.



**Listen actively and communicate** openly without any personal agenda.



Aim to **inspire action** at a societal level and encourage social change.



Develop your **imagination** to gain an understanding of individuals from all walks of life.



# Critical Design Thinking

## 1.5.1 Designer Critical Thinking

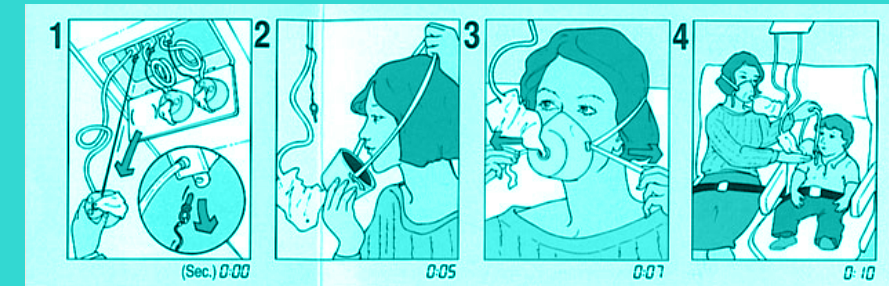
Critical thinking is thus an essential skill for future designers, enabling them to tackle complex challenges and create innovative and sustainable products and systems/services. An adaptation of design education to equip students with critical thinking skills might be necessary.

By doing so, designers will be better prepared to address the issues facing society and create a more equitable and sustainable future. However, fostering skills, such as critical thinking, has been said to be hard as these skills often represent thought modes that have become routines for more experienced designers.

To teach these skills to novice designers, current education modes often rely on tacit knowledge transfer (Gudur, 2016).

However, Van Merriënboer et al. (2002) state that it is crucial to make these complex skills as explicit as possible because it allows designers to clearly define the learning outcomes and ensure that the instructional materials effectively address them.

Furthermore, making skills explicit can enhance the relevance and transferability of the learning experience for students, as they would be able to better understand the practical applications of the skills they are learning. (Örneko lu Selçuk et al., 2023)



Self-empathy before you can have empathy for others



# Section 1: What is

38 BA Design for Art  
Direction

40 NVC at UAL

42 Experiencing NVC  
Training

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62 Challenges and  
barriers

## What are the 'Needs' for implementing NVC at the BA Design for Art Direction?

### Background

The BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication (UAL) has been offering a two-days bootcamp in non-violent communication (NVC) every year in October. The bootcamp has been going on for three years as an integrated part of the teaching team and students learning journey.

Staff and students have started to see the advantages of using non-violent communication methods (NVC), specifically how students communicate with each other and how students communicate with their peers in collaboration.

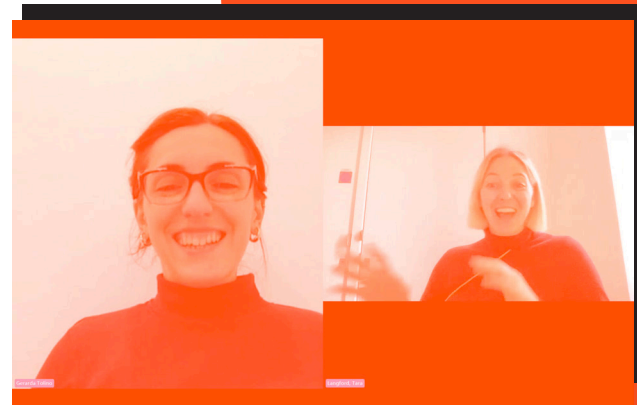
Particularly students have reported that having done NVC training had an impact on students getting hired after or during graduation, as the communication method practices alternative way on the response to conflicts and challenging circumstances between team's dynamics.

### Initial Motivation

Initially NVC was introduced with the aim for implementing a more **compassionate feedback** for students and staff. However, other motivations arise after NVC was implemented into the BA Design for Art Direction.



Photos from Ceri Buckmaster Instagram Page



Interview with Tara Longford, Former Course Director at BA Design for Art Direction

Here the **main motivations** behind implementing NVC at the BA Design for Art Direction from staff In-Depth Interviews.

After organizing the motivations for the implementation of NVC, I have allocated a series of 'Needs' that I specified from the NVC needs list and categorized them per each motivation. My intention was to analyse the motivation with a 'Need' lens:

Need for **Clarity, Communication, Structure**

Bringing structure on complex collaborative projects particularly during Collaborative Unit in Professional Practices where students collaborate with other courses at UAL.

Need for **Choice, Self-Responsibility, Purpose**

Student Agency when it comes to feelings and needs among staff and peers.

Need for **Meaning, Belonging, Celebration**

Value driven collaboration: Students to practice teamwork values around clarity and empathy.

Need for **Transparency, Respect, Acceptance**

Student relationship between creativity and identity: To differentiate students work and creative identity during feedback and learning journey.

Need for **Growth, Learning, Consideration**

Changing the narrative around conflicts: Conflicts as a transformative moment in team forming.

Need for **Inclusion, Empathy, Kindness**

Horizontal levelled powers in class and teamwork that fosters inclusion.

Need for **Welcome, Community, Care**

NVC Bootcamp day as an opportunity to build community among cohorts and staff.



## NVC at UAL - What is already happening

Dr Anna Troisi, Reader in Creative Computing and Equitable Futures at UAL's Creative Computing Institute, was 1 of 55 higher education staff awarded a prestigious National Teaching Fellowship over the summer. Presented annually by Advance HE, the competitive scheme acknowledges and celebrates individuals who have made an outstanding impact on student outcomes and the teaching profession in higher education across the UK. Dr. Anna Troisi was the first UAL academic staff to introduce NVC in teaching practices at UAL.

Widely recognised for her contributions to creating a more equitable and empathetic academic environment, not least her innovative use of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) to enhance inclusivity and student agency in curriculum and pedagogy, Dr Troisi is celebrated as a leading advocate for impactful change in higher education. (UAL website)



Dr. Anna Troisi, Teaching Peace to students enrolled in the BSc Creative Computing at UAL

"I introduced NVC in the teaching/learning spaces through workshops provided by certified coaches. I worked with colleagues for the co-creation of guidelines for writing compassionate feedback to students. I reinforced the need to practise during debates. This combination of activities enhanced inclusivity and empowered students as decision-makers in the BSc Creative Computing (UAL). It helped to address the low student satisfaction rate of 50% (2019) to 85% (2021), evidencing the value and impact of NVC in academic settings. The student voice score also increased steadily from 47% (2020) to 95% (2021) to 100% (2023)."

Dr. Anna Troisi, Reader in Creative Computing and Equitable Futures at UAL's Creative Computing Institute

After academic staff have received NVC training as part of staff training, NVC has been useful as **a tool for classroom learning** at the BA Design for Art Direction as follow:



### Student Agency Practice Tool

Academic Staff have used NVC as a Tool to identify needs that students resonate with in their practice. Asking questions like: Is this project meeting your need for aliveness?



### Psychological Safety Tool

Academic Staff creates space for Check-in with students at the beginning of class, during and after class.

### Other courses at UAL using NVC:

**Teaching Peace** to BSc Creative Computing at UAL (Dr. Anna Troisi)

Writing **Compassionate Feedback** (Dr. Anna Troisi)



### Feelings as Direction Tool

Academic staff have taught students to use feelings as an information to direct the things that students want to happen for them in the course.



### NVC as a Place making Tool

Academic Staff at BA Design for Art Direction sees NVC Bootcamp as an opportunity for establishing a supportive environment an sense of community among cohorts and staff, yearly event.



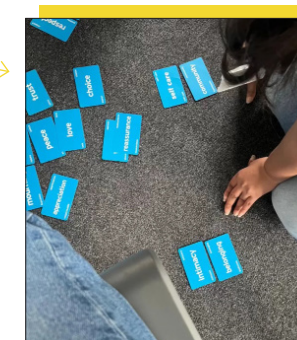
### Needs as Reflection Tool

Academic Staff have used NVC as a Reflection tool to facilitate project retrospectives at the end of projects. Asking questions like: What needs were met in last project? What need want to meet in the next



### Feedback Tool

Listening Hour between staff and students at BA Design for Art Direction in class.



**Listening Lab workshop** at UAL x MA Service Design Students | Dr. Male Lujan Escalante with Ceri Buckmaster NVC Facilitator and Mediator



# Experiencing NVC Training

## NVC London Community day

During the summer (June 2024) I have participated in the NVC London Community day at the beautiful Olden Community Garden.

It was a very amazing experience where I had the opportunity to learn more about the communication method but also to experience the learning on NVC personally.

At the end of the whole day I felt exhausted and quite emotionally drained. At the same time, it was amazing having had the opportunity to connect with other people in the community in a peaceful environment.



Me at the NVC Community Day at Olden Community Garden

## Keep your NVC fit - Empathic Listening

My **reflection** on Ceri Buckmaster Empathic Listening: 1h practice session of core NVC Skills

“After the Monday evening session on Empathic Listening with Ceri Buckmaster, I felt calm. I was upset when I arrived at the session because a friend of mine had let me down. During the session, we were first given a live example: John shared something that had upset him, and Ceri reflected back his feelings and needs while she was actively listening to him.

She would often say, ‘I am hearing needs of...’ John seemed relieved that Ceri could understand him. During the session, we were asked to reflect back the feelings and needs of the other person; the empathic listener had to play the role of a mirror. I found the idea of impersonating a mirror while listening worked in identifying the potential feelings and needs of the person sharing their experience. I knew what a mirror does, and I just needed to do exactly the same, reflecting back what was said.

However, I found in myself a constant desire to interpret what was said. I wanted to advise, although in NVC, a suggestion or strategy should be shared only after consent, as people might just want to offload most of the time. I also thought that it felt a bit mechanical, I was wondering if are there other ways to role play the mirror, to make it less clinical and cold. Ceri mentioned that our role in this practice is not to make suggestions or find solutions to fix the speaker’s issue, but instead to use empathy.

Naming feelings and needs is enough for the speaker to feel validated, seen, and understood.”

At the community day I have also met other Italians that are currently living in London and connected with them through a whatsapp group: Londra CNV - London NVC.



Screenshot of the whatsapp group



Reflections:  
Compassion | Understanding

The number one thing one thing that stuck completely with me after getting to know NVC is this: Judgments of others are alienated expressions of our own unmet needs (Rosenberg and Chopra, 2015). Understanding that everyone acts depending on their needs has helped me to take things less personal and practice compassion towards myself and close people in my life.



# Context Data

## Student submission work

During the summer, I conducted and analysed 165no. BA Design for Art Direction **Students submission work** from Year one, Year two and Year Three (Academic year 2023/2024) with gained access through UAL one drive that client Dr. Rachel Clarke shared with me.

## Staff & Students Interviews

I have also conducted **In-Depth Interviews** of 5no. Students at the BA Design for Art Direction, 5no. Staff members of BA Design for Art Direction (including current and former course leader of BA Design for Art Direction) and 1no. Facilitator of Nonviolent communication. All interviews have taken part in the Communication for Collaborative Communication with NVC Bootcamp.

Code 01	Code 02	Code 03	Code 04	Code 05	Code 06	Code 07	Code 08	Code 09	Code 10	Code 11	Code 12	Code 13	
Declarative Coding	Nonviolent Communication / Leadership Training	Listening (Active)	Empathy	Collaboration	Conflicts Resolution	Peer work / Designers	Sharing / Reflection	Resolving Action	Needs	Concentration	Challenges		
		Page 6- Communication and was also a turnout, we have good communication when we did it, but whenever it is - make it a harder for each of us to reach out since we were stuck in the outside of Uni Page 8- I need to improve my communication skills, instead people are misunderstanding me, whether it is from my choice of words, tone of voice, or even my body language.	Page 24- This might also have been to my disadvantage The idea goes the same ways as being able to listen to other people Page 26- I think, after some time, when you get to know the your group a bit better, communication becomes much easier. I think, because you are trying to be a leader and everything feels harder.										
		Page 7- Non-violent communication has been very beneficial for our process and for me personally. Practising differentiating and naming my feelings gave me more acceptance and understanding of myself.	Page 7- The most important lesson that I took from this project is to be more patient with everyone in my group and listen carefully. Page 12- working in a group lets me and Paul, we were speaking the same language the language and we thought that making a collaboration project might be very interesting. connection of our ideas together in a moving image work.										
			Page 47- Everything is possible today most important thing is that we both but only a socially-critical formulate ideas about whenever the balance between social perfection and imperfection in this collaboration experience	Page 53- I believe the most important thing is that we both but only a socially-critical formulate ideas about whenever the balance between social perfection and imperfection in this collaboration experience									
									Page 50- A habit is creative in the sense that the concrete emanation on the surface of our "socialisation" changes constantly, driven by the complex dialectic of capitalism, and constantly needs to be designed anew.				
												Page 52- The "loneliness" experienced was intense - the subtly to share my problems with the anticipation of being misunderst ood. Page 53- The "loneliness" experienced was intense - the subtly to share my problems with the anticipation of being misunderst ood.	

Fig. Initial Coding Excel Sheet from 165no. Student Submission work (full Version in Appendix Section)

165no. Students Submitted Work

11no. In-Depth Interviews

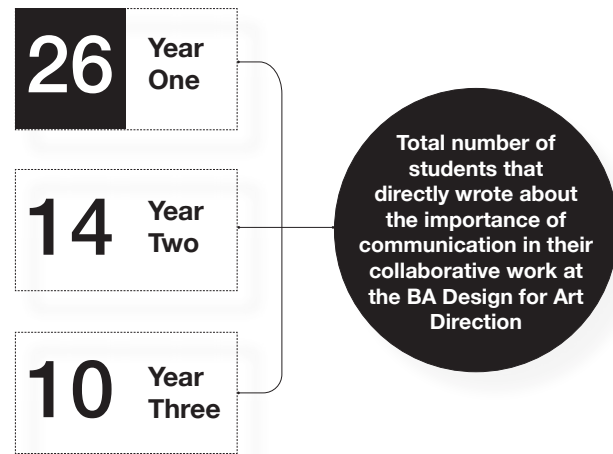


## Student Submitted Work: Initial Findings

### NVC vs. Communication Codes

I started by reading and familiarizing with the type of work that student at BA Design for Art Direction submitted. Some students had separated their Research and Progress document from the rest of their work, which added an extra layer of complexity during the analysis process.

I started by looking for **keywords** such as 'Nonviolent communication', 'NVC', 'Leadership Training'. I logged all the found written mention about the latter keywords into an excel table index where I started to collect deductive codes which has similar themes to NVC.



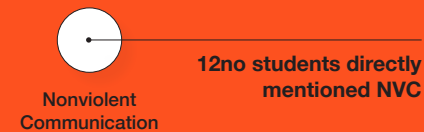
“Non-violent communication lessons were very beneficial for our process and for me personally. Practicing differentiating and naming my feelings gave me more acceptance and understanding of myself.”

“Remember that it is your responsibility to explain your idea, as your group mates may have something else in mind based on their own experiences, world-views and practices. Effective and non-violent communication is crucial to being a successful art director.”

Student Year 1 | Written work

I always find NVC workshops to be really helpful in terms of inclusivity, availability, and support for others, as well as improving my ability to communicate my feelings using better language. I agree that finding the right words can help to reduce the intensity of emotions. This notion of communication later expands to my exhibition theme about hardship to translate and deliver feelings and thoughts to other personnel. This year's workshop was particularly beneficial because I was able to make requests based on my specific needs. Learning how to make appropriate requests is an important skill for navigating

Student Year 3 | Written work



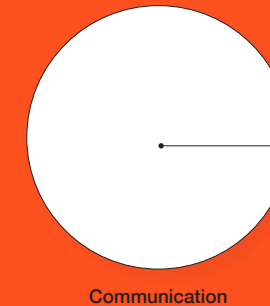
“Communication itself was also a turmoil, we have good communication when only f2f, but whenever it is online it is harder for each of us to reach out since we all have stuff to do outside of Uni”

“I need to improve my communication skills, I noticed people are misunderstanding me, whether it is from my choice of words, tone of voice, or even my facial expression.”

“Clear communication about every little detail is vital for an easier and successful collaboration; never assume the other person knows what you mean without clear guidelines, always have a plan B, more times than not something won't go as planned”

Another issue with the teamwork was that we only texted in the group chat, and we only had around 2-3 discussions about our concept. If I made more effort on motivating others to contribute more to our group work the outcome would look more put together.

Student Year 1 | Written work



“Remember that it is your responsibility to explain your idea, as your group mates may have something else in mind based on their own experiences, world-views and practices”

“I am not surprised there were a lot of problems that surfaced because of communication issues.”

“Collaborating with my peers from the course... Required skills such as communicating, listening, discussing and sharing which you do a lot less of when you are working alone.”

Student Year 2 | Written work

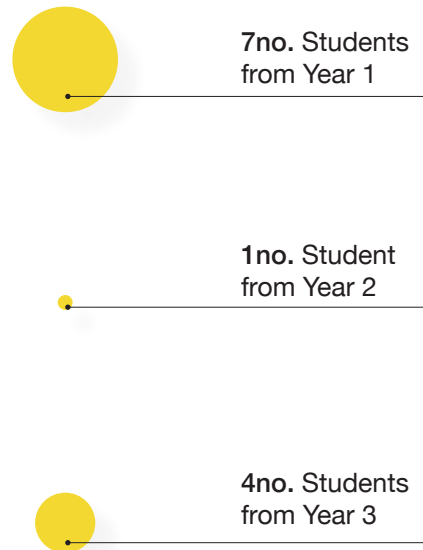
There are practitioners from different parts of the world. When collaborating with others, it is important to adjust your mode of communication to ensure equality. This means making sure that everyone has a chance to be heard, which not only encourages diverse ideas but also benefits individual motivation. It takes effort to truly connect with another person, but it is worth the energy.

Student Year 3 | Written work

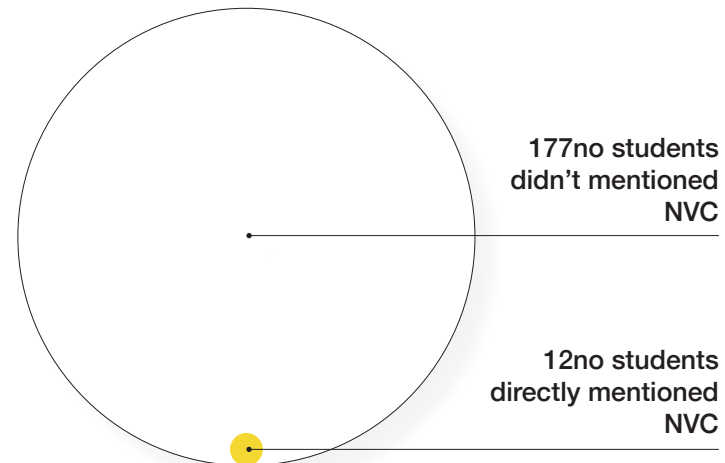
**Student Submitted Work: Coding Strategy, Overall Insights translated in quantitative data**

Only **12no. Students out of 165no. Student** work submission have directly mentioned about the value of the NVC Bootcamp training. However, a vast majority had wrote about the importance of communication in their Art Direction practice.

As follow per **each year** (academic year 2023/2024):

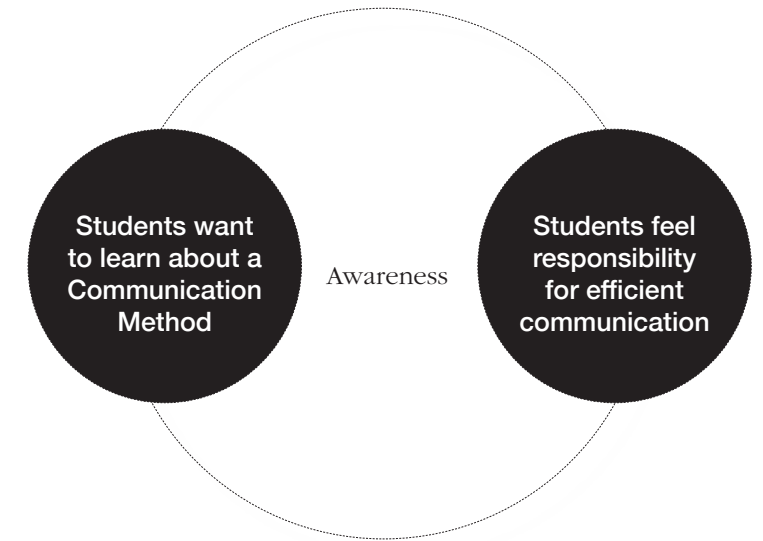


**12no. Students (7%) out of 165no. Directly mentioned NVC** in submitted work. As follow per each year (academic year 2023/2024):



From these insights, there is a visible need for student at BA Design for Art Direction for learning a **communication method** and an **awareness** that communication is key to the collaborative practice at the BA Design for Art Direction. Also students talked about a **sense of responsibility** in regards to practicing good communication among team members and design justice theories.

The responsibility to create an awareness of the designers' own ontology before trying to understand the 'cultural other' is currently left to the individual designer, while it needs to shift towards being an integrated part of service design practice. (Prakash, 2022). The statement emphasizes the critical importance of self-awareness in design. From the insights gathered and after reading about BA students written work, I have understood that students, also especially students from year one are aware of the importance of self-awareness and reflection on their own positionality.



## What other Codes are related to NVC?

I also **not limited my search to only NVC keywords** but other codes that have similar meaning or related to the practice of NVC. I wanted to know what else students mention in their work that is similar or related to the ethos of Nonviolent Communication.

The deductive codes were: Nonviolent communication, Non-violent communication, NVC, Leadership Training, Communication, Listening, Empathy, Collaboration, Conflicts Resolution, Inner work, Sharing Reflection or Feedback, Requesting Action.

Students talked broadly about **inner work** that designers need to do in order to do produce less harm, the importance of **empathy in design process** and **addressing needs** of people and projects. These codes are all related to what Nonviolent communication principles stand for.

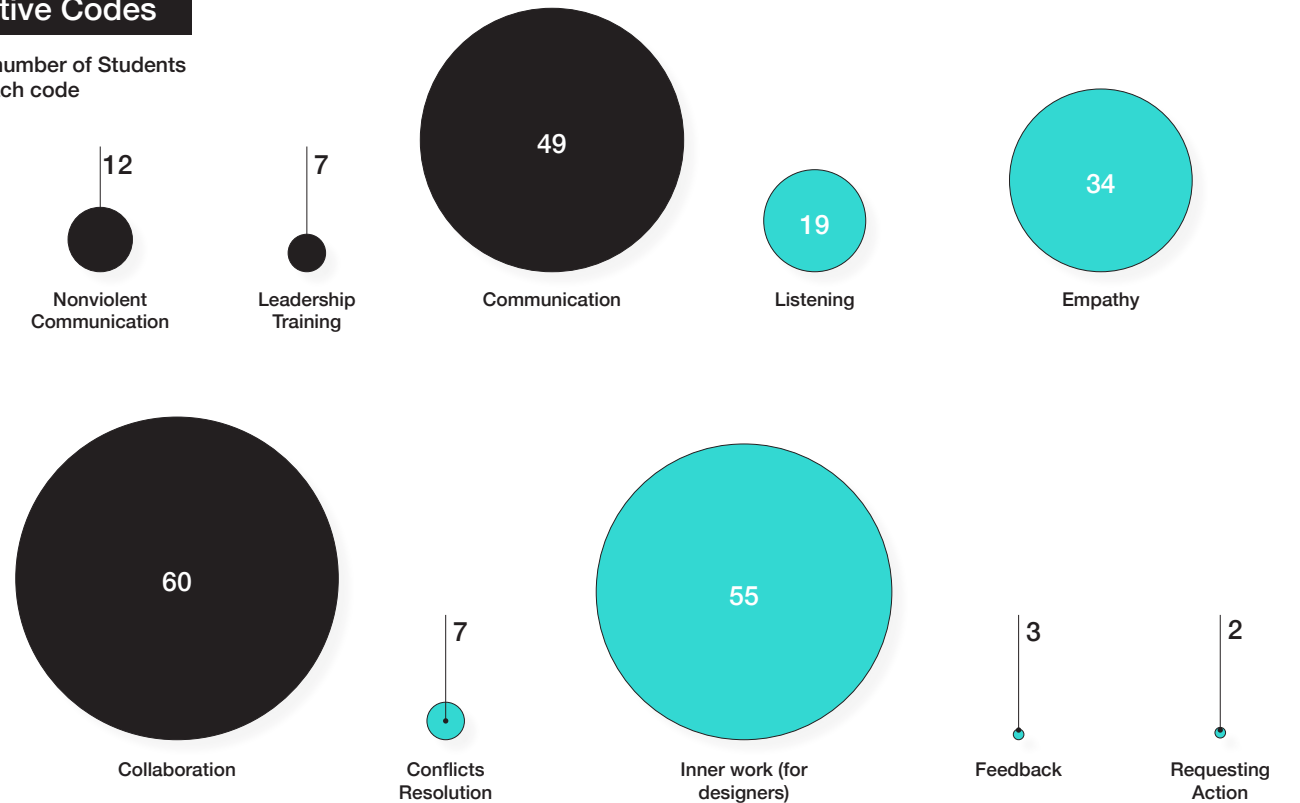
From these insights I gather that student have the intention to wanting to don't produce any more harm through design and recognise of a need for a way to implement that in order to expand this intention into concrete **tangible actions and process**.

“To challenge designers to think about how good intentions are not necessarily enough to ensure that design processes and practices become tools of liberation, and to develop principles that might help practitioners avoid the (often unwitting) reproduction of existing inequalities”

Student Year 1 | Written work

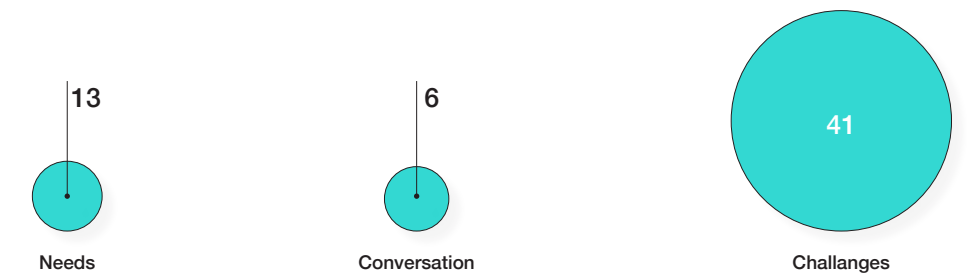
## Deductive Codes

Total number of Students per each code



## Inductive Codes

Total number of Students per each code



## Communication: A key Tool in Collaborative projects

Students at the BA Design for Art Direction had written extensively on how communication is an essential tool for their collaborative projects.

Collaboration is central to the practice of Art Direction. Therefore, the need for communication tool is essential in the teaching and learning of Design for Art Direction at UAL.

### Key Insight:

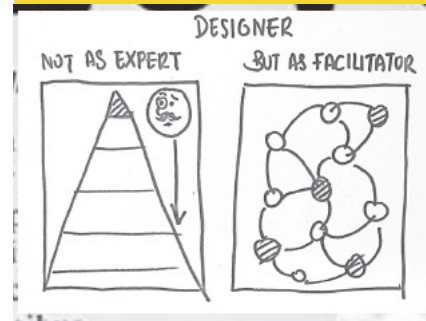
I was surprised to discover that although all years cohorts had NVC training for the past two years, there was **not much mentioned of the NVC training or how it had been used as a tool in students collaborative projects and in class.**

I have learnt that to be an Art Director you need to have a clear vision, attention to detail and a clear Communication style to share your vision clearly and include everyone else.

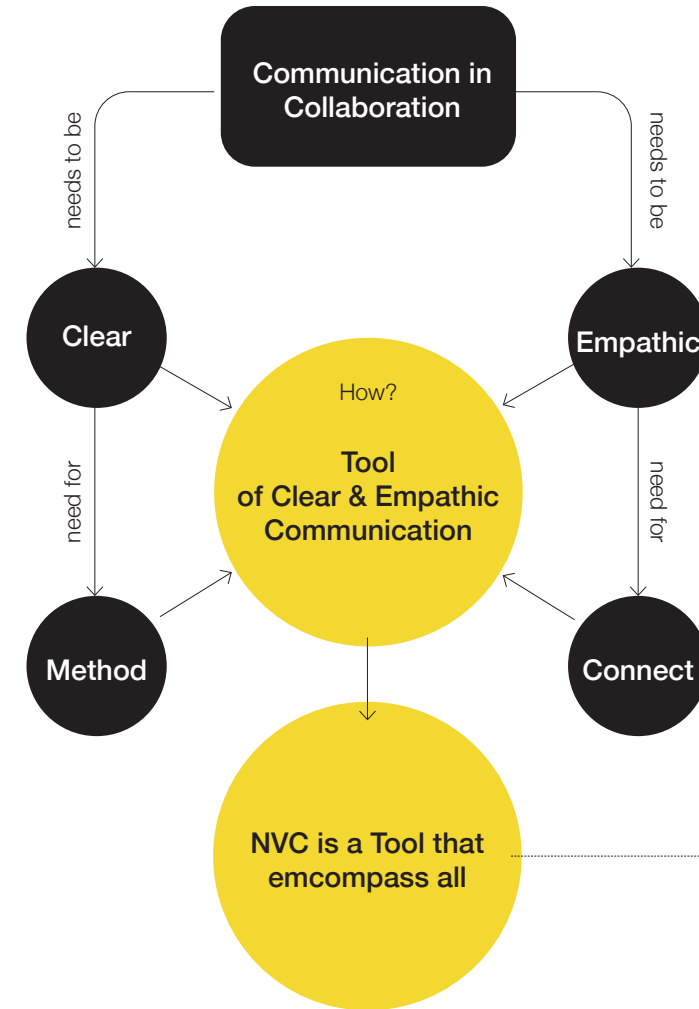
Student Year 1 | Written work

Looking at individual studies and art out there I was able to learn from them and implement it into my own work. It was insightful to learn how To communicate effectively and I believe is one of the key skills to have as an Art Director. Speaking to peers both on and outside my course help gained different perspectives.

Student Year 1 | Written work



Student Year 1 | Sketch from Written work



## What other needs can be met for students through good communication?

Below I have identified the key needs students talked about in relation to communication in collaboration in the Submitted written work:



### Creative Confidence

Remember that it is your responsibility to explain your idea, as your group mates may have something else in mind based on their own experiences, worldviews and practices

Student Year 1 | Written work



### Sense of community

"In this project I choose to collaborate with the people that I am familiar with"

Student Year 1 | Written work



### Inclusion

It was enjoyable collaborating with people that had different aesthetics and curating a piece of work that had elements of each individual's taste.

Student Year 1 | Written work



### Shared Responsibilities

I think, after some time, when you get to know the your group a bit better, communication becomes much more better, because no one is trying to be a leader and everything feels equal

Student Year 1 | Written work



### Support from others

"The collaborations across this project have taught me to make sure that everyone's workload is achievable and no one feels like the process may be unfair. Communication was key to achieve this and in the future I will definitely be holding this as a priority."

Student Year 1 | Written work



### Clarity and Effectiveness

"I thought of X when I was considering collaborators because I've always had good communication with her in my professional classes..."

Student Year 2 | Written work

A world lives within you. No one else can bring you news of this inner world. Through the opening of the mouth we bring out sounds from the mountain beneath the soul. These sounds are words.

Aram Cara John O Donohue



## In-Depth Interviews with Students and Staff at BA Design for Art Direction: Overview & Strategy

I have conducted a series of interviews to better understand the experiences of students and staff with NVC. I have structured the interviews with the aim to explore the **impact, challenges and barriers** that students have staff have discovered during and after learning about the method. I have structures my interview questions with the aim to explore the three sections in the report structure: What is, What if and What else.

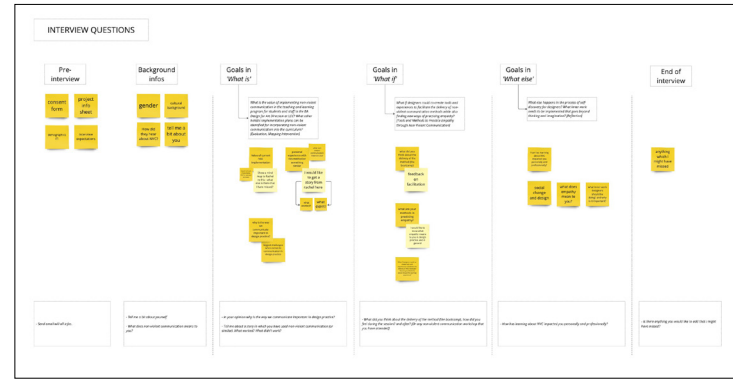
In the **What is** I asked questions in order to understand what good communication meant to students and staff and also why the way we communicate is important at the BA.

In the **What if** I asked questions in regards to students and staff experience at the bootcamp and using and practicing NVC as a tool for communication in their collaborative projects.

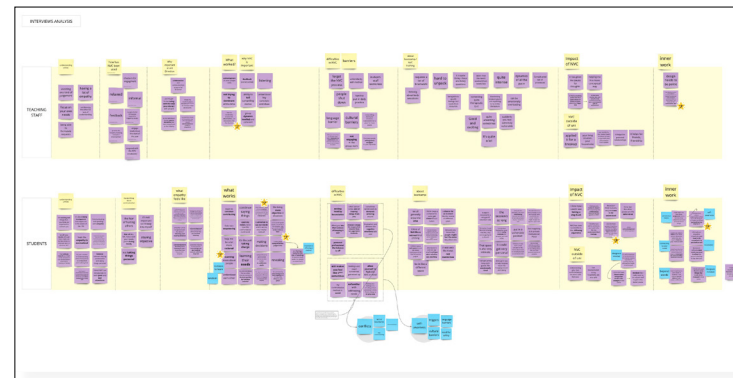
In the **What else** I wanted to explore what other impact learning about NVC has had on staff and students in their personal and professional life.

**Useful for:** Getting deep insights on students and staff experience.

**What didn't work:** I could have structure the interview differently with Dr. Rachel Clarke. This was my first interview for this project. Reflecting back, I could have interviewed her in her expertise in participatory research.



The In-Depth Interviews Structure and questions aimed for each sections on Miro Board



The In-Depth Interviews Initial Findings Analysis on Miro

### Research questions:

The BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication (UAL) has been offering a two-days boot-camp in Nonviolent Communication (NVC) every year in October. The boot-camp has been going on for three years as an integrated part of the teaching team and students learning journey. I will be evaluating what impact and challenges the students and staff have encountered so far. I will structure my project into three main sections: 'What is', 'What if' and 'What else'.

**What is**

What is the value of implementing Nonviolent Communication in the teaching and learning program for students and staff in the BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication (LCC)?

**What if**

What if designers could co-create tools and experiences to facilitate the delivery of Nonviolent Communication methods while also finding new ways of practicing empathy?

**What else**

What else happens in the process of self-discovery for designers? What inner work needs to be implemented that goes beyond thinking and imagination?

Project Info Sheet designed for In-Depth Interviewees

### Project Information Sheet

## Nonviolent Communication Evaluation Project for BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication

### Interview questions:

**Stage 1**

**Getting to know you:**

- Tell me a bit about yourself.
- What does Nonviolent Communication mean to you?
- In your opinion why is the way we communicate important in design practice at BA Design for Art Direction?

**Stage 2**

**Your experience:**

- Tell me about story in which you have used Nonviolent Communication method. What worked? What didn't work?
- What did you think about the delivery of the method (the boot-camp), how did you feel during the session and after?

**Stage 3**

**Your reflection:**

- How has learning about Nonviolent Communication (NVC) impacted you personally and professionally?
- Is there anything you would like to add that I might have missed?

11no.  
In-Depth  
Interviews



## In-Depth Interviews Initial Insights

Below the list of people interviewed that participated in the NVC Bootcamp for BA Design for Art Direction:

**Dr. Rachel Clarke** (she/her) | Course Leader at BA Design for Art Direction

**Floriane Misslin** (they/them) | Lecturer in Design for Art Direction

**Justyna Kabala** (she/her) | Senior Lecturer BA Design for Art Direction

**Adam Gibbons** (he/him) | Lecturer in BA Design for Art Direction

**Tara Langford** | Former Course Leader at BA Design for Art Direction currently Course Director BA Graphic Design at Leeds Beckett University

1no. Student Y1  
2no. Student Y2  
1no. Student Y3



I have structured the key interview insights following my project structure 'What is', 'What if' and 'What else'. Here are the initial insights on the **impact** that learning about NVC had on students and staff at the BA Design for Art Direction:

### Staff In-Depth Interviews | Key Insights on Impact of learning about NVC:

Staff wants to foster a more empathetic communication exchange with students.

Staff wants to foster a more empathetic communication exchange among other members of staff.

Staff wants to equip students with a tool for communication in their collaborative projects.

Staff structure classroom reflection activities using NVC approach to communication.

Staff wants to set a precedent to present to the wider Design School at UAL.

Staff wants to mitigate toxic communication that exists in design industry in the 'designers of the future'.

### Students In-Depth Interviews | Key Insights on Impact of learning about NVC:

Students feel relieved to have a structure for communication in their collaborative work.

Students learned about horizontal levelled power in collaborative projects through empathetic communication.

Students feel that the method has helped me diffuse arguments.

Students feel that NVC has helped them practicing active listening in collaboration.

Students gained a sense of empowerment by breaking some of the gender role stereotypes around naming needs. Students have said that NVC has given them the 'permission' to name feelings and needs.



# Challenges & Barriers

Here I list the insights that I have gathered from student written work and In-Depth interviews around the challenges and barriers that students have experienced while practicing the method with their peers and outside of UAL.

The interaction between designer and user (or community participant) is complex and dependent on a number of factors. Some of these may be controllable, or adaptable, but others are imbedded in the context, experiences, values and behaviour of the individual (Eriksson and Barnes, no date). I find this statement particularly true when the barriers that stop students from practicing NVC barriers identified are around cultural conditioning.



Here quotes from students extracted from In-Depth Interviews:

“Well, also I think what I realised from this is that although we used NVC, it doesn't change the way you feel towards these very aggressive moments of like being shouted at, being told things or being like blamed for things like yes, NVC provides efficient communication and gives a better outcome for that kind of situation. But it still makes you feel like \*\*\*\* sometimes.

I think that's the most difficult thing. I think you'd think that NBC would cure all difficult situations, but at the at the end of the day, you still feel affected and shaken by these things. I think that's OK. Like it's OK to feel like \*\*\*\*, but I think NBC kind of alleviates.”

Student Year 3 | Written work

“If someone hasn't been isn't familiar with addressing their needs at all. Or like I'm familiar with it, I think it's definitely not easy to really discuss that.”

Student Year 2 | Written work

“And I feel like it's also the, probably the themes that you speak about in the nonviolent communication methods. Sometimes they put you in a bit of a vulnerable position, right, so.”

Student Year 2 | Written work

“Well, like I think, I remember feeling like, wow, this is really intimate for people are just met today. To breakdown like barriers of strangers and stuff. Which could be a really good thing, but it's also like. It was so it was such a new concept to like, think about and to reveal yourself to someone else.

Student Year 2 | Written work

“First year it is definitely a lot more intimidating because you don't know many people on your course as well. I mean, in your year as well.”

Student Year 2 | Written work





## Section 2: What if

### Section 2: What if

- 66 Communicating the value of NVC (to Staff)
- 68 Feedback on initial insights
- 70 Nonviolent global liberation
- 72 Communication for Collaborative Leadership Bootcamp
- 73 Communicating value of NVC (to Students)
- 74 Participant Observations
- 76 'Feel, Sketch, Name'

# Communicating value of NVC

## To Staff at the BA Design for Art Direction

As part of the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) workshop implementation with academic staff, I developed an initial document designed to serve as a practical tool for both the staff and the NVC facilitator during the workshop. This tool was crafted to effectively communicate the initial findings and provide a comprehensive summary of the key themes and codes that emerged from the evaluation research conducted with staff and students.

The document aimed to bridge the gap between research insights and practical application, ensuring that the data could be readily understood and utilized by the workshop participants. After presenting the document to the staff, they provided constructive feedback, which prompted further refinement of the findings.

One significant suggestion was to categorize the communication of the identified values into three distinct audience groups. This approach would allow for tailored messaging and engagement strategies, ensuring that the insights resonated appropriately with each audience. This collaborative feedback process enhanced the document's relevance and usability, making it a more effective resource for the workshop and its stakeholders.

Dr. Rachel Clarke and team **feedback:**

a) **Communicating the value of NVC to new students**  
 + Student theme 2: Improved Collaboration and Group Dynamics: Enhancing Teamwork  
 + Student theme 3: Personal Growth and Self-awareness: Developing Individual Identity

b) **Communicating the value of NVC within the Design School**  
 + Student theme 4: Professional Development: Preparing for Industry Challenges  
 + Student theme 5: Enhanced Learning Experience: Creating an Inclusive Educational Environment  
 + Staff theme 3: Improving Staff-Student Dynamics  
 + Staff theme 1: Enhancing Educational Practices

c) **Why we feel these insights are valuable in the context of future design practice**  
 + Student theme 1: Enhanced Interpersonal Relationships: Building a Supportive Community  
 + Student theme 6: Broader Social Impact: Contributing to Community Well-Being  
 + Staff theme 4: Shaping Future Design Practice

**Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Evaluation**  
 BA Design for Art Direction  
 London College of Communication (UAL)

**Research question: What is the value of implementing NVC in the teaching and learning program for students and staff in the BA Design for Art Direction?**

**Research Method: Thematic Analysis of Interviews and Students Submissions**

**Student submitted work (Year 1, 2, 3): Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Data found in the 1650s.**

**Themes generated from the research findings of Staff and Students Interviews and Submitted Student works (Y1/Y2/Y3)**

**Student Theme 5: Enhanced Learning Experience: Creating an Inclusive Educational Environment**

**Student Theme 6: Broader Social Impact: Contributing to Community Well-being**

**Student Theme 1: Enhanced Interpersonal Relationships: Building a Supportive Community**

**Student Theme 2: Improved Collaboration and Group Dynamics: Enhancing Teamwork**

**Student Theme 3: Personal Growth and Self-awareness: Developing Individual Identity**

**Student Theme 4: Professional Development, Preparing for Industry Challenges**

**Staff Theme 4: Shaping Future Design Practice**

**Staff Theme 3: Improving Student-Staff Dynamics**

**Staff Theme 1: Enhancing Educational Practices**

**What are some of the challenges of practicing NVC identified from Staff and Students at the BA Design for Art Direction?**

**Given the research findings of the impact and challenges of Nonviolent Communication, what if NVC..**

NVC Evaluation document with initial themes and codes shared to staff at BA Design for Art Direction for the NVC implementation workshop



# Feedback on Initial Insights

## Feedback from NVC Facilitator Ceri Buckmaster

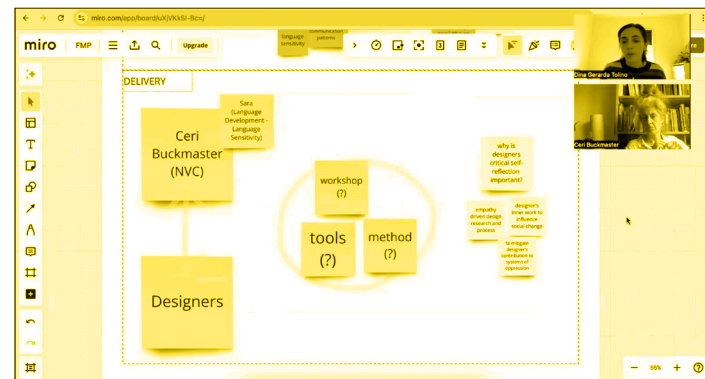
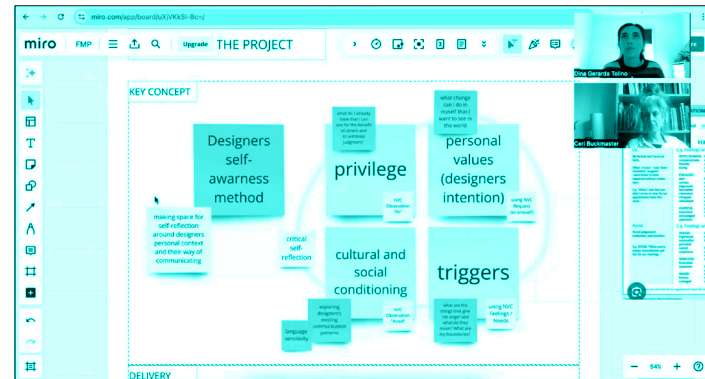
I spoke with Ceri Buckmaster to get feedback my initial idea of a self-reflection tool for designers self-awareness with particular focus on managing unconscious biases.

Below in summary the feedback (and next page one important key insight for the development of the reflection tool):

We can't avoid cultural conditioning but we can deal with them or mitigate them but can't stop them from happening.

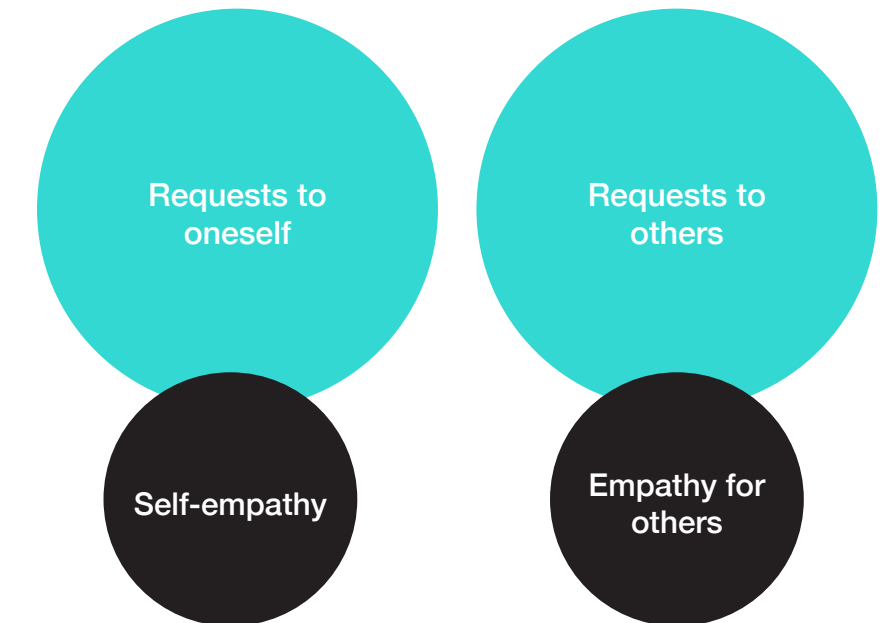
Feelings and needs links us to our right brain.  
Observations and Requests in our left brain.  
We need all 4no. Components f NVC to create a connection.

We need to connect our feelings in order to reveal unconscious bias and at the same time we need the mirror of someone else giving us feedback. Without feedback we can't understand our unconscious biases.



Me and Ceri Buckmaster discussing initial insights and initial concept for a self-awareness tool for designers

Request to oneself are an important part of NVC as is one of the few practice that social change starts with ourselves. But is important to name all requests. Requests to others move towards social change.



# Nonviolent Global Liberation

I came across **Nonviolent Global Liberation (NGL)** through NVC Facilitator and Mediator Ceri Buckmaster.

NGL explore systemic change, addressing issues like scarcity, powerlessness, and isolation. Nonviolent systems are based on needs, unlike the current systems of our societies which are not based on punishments and rewards.

Their focus includes:

**Decision making** systems  
**Resource** allocation systems  
**Information** flow systems  
**Feedback** mechanism systems  
**Conflict resolution** systems  
**Support** systems  
Systems of **awareness** around power and privilege

The academic staff at the BA Design for Art Direction have talked about the intention to plant a vision for the future of design practice to break down some of the gendered, racial, class, related problems that arises

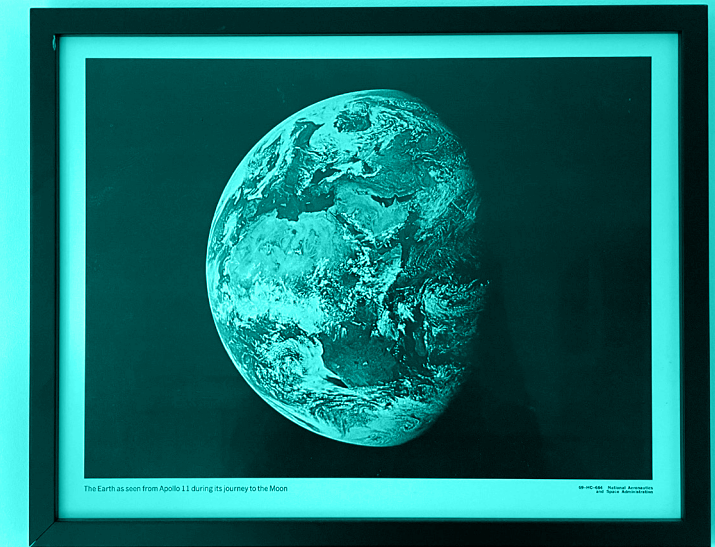
from the Art Direction industries. The **Visual Mobilization (VM)** Framework developed by Emma Quayle and in collaboration with Miki Kashtan and Verene Nicolas is the structural core of the Nonviolent Global Liberation.

My **key learning** from the desk research on their work are:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ↓<br>The seed of vision for a world that works for all is within us.   | ↓<br>The main challenge is: how do we make systemic changes with tenderness?                        |
| ↓<br>We are all born with the 'seed' of vision and through trauma we lose touch with that 'seed' of vision.  | ↓<br>We can restore our 'natural powers' based on internal resources to create new systems of love. |
| ↓<br>We need to create new structures to mobilize towards that vision in order to close the gap between the 'Vision' and the 'Now'. This can be done by: | ↓<br>Practicing to make choices within togetherness and not separation.                             |
| ↓<br>Assessing our current capacities and by Problem Solving and anchor them in concrete systems.  | ↓<br>Bringing tenderness to our limitations (Self-judgment)   |

Reflections:  
Justice | Healing |

I also think about all the violence we have and are exposed to. I think about all the people that are suffering from the system of oppression that we live in and I feel a desire for wanting to connect emotionally with humanity and beyond, to send and invitation to be kinder to one another. Also a deep sense of wanting to understand the drives of the people that decide to aliment this violence in the world. But maybe there is nothing to understand. There is just acceptance that the world it is what it is and what we can control is our intention and on what we choose to act on.



Autoethography visual research: Photo of a picture frame showing 'The Earth as seen from Apollo 11 during his journey to the moon' in my bedroom



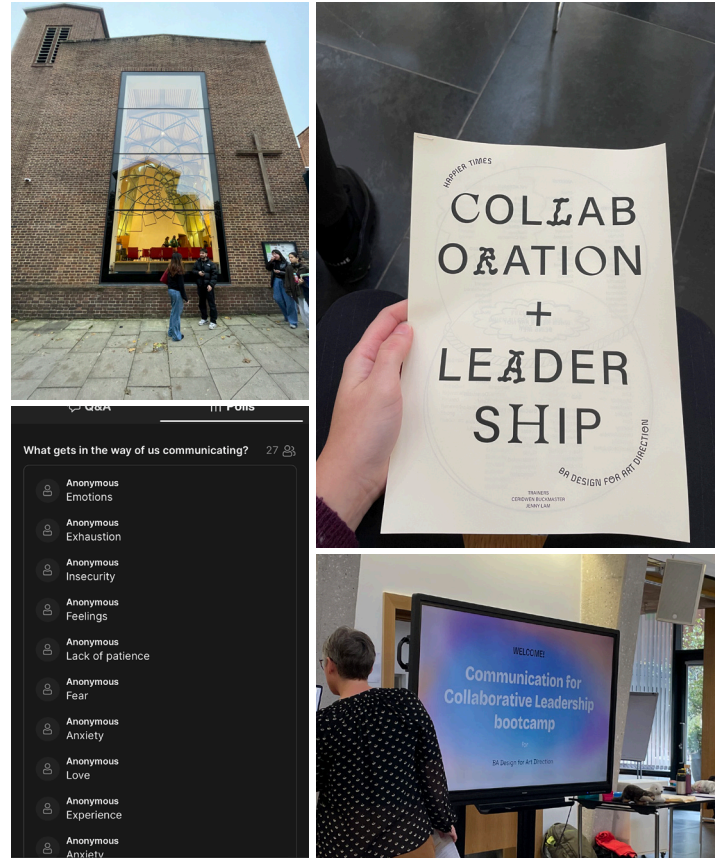
# Communication for Collaborative Leadership NVC Bootcamp

## One Full day at Lumen

On Monday 21st of October 2024 I have attended the Nonviolent Communication Bootcamp that the BA Design for Art Direction offers. This year (2024) the workshop was running for its third consecutive year. The bootcamp took place in The Lumen Community, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS. Attending the NVC Bootcamp gave the opportunity to introduce my contribution to course by introducing my NVC evaluation project research to all participants at NVC Bootcamp. Moreover, participating in the activities gave me a better **understanding of my target audience** (students Y1, 2 & 3 at BA).

**NVC Certified Facilitators:**  
Ceri Buckmaster & Jenny Lam

**Participants:**  
BA Design for Art Direction (Academic Staff & Students)  
Rose Thompson | UAL Social Purpose Lab



# Communicating value of NVC

## To Students at the BA Design for Art Direction

As part of the Communication for Collaborative Leadership Bootcamp, myself and Dr. Rachel Clarke presented the initial findings of the evaluation project.

This was my first test on communicating the value of NVC to students at the BA Design for Art Direction.

### My key learning on the presentation:

I felt that the way I presented wasn't very engaging for students.

The single slide provided was overwhelming in terms of information on the key findings of the value.

The themes were overwhelming in terms of quantities and language.

It was my first time meeting my target audience as a cohort and the presentation should have been more targeted to the target audience needs or ways of learning.



Slide presented as part of the wider Communication for Collaborative Leadership bootcamp



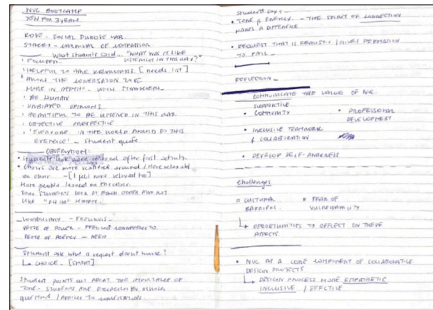
Myself and Dr. Rachel Clarke presenting the initial findings of the value of implementing NVC in the BA programme



# Participant Observations

## Communication for Collaborative Leadership Bootcamp

At the bootcamp I decided to participate and conduct a participant observation research. I found this method to be very insightful and feel so grateful to have had very close access to my target audience. This method has given me rich and deep insights in order to hear and see immediate feedback from students while they were experiencing the bootcamp organised for the students. A couple of students thought I was also a student at the course as some students were meeting each other for the first time at the bootcamp. I explained I was conducting research at the bootcamp.



Notes of my observations during the NVC bootcamp

**Useful for:** Understand my target audience, Experience the NVC Bootcamp, Build relationships with students, staff and other researchers working in similar topic (UAL Social Purpose Lab Evaluation manager Rose Thompson, PhD on-going research from Stacey Leigh Ross).

Students quotes from in response to question “What was it like to listening in this way” after an active listening activity:

“I felt focused”

“Helpful to have keywords (needs and feelings list)”

“Beautiful to be listen in this way”

“Everyone in the world should do this experience”



First year student selected ‘Needs’ after one of the Bootcamp Activities around identifying needs

## Observing students behaviours:

Some students are listening attentively, few students engage in conversation when facilitators are asking questions or playing games and others are looking down or at their phones.

Generally the cohort looked more relaxed in the afternoon with some students choosing to sit on the floor, leaning back on their chairs and engaging more with activities.

In the afternoon session, some students started to leave or remained in the opposite room without following the session.



Staff and Facilitators demonstrating how to play the “Empathy Game Card” to all years cohorts

## Overall Observations:

Students recognise the value of the NVC Bootcamp while giving feedback at the end of activities.

Students question relevance of the NVC Bootcamp in relation to their course. I hear student say: ‘It feels like therapy’.

The majority of the students who have engaged in activities were sounded native English speakers

The student next to me turns and ask: ‘Why are we doing this?’ While another student from the crown says: ‘Everyone in the world should do this’.

During ‘As I hear you saying..’ Exercise students engaged in the game, however there was a sense of general sense of fear of vulnerability as students rarely expressed how they noticed they were feeling and the focus remained in what they noticed externally (for example, how other students were dressed).



# 'Feel, Sketch, Name'

## Arts-based Evaluation Method

During the Communication for Collaborative Leadership Bootcamp, I have set-up a station with 'Feel, Sketch, Name' a method of research I have designed. I was asking students to sketch an emotion they feel or felt during the session. My intent was to give space to other ways of receiving feedback that used **non-verbal communication**. 'Feel, Sketch, Name' was also a way for me to **engage in dialogue** with students from Year 1 at BA Design for Art Direction to learn about how they felt about the bootcamp. Six students participated in the activity.

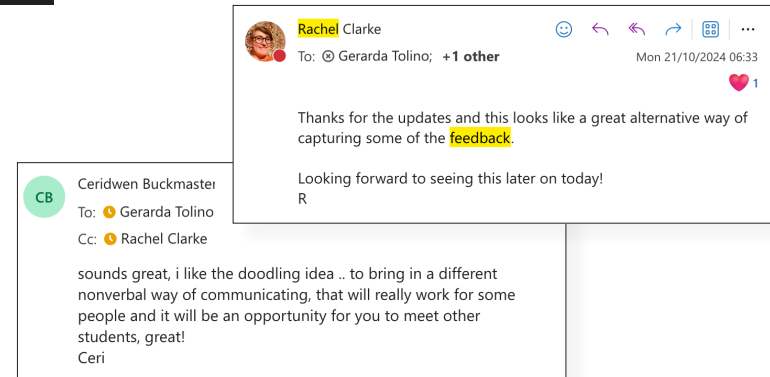
### Activity Name:

'Feel, Sketch, Name' - An emotion you feel right now or felt during the session.

### Participants:

BA Design for Art Direction (Academic Staff & Students)

**Useful for:** Exploring alternative approaches to research, Including different ways of expressing feedback, Engaging in conversations with students.



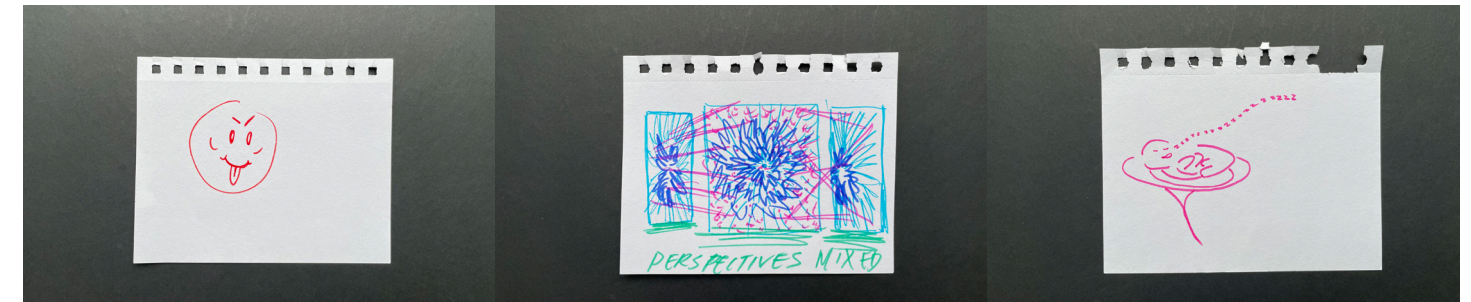
Feedback received from NVC Facilitator and Mediator Ceri Buckmaster on method and prior to bootcamp



'Feel, Sketch, Name' set up at the Communication for Collaborative Leadership Bootcamp and a student sketching how they felt

## Key Reflections on the method

Drawings without words are up to interpretation to those who view. This might results in making wrong assumptions, therefore the absence of words makes the research method too abstract for evaluation. On the other hand, the drawings collected could be 'felt' rather than read or understood. The activity also fosters inclusivity by recognising other ways of expressing feedback.



A first year student sketching an emotion and me talking to students next to the 'Feel, Sketch, Name' set up at the Bootcamp



Students sketches using the arts-based evaluation method



# Section 3: What else

## Section 3: What else

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# The effects of NVC

## Autoethography

Adopting an autoethnography method was relevant in this project as I wanted to explore and measure the impact that learning about NVC had in my professional and personal life.

I am currently in part-time employment at a design and build company in London and work on projects in collaboration with other 6 designers, all bringing to the team different skill where I worked for the last 3 years. I believe in teamwork and I strongly value fostering a sense of community at work that feels safe and supportive. I also feel that the value of NVC aligns strongly with my personal values. I wanted to learn on finding ways to improve my way of communicating with an approach to communication that has at his heart the willingness to connect to others.

I am interested in designers positionality in design projects. I feel that learning about NVC has given me a chance to reflect on my own position and

**Useful for:** Getting insights on the inner transformative effects of learning about Nonviolent communication has on a designer. Space for thoughts.

super powers and reflect on ways I can embody change and apply theories such as Design Justice or Designs for the Pluriverse in a practical manner through learning an empathic communication method.

The way I have decided to structure autoethnography in this report is by weaving my visual and written reflection in this report depending on the relevance of each chapter.

### Key Insights:

NVC helped me understand ‘powers’.

NVC helped me understand ‘interdependence’.

NVC help me explore my ‘super powers’.

Autoethnography helped me explore NVC in a more speculative way

Autoethnography helped me explore ways of communicating that go beyond words. Getting insights on the inner transformative effects of learning about Nonviolent communication has on a designer.

### Reflections: A childish dream

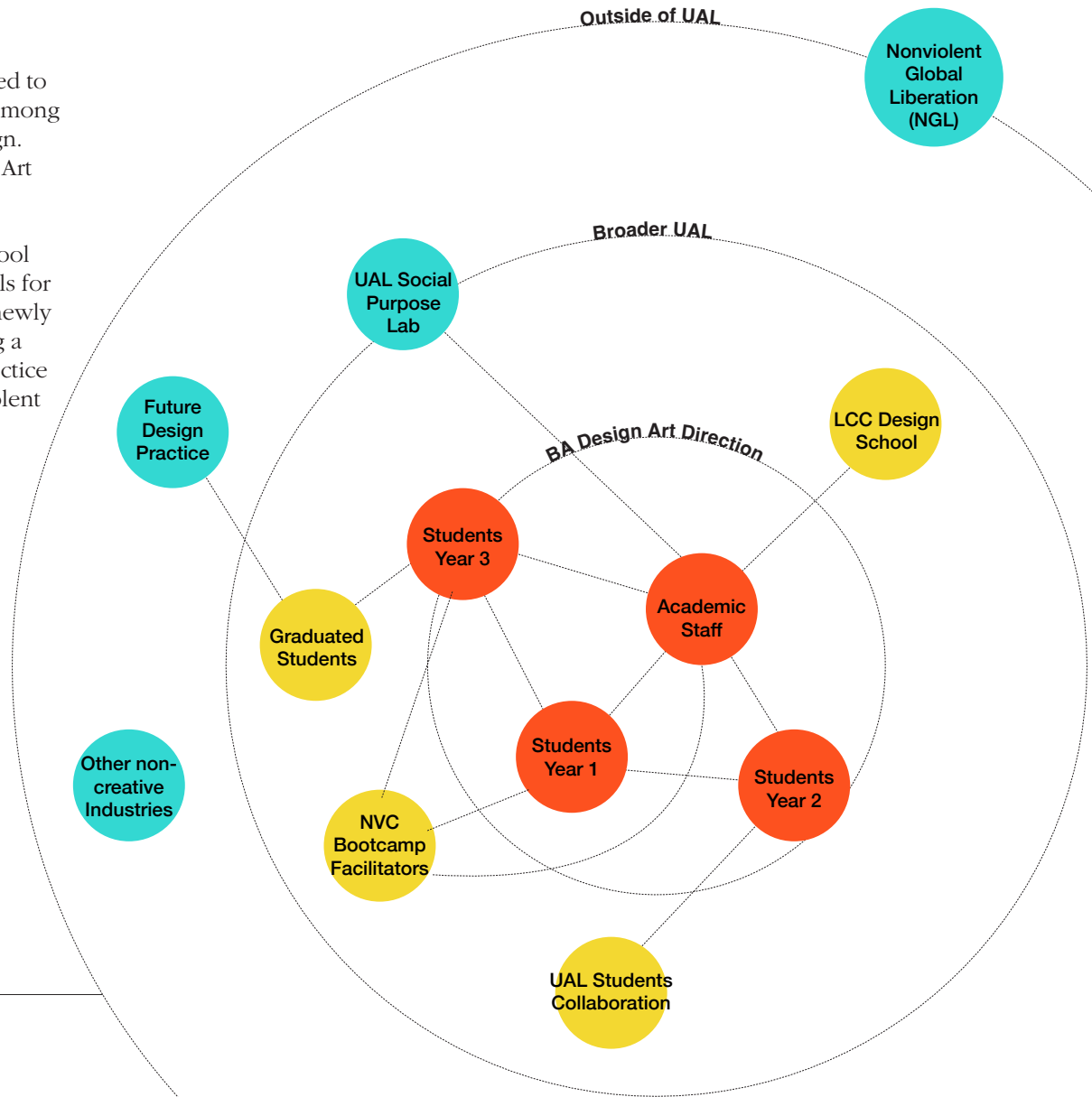
I used to have one of those peace flags hanging from my bedroom window as a young girl. I remember most people in the town where I grew up had one hanging from their window. I now learnt that it was part of the Italian nonviolent movement and the flag became popular with the ‘Pace da tutti i balconi’ (“peace from every balcony”) campaign in 2002, started as a protest against the impending invasion of Iraq. I didn’t even remember this, but I do remember really hoping for this action to make a difference and for peace to really happen. Now that I remember about it, I think how naïve I was, believing that war could stop. But I also think about how our cultural conditioning shape us to loose those dreams. Learning about NVC reminded me that young girl, and also brought a sense of compassion towards her and empathy.



# Stakeholder Map

United Creatives is toolkit designed to foster empathic communication among first-year students in art and design. Developed for the BA Design for Art Direction at UAL's LCC.

At broader level, this interactive tool helps students build essential skills for collaborative leadership in their newly formed teams while also fostering a mind set for the future design practice that takes on principles of nonviolent movements,



# My Target Audience

During my participant observations at the Communication for Collaborative Leadership bootcamp, I had the chance to speak and connect to some of students during lunch break and also just while participating in the activities.

Through the personas, I wanted to convey how the students might feel at the time they are attending the bootcamp. I wanted to evoke how students might have felt from what I have heard, observed and experienced myself as an undergraduate student but also as a MA student attending the bootcamp.

I imagined the students would write short messages where they expressed how they truly felt about attending the bootcamp and of their hopes and dreams.

I then analysed the message using the NVC feelings and needs list and added the keywords at the end of each personas.



Hopeful Third year student



Excited First year student



Warm Second year student



Perplexed First year student

### Hopeful Third year student

Dear Readers,

After completing a Nonviolent Communication (NVC) bootcamp, I'm excited to test these skills in my professional life.

I'm confident, curious, and eager to dive into leadership and negotiation, especially as I take on a mentoring role with first-year students who are just starting their journey.

Sometimes, I do feel a bit isolated in my enthusiasm for NVC—not everyone's as open to it. Balancing confidence with uncertainty for what is coming next in my career, I'm still figuring out! But I'm ready for the challenge, open to learning, and hopeful to inspire growth in myself and others along the way.

I feel grateful to be part of this community.

**Feeling:**

Compassionate  
Lost  
Thankful

**Needs:**

Clarity  
Acknowledgement  
Support



## Excited First year student

Hello peeps,

I've just arrived here from China, and it's been a bit hard adapting to this new city and, honestly, to new ways of working. I've always preferred to work alone—it feels safer, especially after past collaborations that didn't go well. But I know this program's all about teamwork, so I'm pushing myself to make this work!

I'm independent and often a bit intense when I'm excited, especially when discussing my own art projects. But I can see that my passion can sometimes make others pull back, and it's tough not to feel excluded when that happens. It's a learning curve, and there's anxiety too—new people, new environment.. My goal is to adapt, build trust, and find a way to connect with people at UAL and London off course!

Here's to figuring it out, one step at a time.

### **Feeling:**

Nervous  
Heartbroken  
Inspired

### **Needs:**

Belonging  
Healing  
Care



## Undercover 'warm' second year student

Hi there,

Last year, I took a Nonviolent Communication (NVC) bootcamp, and honestly, I found it really valuable. But my friends? They're a bit skeptical. One of them keeps saying that in our industry, it's all about technical skills—those are what actually get you a job. I get where she's coming from, but I also think connecting with people is necessary too, even if it's not as obvious.

So now, I'm trying to bring what I learned into my life in small, subtle ways. It's a balancing act: staying true to myself without feeling exposed, practicing NVC while keeping things low-key around my friends. It's not easy, but I think it's worth it.

I am looking forward to what is new in the NVC Bootcamp this year!

### **Feeling:**

Exposed  
Apprehensive  
Self-conscious

### **Needs:**

Authenticity  
Connection  
Choice



## Perplexed first year student

Hi there,

Part of me is skeptical about this boot-camp—emotions and communication are complex, and it's hard to imagine that a set of principles can really cover it all. Still, I want to give this a fair shot, especially if there's a way to make NVC fit into my work authentically.

I'm balancing my critical side with an open mind, trying to find something real in these concepts that resonates with me. I want to feel inspired and maybe develop ways to collaborate with my team, especially when it comes to managing conflicts and everyone equal contribution which I believe is important but challenging.

Here's to figuring it out, step by step, and seeing if there's something here that is useful for me.

### **Feeling:**

Perplexed  
Tired  
Optimistic

### **Needs:**

Structure  
Balance  
Rest



# Low Fidelity Prototype

## Unity, Charedes and Emotionally and Solitaire Tools

I have tested a low fidelity prototype set of tools with students at the BA Design for Art Direction. In the tools I have borrowed rules from other card games such as Uno (Unity), Charades, Pictionary (Emotionally) and Solitaire. At the end of each test I have asked students to express their feedback in an informal way, I wanted to create an informal atmosphere where students felt comfortable to share their feedback about the tools tested and also talked about their experiences at the bootcamp. One student didn't attend the Communication for Collaborative Leadership bootcamp and new to the approach to communication using NVC.

### Participants:

BA Design for Art Direction  
(4no. First year students)

**Useful for:** Engaging in conversations with students and better connect with target audience to understand their needs when it come for tools to practice NVC in class.

## Game 1: Unity



Photos of low fidelity prototype



First year students playing 'unity' activity

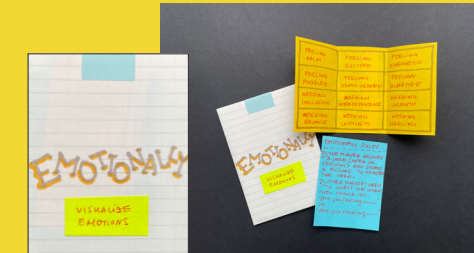
### Key Insights

Student mention that they will like more challenge cards to make the game more interactive.

After a while students stop reading emotions on cards.

Student would like to see the different feelings categories.

## Game 2: Charades



Photos of low fidelity prototype



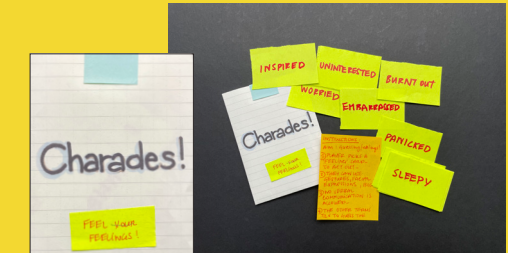
First year students playing 'charades' activity

### Key Insights

Student said that they found mimicking an emotion difficult, they would prefer to act it to also have an opportunity to 'be someone else'.

Students wanted to use the needs and feeling list to choose the work to guess.

## Game 3: Emotionally



Photos of low fidelity prototype



First year students playing 'emotionally' activity

### Key Insights

Student use movement while they draw the emotion to express the emotion.

Students would prefer to talk in the activity too.

I also understood that it would have been helpful to have a brief explanation of the words.



# High Fidelity Prototype

## United Creatives: UAL Communication for Collaborative Leadership Tool

### Service Statement

*United Creatives* is tool designed to foster empathic communication among undergraduate students in art and design collaborative practices through an interactive learning method.

Developed for the BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication UAL, this interactive tool helps students build essential skills for collaborative leadership by applying an approach to communication that is inspired by the nonviolent movement.

Through hands-on activities, *United Creatives* encourages a way of taking positive action through compassionate communication and balanced power dynamics within team projects.

By transforming communication into a practice of empathy, *United Creatives* empowers students with skills to navigating conflict with intention, giving constructive feedback, with the intention to connect and foster a inclusive collaborative teams.

### Why is it called United Creatives?

*Creatives* as to recognise our natural powers and capacities as human beings to problem-solving to contribute to social change, however small.

*United* as to evoke a sense of togetherness which is core to the practice of Nonviolent Communication and other practices of peace.

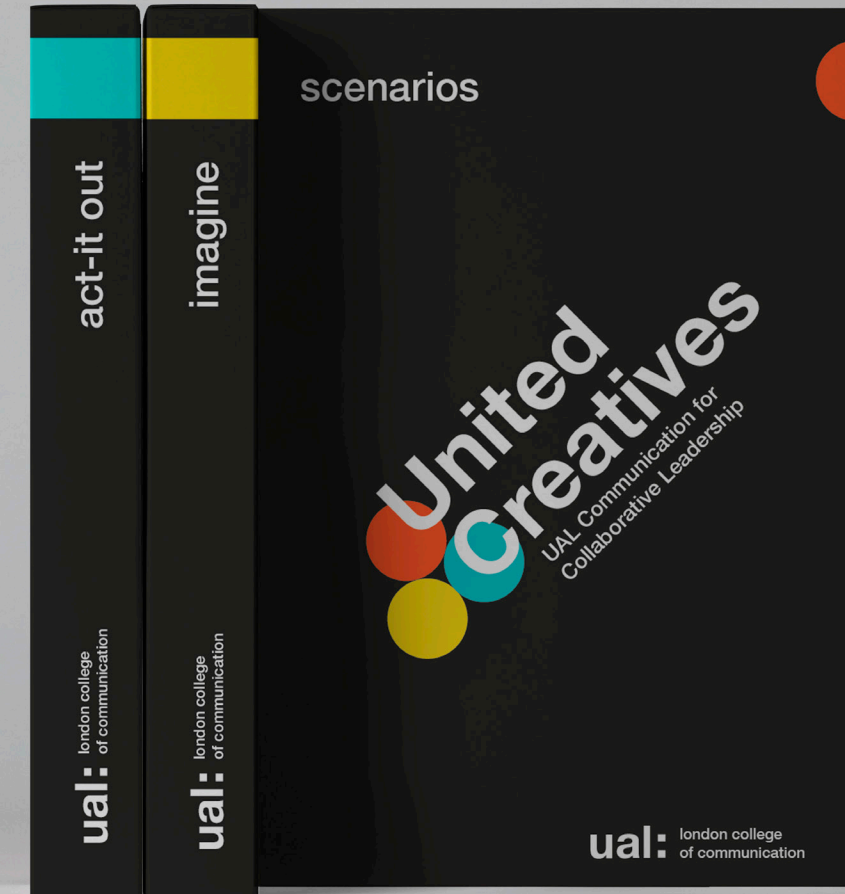
### Why is it important?

#### Inter-dependence (power-with)

NVC fosters a balanced and mutual reliance on each other to create change. By also recognising each individual capacities to create change and the need to come together as a whole to make equitable choices. This will be different being 'dependent' on someone else where the individual is 'power-over' by someone else decision, which NVC mitigates.

#### In-dependence (power-within)

Nonviolence movements and communication states that social change starts within us at individual level to set our values around what peace means to us and what requests can I make to myself in order to mitigate our harmful cultural conditionings and discover our natural powers.



## 1 United Creatives Team Activities

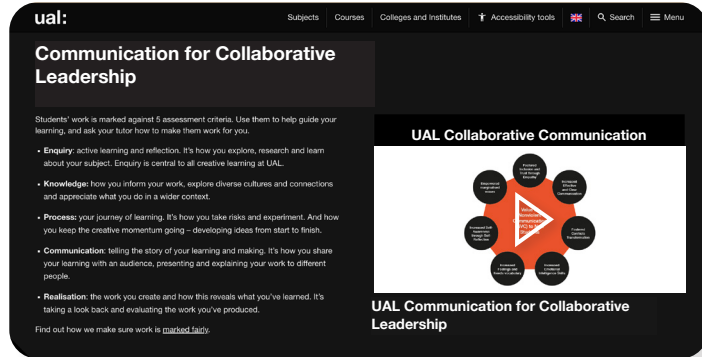




# Supportive service elements

**2. United Creatives | Value video** communicates the value of the Communication for Leadership Bootcamp to new students at UAL. The video is available on UAL website available for students and explains in an interactive way what are the benefits of learning and practicing Communication fo Collaborative Leadership.

**3. United Creatives | Value brochure** is a useful tool for academic staff to use when communicating the value of implementing NVC method in the teaching and learning of students and staff training development. The brochure is a summary of the key insights from the evaluation research project. The insights are divided into three main sections depending on different audience.



2 Value video

3 Value brochure

# Why UAL branding?

UAL Branding guidelines (black and white logo and Helvetica font) have been used for this *United Creatives* as a way to speculate the possibility of the tool being an integral part of the University of the Arts London (UAL), therefore consistent to the university branding guidelines designed by Pentagram.

My intention was to create the narrative of United Creative as the initiative that UAL as an institution funded tools to practice empathy in communication.

“At the same time, like I'd like to focus on, you know what I'm learning on the course during course time. And so I think. If I'm imagining it (the bootcamp training) in a more institutional place like it's just a lot more conducive to think about working experience and you know how to deal with things that might be more professional setting.”

Student Year 2 | In-Depth Interview



United Creatives Logo



United Creatives branded notebook and totebag



# 1 United Creatives Team Activities: Overview

**transformative conflicts scenarios cards**  
 25no. scenarios cards

**trust scenarios**  
 Emma's been assigned a major responsibility on the team's new project, and she feels scared. She's worried that if she makes a mistake, it'll reflect poorly on the whole team. Though she doesn't want to let anyone down, she feels paralyzed by her fear of failure and hesitates to move forward.

**inclusivity scenarios**  
 Tom finds himself going through the motions with the current project, feeling little passion or engagement. The work feels repetitive, and he struggles to see how his role makes an impact. He doesn't want to let the team down, but he can't help feeling disconnected from the purpose.

**constructive feedback scenarios**  
 Fern has noticed that their teammate, Aisha, often receives praise from their tutor, while their own efforts seem overlooked. They feel a twinge of jealousy and wonders if their work isn't as good. This feeling is affecting their motivation, even though they want to support their team.

**Balance**  
 After weeks of intense work on a team project, the group decides to create a schedule that balances work and rest. Each member has a clear role, with specific time set aside for individual tasks and team discussions. Now, everyone feels more focused and energized, knowing there's a plan that respects each person's workload and well-being.

36no. needs cards

1no. Instructions leaflet

1no. box

'scenarios' | Team activity 1

printable framework table

reflection prompt cards

1no. Instructions leaflet

1no. box

'imagine' | Team activity 2

Curious

Energetic

26no. 'when needs are met' feelings cards

36no. needs cards

25no. scenarios cards

1no. Instructions leaflet

1no. box

'act-it out' | Team activity 3



# 'scenarios'

## Activity 1

### Instructions for 'Scenarios' Team Activity 1



To start the activity, each player draws 6 needs cards.

The player who most recently had a successful collaboration starts as the Storyteller and draws a scenario card.

The Storyteller reads the scenario card. Everyone else chooses what they think the character in the scenario needs by passing one Need card to the Storyteller.

The Storyteller chooses which Needs card or Multiple Needs card most resonates with the scenario card.

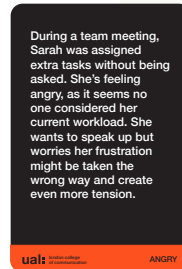
All players together formulate a request by answering the below questions:

What can the character in the scenario do within themselves to meet this need?

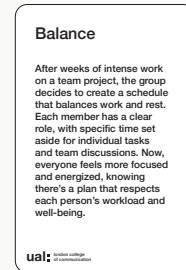
What can the team in the scenario do together as a whole to meet this need?

### Example:

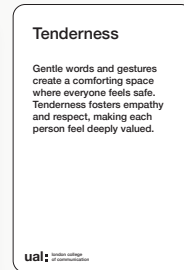
**Step one:** The Storyteller reads the scenario card. Everyone else chooses what they think the character in the scenario needs by passing one Need card to the Storyteller.



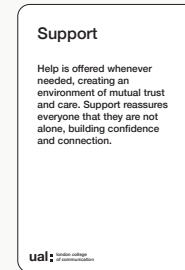
Scenario card  
Player 1 Storyteller



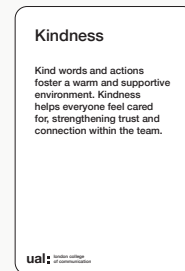
Need card  
Player 2



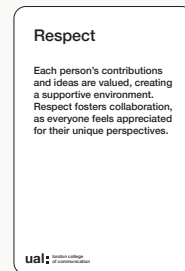
Need card  
Player 3



Need card  
Player 4



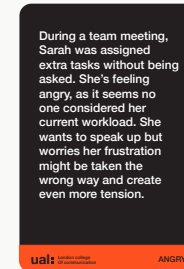
Need card  
Player 5



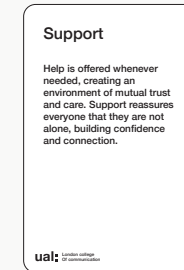
Need card  
Player 6

Student Year 1 | In-Depth Interview

**Step two:** The Storyteller chooses which Needs card or Multiple Needs card most resonates with the scenario card.



Scenario card  
Player 1 Storyteller



Need card chosen  
by Storyteller

**Step three:** All players together formulate a request by answering the below questions:

What can the character in the scenario do within themselves to meet this need?

*Sarah could explain her current workload situation to classmates and ask for help.*

What can the team in the scenario do together as a whole to meet this need?

*The team notices that Sarah seems angry and could ask her if is there any **support** she needs to carry the workload?*

I remember it well because it says so much, so fast and so easily to you to understand the situation. But I also that was one of those moments where, like you had to bring out your own experiences and then ask like, wait. But I don't want to bring up my own experience at this time because, you know, it's like, One of it's personal to me.

# 'imagine'

## Activity 2: Imagine your Collaborative Leadership Intention

### Instructions for 'Imagine' Team Activity 2



To start the activity, take the framework, post-its and coloured pens and pencils

One team member draws a card from the questions cards. The team reads the question card.

Individually, draw or write a reflection in response to the question card.

Each team member, adds their drawn or written reflection on the Reflection 1 frame.

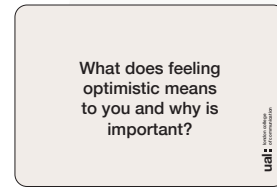
All team members have 60 seconds each to share what reflection they draw or wrote to the team.

Repeat the activity for Reflection 2, 3 & 4.

After the framework is completed with all reflection. The team takes a photo of the framework created together and can use it as their whatsapp group photo or hang it in their preferred space for collaboration.

### Example:

**Step one:** The team draw a card from the questions cards. The team reads the question card.



Question card

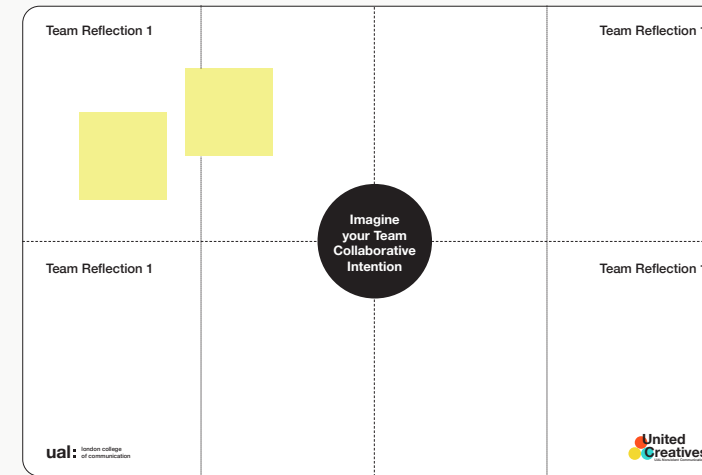
**Step two:** Individually, draw or write a reflection in response to the question card.



All team members draw or write

**Step three:** Each team member, adds their drawn or written reflection on the Reflection 1 frame.

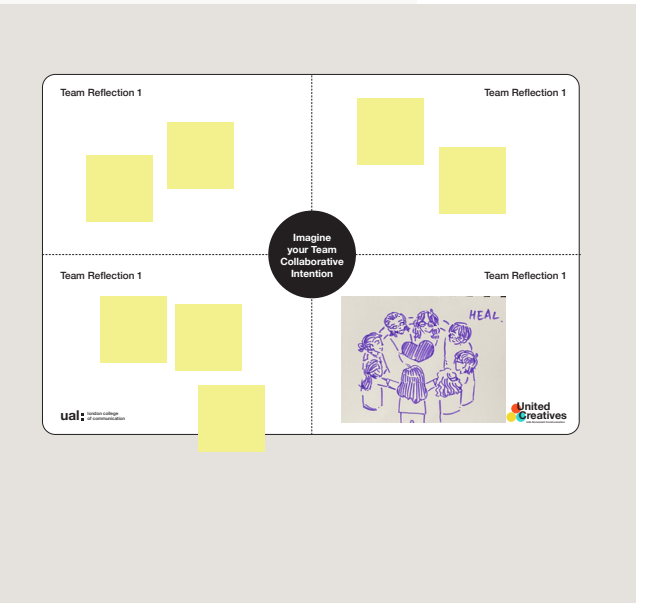
60 sec each to share



Reflection Framework

**Step four:** Repeat the activity for Reflection 2, 3 & 4.

After the framework is completed with all reflection. The team takes a photo of the framework created together and can use it as their whatsapp group photo or hang it in their preferred space for collaboration.



Reflection Framework completed



# 'act-it out'

## Activity 3

### Instructions for 'Act-it out' Team Activity 3



To start the activity, divide the team equally into Actors and Observers.

The Actors draw a Scenario card. Away from the Observers the Actors read the scenario card together and plan the role play scenario for 2 minutes.

The Actors then start acting the scenario card for approximately 2 minutes.

The acting stops.

The Observers choose one or more Needs cards that are necessary given their observations and they show the Needs cards for the actors to consider.

The actors then resume acting the scenario, taking on board the Need for [chosen Needs cards]. This time the Observers can intervene by becoming an 'Actor of change' towards a collaborative outcome.

The 'Actors of change' act a Collaborative Leadership scenario given the needs they identified.

Act for approximately 2 min.

Then finally the 'Actors of change' ask: How are we feeling now?

ual: london college of communication

### Example:

**Step one:** The Actors draw a Scenario card. Away from the Observers the Actors read the scenario card together and plan the role play scenario.



The Observers

The Actors

Tom finds himself going through the motions with the current project, feeling little passion or engagement. The work feels repetitive, and he struggles to see how his role makes an impact. He doesn't want to let the team down, but he can't help feeling disconnected from the purpose.

ual: london college of communication UNINTERESTED

**Step two:** The acting stops.

**Step three:** The Observers choose one or multiple Needs cards that are necessary given their observations.

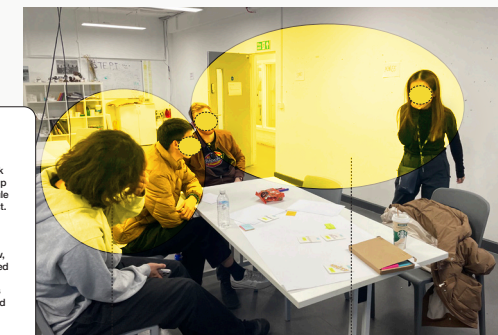


### Balance

After weeks of intense work on a team project, the group decides to create a schedule that balances work and rest. Each member has a clear role, with specific time set aside for individual tasks and team discussions. Now, everyone feels more focused and energized, knowing there's a plan that respects each person's workload and well-being.

ual: london college of communication

**Step four:** The Actors then start acting the scenario card again. This time the Observers can intervene by becoming the 'Actors of change'.



### Balance

After weeks of intense work on a team project, the group decides to create a schedule that balances work and rest. Each member has a clear role, with specific time set aside for individual tasks and team discussions. Now, everyone feels more focused and energized, knowing there's a plan that respects each person's workload and well-being.

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'The Observers' become 'The Actors of change'

The Actors

**Step five:** The 'Actors of change' act a Collaborative Leadership scenario given the needs they identified.

The can also use the **Empathy Structure** to guide their acting

And also by using the **Empathy Structure:**

Reflect back  
eg. I am hearing that...

Guessing Feelings  
eg. Are you feeling...?

Guessing Needs  
eg. Are you needing...?

### Balance

After weeks of intense work on a team project, the group decides to create a schedule that balances work and rest. Each member has a clear role, with specific time set aside for individual tasks and team discussions. Now, everyone feels more focused and energized, knowing there's a plan that respects each person's workload and well-being.

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**Step five:** Then finally the 'Actors of change' ask: How are we feeling now?

All together choose a 'Feeling when need is met' card deck and celebrate!

Energetic



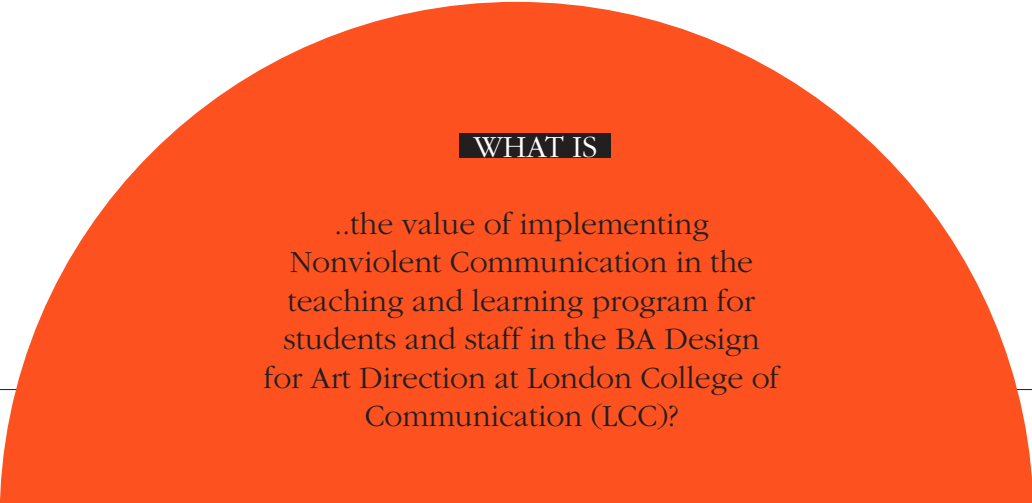
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### 3 Value brochure

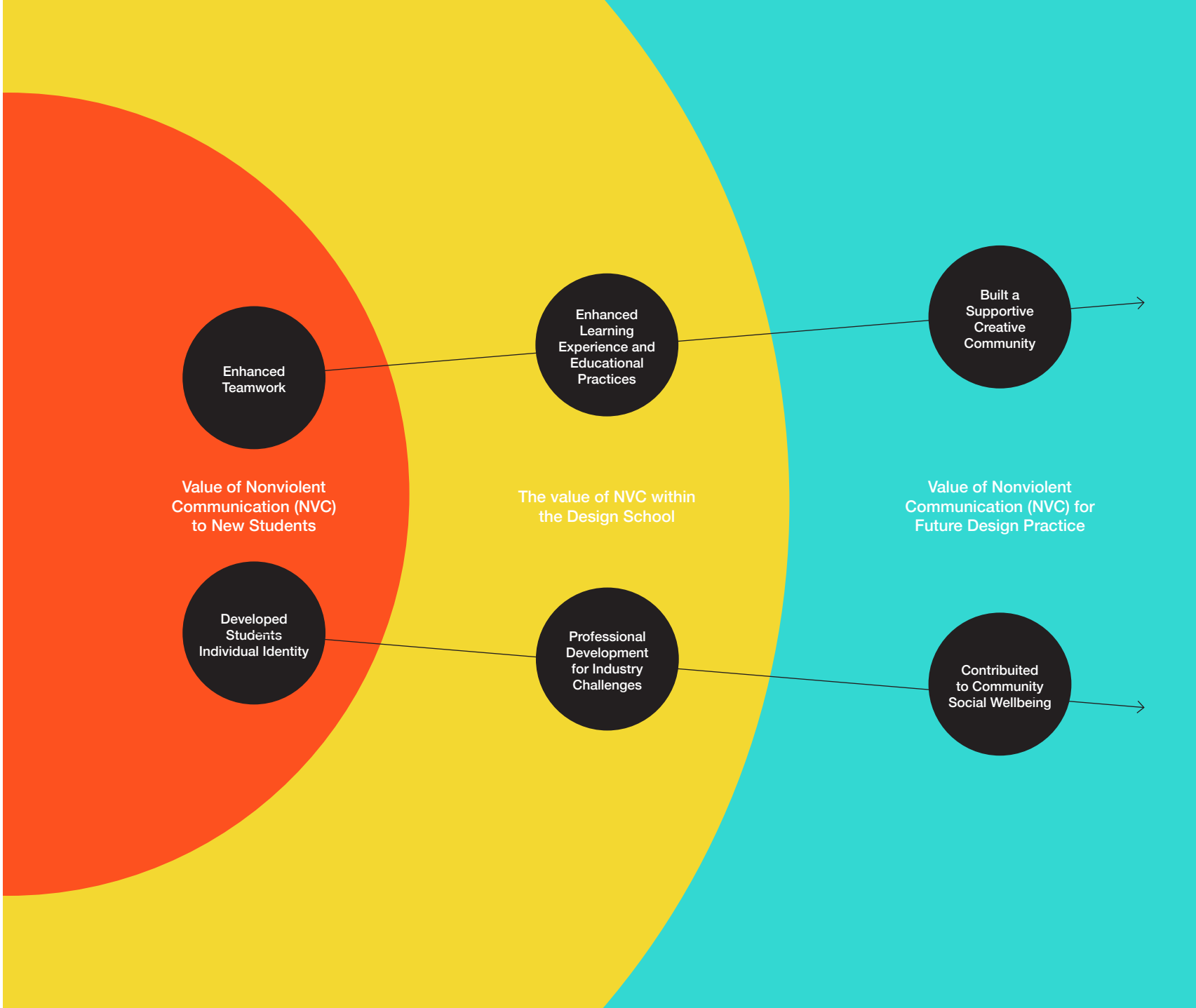
One of the main delivery for the project was a Codebook of the Thematic Analysis to Dr. Rachel Clarke. After integrating the feedback gathered from the NVC implementation workshop, I have decided to condense the themes and coded even more to make the information more clear. I also decided to merge the staff and students themese together and from the examples in each theme it is clearly indicated which quote is from staff and which one is from students.

The graphs and codebook were created from the research insights of the Thematic Analysis of In-Depth interviews and Student unit submission works.



#### WHAT IS

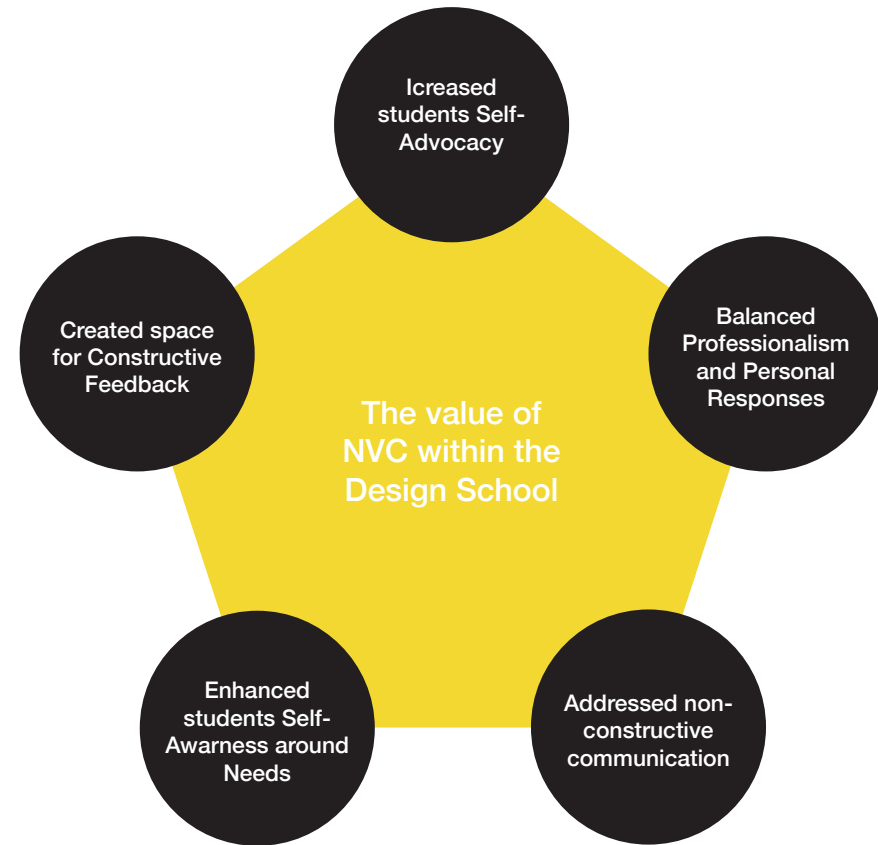
..the value of implementing Nonviolent Communication in the teaching and learning program for students and staff in the BA Design for Art Direction at London College of Communication (LCC)?



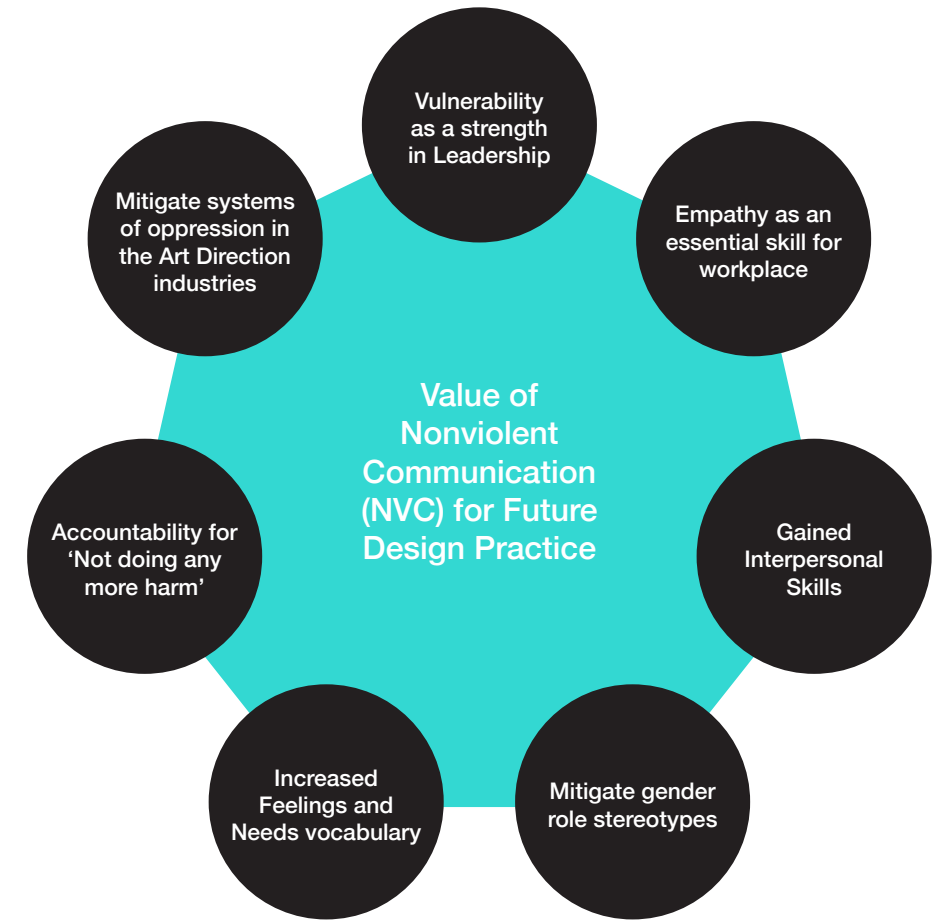
Value of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) to New Students at BA Design for Art Direction



Value of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) to New Students at BA Design for Art Direction



Value of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) for Future Design Practice





## a. Communicating the value of NVC to New Students

### Theme 1:

Improves Collaboration and Group Dynamics: Enhancing Teamwork (Staff & Student Theme)

#### Code 1:

Increased empathy between students that fosters Inclusivity and Trust

#### Description:

Increased empathy and trust between classmates makes teams more inclusive by recognising everyone's strengths with the intention to connect rather than dominate.

#### Example:

*"Stops you from over speaking and under speaking and kind of just tells everybody what's going on at that moment. I think it's more efficient, yeah."*  
Student | In-Depth Interview

#### Code 2:

Equips students with an effective Method of communication

#### Description:

Equip students with a system to speak clearly with the intention to connect rather than dominate during decision-making process and constructive feedback.

#### Example:

*"In my initial proposal email I sent, I used the non-violent communication techniques we've discussed so much in classes to make my intentions and needs clear."*  
Student | Submitted Work

#### Code 3:

Navigating Conflicts in Collaborative projects

#### Description:

Increased rational thinking between students recognising that other students have same emotions but different ways to react leading to increased compassion.

#### Example:

*"I think it just helped to kind of tone down seeing it in emotional way and seeing more like, OK, this can be resolved if we just, you know, try to meet those needs instead, yeah."*  
Student | In-Depth Interview

### Theme 2:

Personal Growth and Self-awareness: Developing Individual Identity (Staff & Student Theme)

#### Code 4:

Learn about Emotional Intelligence

#### Description:

Increased rational thinking by communicating thoughtfully to avoid harm and managing personal judgments through self-awareness

#### Example:

*"I've learned to separate them [judgments]. Not necessarily not to have those judgments, but to feel like those judgments are your personal side of things."* Student | In-Depth Interview

#### Code 5:

Increased vocabulary around feelings and needs

#### Description:

Encourages introspection, reflecting on designers cultural conditioning and other forms of potential harm to others around communication

#### Example:

*"I've benefitted from adopting nonviolent communication practices, including using the needs list when getting to the bottom of a particular feeling, both when working alone or in collaboration."* Student | Submitted Work

#### Code 6:

Equip students with a tool for Self-reflection

#### Description:

Students and staff benefit from having a list to specify feelings and naming needs.

#### Example:

*"I think I took away more like the actual reasoning and the and the conversation about the subject more than I did, like solutions and like how to actually implement that".* Student | In-Depth Interview

#### Code 7:

Empowers marginalised voices

#### Description:

Students feel empowered to advocate for themselves in both creative and collaborative settings

#### Example:

*"Feels very empowering sometimes because you know when women say what they want, it's ordering around. When guys say what they want or like what they need, it's like just taking charge, right?"* Student | In-Depth Interview



## b. Communicating the value of NVC within the Design School

Theme 3:  
Professional Development: Preparing for  
Industry Challenges  
(Student Theme)

### Code 8:

Learn about Self-Advocacy in the workplace

### Description:

Empowers students to speak up about their needs and rights within professional contexts (Student express needs around unpaid work opportunity).

### Example:

*And I think like obviously there's like that power hierarchy level like young people need to realise that it's OK to communicate like you're not lashing out on them or telling them off. It's just NVC and you're communicating your needs*

### Code 9:

Balancing Professionalism and personal reactions

### Description:

Understanding where others are coming from, and acknowledging that their behaviour may be driven by their own needs rather than being personal.

### Example:

*. I think it works well with like the balance between staying professional and taking things personal."*  
Student | In-Depth Interview

### Code 10:

Students learn to breaking non-constructive communication patterns in workplace

### Description:

Helps identifying workplace 'toxic' communication styles and learn mitigating them by using NVC approach.

### Example:

*"I think in the workplace. It's just help me. Be a lot more rational. We're making decisions or make making less interpretations."*  
Student | In-Depth Interview

## Theme 4:

Enhanced Learning Experience &  
Educational Practices  
(Staff & Student Theme)

### Code 11:

Enhances students Self-Advocacy and Self-Awareness in relation their needs

### Description:

Student well-being is improved by creating space to express what students need from tutors and the course

### Example:

*"I guess there's elements of that related to mindfulness. That we would use or I would use in sessions. Just in terms of helping students to feel present in themselves and in the room."*  
Staff | In-Depth Interview  
Student | In-Depth Interview

### Code 12:

Creates opportunities for Constructive Feedback to tutors and among team members

### Description:

Students are given space for expressing constructive feedback to tutors while fostering an environment of safety and understanding for both students and staff

### Example:

*"Non Violent Communication workshop really helped me in navigating and initiating critique sessions with my team mates"*  
Student | Submitted Work



## c. Why we feel these insights are valuable in the context of Future Design Practice

### Theme 5:

Enhanced Interpersonal Relationships:  
Building a Supportive Community  
(Staff & Student Theme)

#### Code 13:

Recognizing that Vulnerability is a strengths for future leaders

#### Description:

Sharing stories creates emotional connection and feelings of safety

#### Example:

*"Because I think humans, we just crave to be understood, feel like other people are the same as us"*

Student | In-Depth Interview

#### Code 14:

Empathy as a required skill to have in the workplace

#### Description:

Students see empathy and NVC as essential skills for connection, collaboration, and responsible communication.

#### Example:

*"I think like nowadays people or like jobs want someone who's empathetic because obviously it's a people team."*

Student | Submitted Work

#### Code 15:

Teaching Interpersonal Skills

#### Description:

Compassion, Communication, Collaboration, Shared Leadership as essential skills for practitioners

#### Example:

*Finding the things that are working, finding that the atmosphere of compassion, communication, collaboration, shared leadership, finding that those things are so effective for them as practitioners."*

Student | In-Depth Interview

### Theme 6:

Broader Social Impact: Contributing to Community Well-Being  
(Staff & Student Theme)

#### Code 16:

Challenging gender roles stereotypes

#### Description:

There is a sense of empowerment among students when given the 'permission' to express needs

#### Example:

*"I've learned to separate them [judgments]. Not necessarily not to have those judgments, but to feel like those judgments are your personal side of things."* Student | In-Depth Interview

#### Code 17:

Increased vocabulary around feelings and needs

#### Description:

Encourages introspection, reflecting on designers cultural conditioning and other forms of potential harm to others around communication

#### Example:

*"And I think it's always that fear of like, OK, if you state your needs, you're being needy, but I think. Learning this (NVC) is kind of learning that. Now this is universal to say our needs and it can be very helpful instead."* Student | Submitted Work

#### Code 18:

Learn about Designers Accountability around 'Not doing any more harm'

#### Description:

Building awareness around designers roles and how their positionality affect design for social justice

#### Example:

*"I like the idea of it. I like the conversation being open and having this mentality while speaking to people, especially in a designing community and also just by influencing, feeling responsible for not hurting others."* Student | In-Depth Interview

#### Code 19:

Mitigate systems of oppression in the Art Direction industries

#### Description:

Enabling future designers to foster collaboration and dismantle oppressive systems in Art Direction.

#### Example:

*"Those students eventually will either, you know, join a studio or work, you know, somewhere in a bigger company, or perhaps in small ways will be able to contribute into, you know, changing the industry."* Student | In-Depth Interview



# Testing with Stakeholders

## Feedback from NVC Facilitator Ceri Buckmaster

I met Ceri Buckmaster to get feedback on United Creatives Toolkit. The feedback session was in person and lasted approximately 1.5h. Ceri has given me essential feedback for the final development of United Creatives.

Below in summary the feedback:

### Tool 1:

On 'Scenario' Tool Ceri advised against adding the element of competitiveness to the tool. Competition is against the ethos of NVC. Competition encourages separateness and instead with NVC we practice connection.

Therefore, Ceri suggested that United Creatives scenario cards is not to be called a 'game' but instead a 'tool'.

The activity in the scenario cards could end with an element of togetherness which is core in NVC.

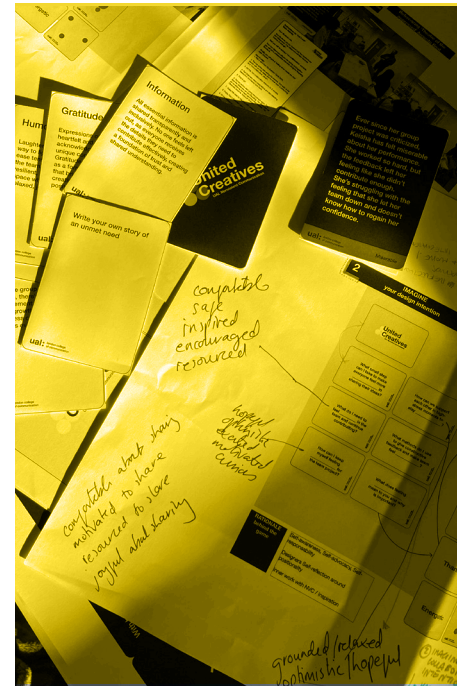
### Tool 2:

On 'Imagine your Collaborative Intention' Tool Ceri advised to make reflection questions cards already completed with feeling and also helped to merge similar questions.

### Tool 3 (1&2):

On 'Act-it out' Tool Ceri advised end the role playing game by asking the actors a final question 'How are you feeling now?'

Ceri has also suggested that the prototype could be tested at the Listening Lab at UAL with the possibility to integrated at the bootcamp



United Creatives High-fidelity printed version with Ceri comments

## Feedback from Dr. Rachel Clarke

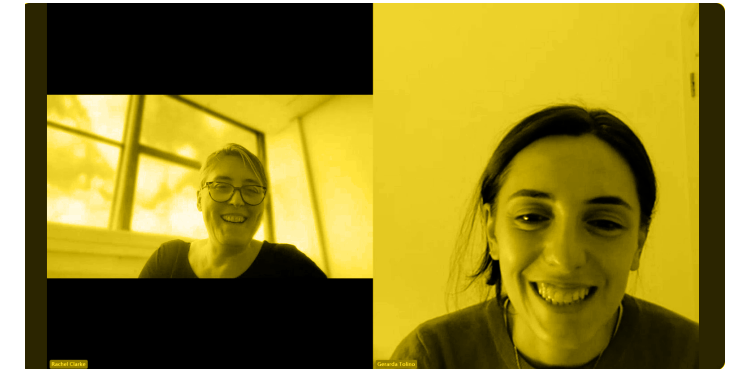
I presented United Creatives toolkit to Dr. Rachel Clarke and the feedback was positive. Dr. Rachel Clarke thought the prototype would really support academic staff with practicing NVC in class.

Below the feedback in summary:

The toolkit will be beneficial activity for newly formed groups, to support new students to discuss scenarios where conflicts may arise.

Dr. Rachel Clarke will be presenting United Creatives prototype to the Dean of Design School at London College of Communication (LCC) with the intention to ask for funds for the development of *United Creatives*.

Also two copies of United Creatives prototype will be funded by BA Design for Art Direction internal budget to be used in class at BA Design for Art Direction.



Me and Dr. Rachel Clarke during United Creatives High-fidelity feedback discussion



## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths:

*United Creatives* is **empathy** and **compassion** focused with which aligns with workplace and educational needs of our times, where emotional intelligence is an increasing essential required skill.

It is an **interactive** and **hands-on tool**, fostering learning-by-doing approach which are proven to be effective than theoretical approaches.

### Weaknesses:

*United Creatives* **requires fundings** for the tool to be implemented in class and further fundings for prototype iterations and further research.

The effectiveness of the tool (especially activity 3) may rely on the skills of the facilitator making it a tool which is **less used independently**.

### Opportunities:

*United Creatives* is a tool that can be applied more broadly **across creative fields** and teams that work collaboratively.

The toolkit **could be digitalized** to also make it less expensive and available for remote teams.

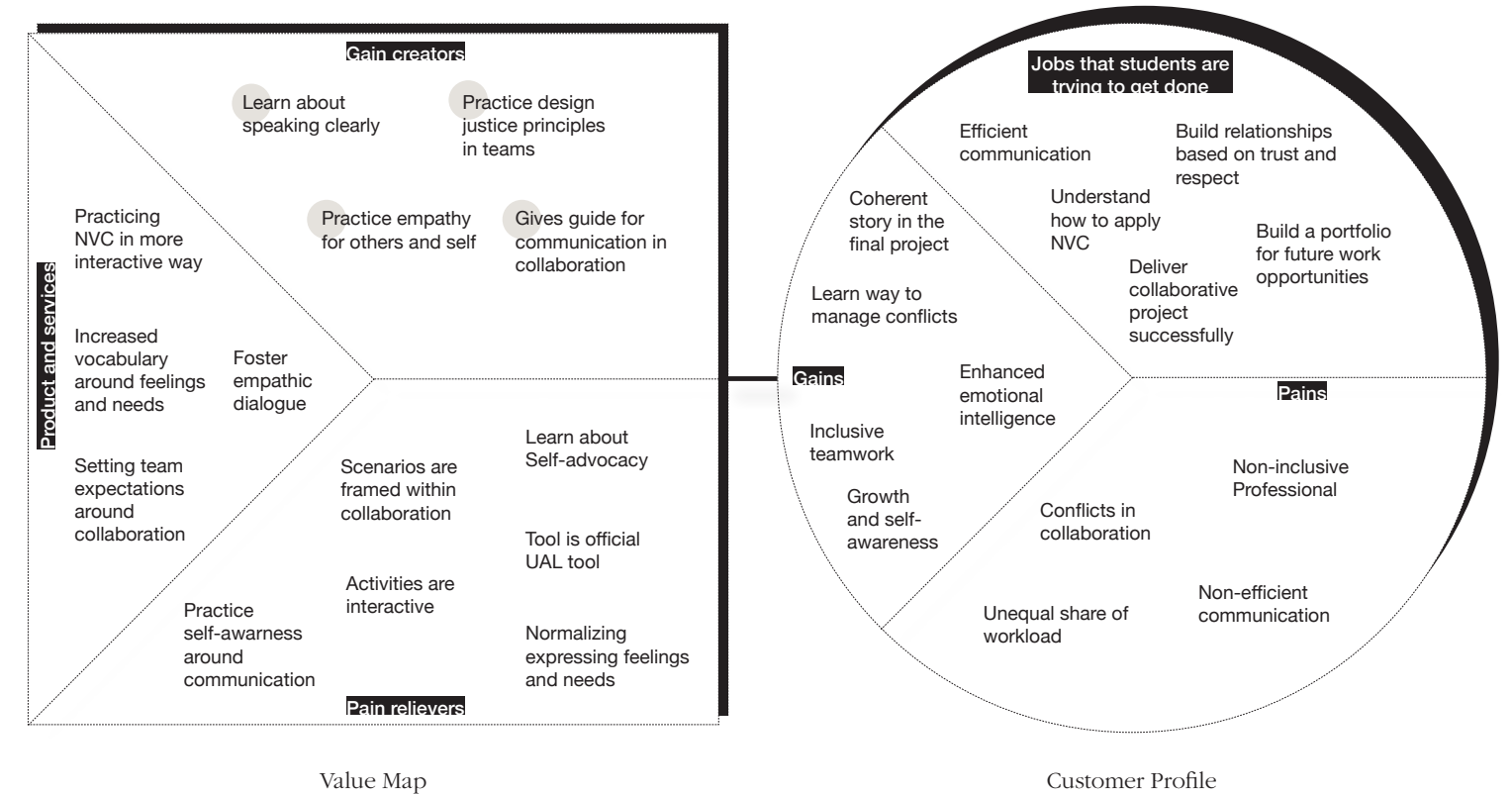
The tool **could be expanded** into each phase of the Team Development model.

### Threats:

Competition for *United Creatives* from other **similar frameworks** some of which might be easier to implement and more cost effective.

There is a **potential for mis-interpretation** of the use of the tool, shifting the focus away from the objective to practice NVC.

## Value Proposition Canvas



# Conclusion

## Conclusion

**124** I have learnt

**126** Conclusion

**128** Bibliography

**130** 'A Livella' Neapolitan  
poem on equality



# I have learnt..

Title: **Interdependence** is a core need in collaboration.

Subtitle: Fostering Connections for Transformative Change

I have learnt that service design can't change everything and we can't heal systems that made us 'ill'. I have learnt that interdependence is a core need in collaboration: we need each other in order to create new systems of love that are growing to surround existing systems of oppressions. 'Interdependence' is different from 'dependency' where individuals might feel 'influenced' by a system. Interdependence is the willingness to connect to others with intention of love. It is important to be in a place of love when we practice NVC as the tool can be used to manipulate people.

9.2 Title: **Our differences** are our natural powers

Subtitle: The power of inclusion makes us stronger

I have learnt that in team collaborations our differences are our natural powers. That nurturing a team and class environment that values mutual respect rather than control and collaboration is an opportunity to create a high trust field environment in teams and among students and staff. Challenges in collaboration between students at BA Design for Art Direction are around power dynamics, conflicts management, decision making. I learnt that quieter voices have a lot to say and we can collectively allow space for listening to everyone.

9.3 Title: **Need to normalize** talking about feelings and needs

Subtitle: Emotional Intelligence as a learning unit at UAL

I have learnt that we need to normalize talking about feelings and needs in collaboration with others and among students and staff and Nonviolent communication is an approach that guides us in bringing structure on how to do that. I have also learnt that as we are not used to talk or name our feelings and needs, there is a need to increase the vocabulary around feelings and needs. Empathy is core to design and it can be learnt and we can be better at it with practice. Could UAL make NVC an integral part of their assessment criteria?

9.4 Title: There is lack of student **engagement with NVC**

Subtitle: Vulnerability is a strength for leadership and building trust

I truly understood my target audience when I spent the whole day with students and staff at the NVC bootcamp in October. I am thirty-two year old and the Communication for Collaborative Leadership was my 4th major exposure to NVC and while there I still felt quite exposed and vulnerable. I could only imagine how some students, some which have recently arrived in London must have felt. I wasn't surprised to see many students dis-engaging, some feeling defensive, there is a lot already going on for young people. I believe the work is necessary, absolutely, however, I believe it has to be tailored to students needs and consider the time they are introduced to NVC.



# Conclusion

It is evident that most students and people I talked to face challenges in fully engaging with NVC due to unfamiliarity with talking about feelings and needs in a world that is trying to dehumanize us. I learnt that there is a lot of healing to do before we can even empathize with others. That first of all we need to empathize with ourselves. We are the only ones that have access to our inner worlds in order to discover and share our natural powers.

Observations with students also show that engagement improves when learning activities are infused with humor, movement, and creative elements. By developing innovative and accessible approaches to teaching NVC, design education can empower students to embrace vulnerability as a strength, fostering trust and leadership within teams.

*United Creatives* emphasize the urgent need to integrate NVC and emotional intelligence as foundational elements of design education. By doing so, we can cultivate a generation of designers who are not only skilled in their craft but also equipped with the emotional and relational tools needed to create systems of care, inclusivity, and transformative impact.

Nonviolence is a commitment to take responsibility for our actions and start the social change we want to see in our systems within ourselves.





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## Neopolitan Poem on equality

A' LIVELLA – Antonio de Curtis “Totò”

~~~~~

Each year, on November the 2nd, it's customary  
to go to the cemetery for (to visit) the dead.  
Everyone ought to do this courteous deed;  
everyone ought to keep this duty in mind.

Every year, without fail, on this day,  
of this sad and gloomy recurrence,  
I too go there, and with some flowers adorn  
the marmoreal vault of Aunt Vincenza.

This year it occurred to me an adventure ...  
after having completed the sad homage.  
Mother of God! to think of it, and what a fright!  
but then I pulled myself together and took heart.

This is what happened, listen to me:  
the closing hour was fast approaching:  
serious and grave I was about to exit  
looking at some graves here and there.

"Here rests in peace the noble Marquis  
Lord of Rovigo and of Belluno  
intrepid hero of a thousand exploits  
dead on the 11th of May of 1931."

The coat of arms with a crown to top it off ...  
... below a cross made up of small light bulbs;  
three bunches of roses with a mourning ribbon:  
candles, stubby candles and six votive lamps.

Right next to the tomb of this noble lord  
stood another grave, really small,  
forlorn, with not even a flower on it;  
for designation, just a miniscule cross.

And on top of the cross, one could barely read:  
"Esposito Gennaro — netturbino (garbage collec-  
tor)."  
looking at it, I felt such a deep pity  
for this dead man without even a small votive lamp!

Such is life! I, in my head, reflected ...  
some have had a lot and some have nothing.  
Did this poor fellow ever expect  
to be a wretch even in the other world?

While I was fantasizing upon this subject,  
It was almost the midnight hour,  
and I ended up locked in like a prisoner,  
scared to death, ... in front of all those candles.

All of a sudden, what do I see in the distance?  
Two shadows coming towards me ...  
I thought: this appears to me quite strange ...  
Am I awake, ... asleep, or is it a fantasy?

No fantasy at all; it was indeed the Marquis:  
with top hat, monocle, and mantle;  
and the other behind him a nasty figure,  
stinking to hell and with a broom in hand.

And that one is for sure don Gennaro ...  
the one who died poor ... the rubbish collector.  
I can't make any sense about this fact:  
they are dead, and they retire at this hour?

Oh well ...

They were perhaps a palm away from me,  
when the Marquis suddenly stopped,  
turns seriously and grave ... quietly and calm,  
saying to don Gennaro: "Young man!

I'd like to know from you, you filthy wretch,  
with what audacity and how have you so dared  
to have yourself interred, to my shame,  
next to me, emblazoned as I am!

Caste is caste, and must, indeed, be respected,  
but You have lost both mind and measure;  
your body needed, of course, to be interred;  
but buried in the garbage heap!

Not a moment more can I tolerate  
your stinking proximity,  
therefore it is proper for you to find a grave  
among your equals, among your own folks."

"Mister Marquis, it is not my fault,  
I wouldn't ever done you this insult;  
it was my wife who did such a nonsense,  
what could I do since I was dead?

Were I alive, I would make you happy,  
I would take the little casket with those few bones  
And right now, ... this very instant,  
I would remove myself to another grave."

"And what are you waiting for, you filthy wretch,  
for my wrath to reach the overflow?  
If I hadn't been a titled man  
I would have resorted to violence already!"

"Show me then! ... pick up this violence! ...  
Fact is, Marquis, I've had it up to here  
listening to you; and if I lose my patience,  
I'll forget I'm dead, and it'll be blows! ...

Who do you think you are ... a god?  
In here, won't you get it that we are all equals? ...  
... Dead are you and dead also am I;  
each one, once is gone, is exactly the same (as any  
other)."

"You filthy swine! ... How dare you  
compare yourself to me who had nativity  
of illustrious, most noble and perfect (forbearers),  
so as to be the envy of Royal Princes?"

"What of Nativity, ... Easter, and Epiphany!!! \*)  
Won't you get it through your skull and into your  
brain,  
that you are still diseased with delusion!  
Do you know what death is? ... it's a Level!

A king, a magistrate, a great man,  
on entering this gate comes to conclusion  
that he has lost everything, life and even title:  
haven't you yet reached this reckoning?

So, listen to me ... don't be obstinate,  
put up with my proximity — what do you care?  
only the living indulge in these buffooneries:  
we are serious here ... we belong to Death!"



