**Interview – Respondent 4**

**Held on 19 December 2024 at 11am via MS Teams**

**Graduate from BA Interaction Design Arts course, currently running their own practice and teaching as an AL at LCC**

 **RR:** So to start can you tell me a little bit, obviously I know that you're teaching in IDA, but in terms of your journey after you graduated in 2022? You went on straight to do an MA if I remember…

 **R4:** That's right. Yes, so I did an MA in biodesign, so taking this sort of interaction design in a different direction. Well, actually in my final year on the MA, I started teaching on the service design course alongside that. I've been doing that ever since, so there's been sort of four years of that now.
But yeah, so the masters sort of did alongside different sort of teaching roles and but service design because I suppose links to more sort of policy jobs that I've done with local councils.

 **RR:** So this is MA service design at LCC or is it…?

 **R4:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. So different public collaboration lab in Camden and other local council projects alongside the MA. And then in the second year of the MA well, I started teaching back on IDA. And then yeah, just a sort of amalgamation of things.
So I sort of stepped back from the policy side of things, from sort of Defra and different government things. But still doing research as associate of service futures lab, but that is working with local government and central government, but from an outsider, rather than being directly attached to them in that way.

 **RR:** So you were working directly as a service designer for government departments. Did IDA prepare you for that?

 **R4:** Yeah. So it was a sort of running a codesign team. Well, it's a research job. Yeah, I think IDA sort of gets you comfortable being uncomfortable, especially with the sort of more community projects or… I mean it's so similar to wacky races [IDA project] and events where you have to learn to deal with and manage the public.
In different ways, and I think less so in central government, but more sort of community or sort of more local council projects where you’re running workshops.

 **RR:** Yeah, that's great. And did you take a DPS year here when you were at LCC?

 **R4:** I did. Yeah, it was more of a COVID dodge. I joined the DPS very late in sort of May or June that year, sort of almost sort of just at the end of the year as, sorry, April or May because that's when COVID sort of really started kicking off here and I was like, I don't want to do this sort of…

**RR:** Right. OK, great. OK, so now to kind of more CTS questions. So looking back what do you see as being the purpose of CTS within your degree?

 **R4:** Yeah. I sort of saw it at the time as, sounds pretty obvious, but sort of it gives you if you haven't studied art history or sort of history of art, the context behind different art forms. And I think that's very prevalent on interaction design in that way.
Moving into the more CTS3 sort of final year stuff was, I was very lucky to have a really great tutor and have the option of doing sort of long dissertation on a completely separate topic. But at the time I was interested in Middle Eastern politics and Arabic. And that was the other option for masters. And so it really helped sort of get a place on that. But I didn't end up choosing it in the end.
I mean, especially the more policy side of things, that probably was incredibly helpful, quick sort of analytical, analysis text and writing.

 **RR:** So, would you that when you were doing policy projects, some of those skills were applicable?

 **R4:** Yeah, I mean, definitely, having to draft things very quickly, sort of documents and bids, and sort of structure your thinking. I know not everyone wants to go and work in sort of academia or policy, but that could almost happen earlier in that way [in the delivery]

 **RR:** In what way do you mean it could happen earlier?

 **R4:** I mean that the sort of analytical writing or that sort level that we that you have in the final year perhaps?

**RR:** So what was the experience in year one and year two. What options did you choose, do you remember?

 **R4:** No, no, I don't, sorry. It's all a blur COVID, yeah.

**[… discussion about PPU unit]**

 **RR:** I think there is something about the particular culture of IDA, can you tell me a little bit more what is the CTS position in relation to the studio? How did you see this kind of tension potentially, or maybe there wasn't a tension…

 **R4:** I mean as a student CTS for me, as I sort of mentioned I didn't have the sort of history of art or contextual learning around designing art before CTS.

From what I've seen and the way that we've sort of delivered CTS this year, I think it was almost tailored to IDA. Rather than, from my experience of it, it was still fantastic, but it was at the time sort of very lecture based. We still had a great time. I think there's this, I'm probably biased, but doing sort of this the wacky races and the game state if I were part of the Cubist team, I would remember for my whole life everything about Cubism after that sort of moment. It's that nice mirroring with the contextual sort of learning and making.

 **RR:** And was \_\_\_\_ often talking to you about CTS when you were a student, was he talking to you about your dissertation? Was he giving you texts to read? Did that CTS-ness come from studio practice?

 **R4:** Yes, and he did, actually. And in that same way, where I suppose traditionally a lot more of my peers at the time were selecting more design and art sort of topics, he's still passing on sort of Edward Said and sort of different documentaries to myself, even though it was on photography and Middle Eastern politics. So there was definitely.
And I would say that I'd like to think that I do that now and sort of check in with my tutor group in 3rd year how their CTS is going now.
There's an element of IDA in 3rd year where there are multiple briefs to choose from.
And that almost allows, if you are passionate about a certain topic which makes you choose your CTS direction, you can mirror it. And I do think it makes a big difference in that sort of tailoring of CTS you always select something you enjoy, but at the same time, if you're doing a sort of physical project alongside it, I think it makes a big difference.

RR: And so there is this ability to choose whatever you wanted to research irrespective of whether it could be explicitly connected to IDA or your practice. Did you find that valuable? Because again that's where we often find a bit of tension where students are like, ‘Oh, can I choose something that is completely unrelated to my cause?’ Some course leaders would like students to work on themes that are directly related to their course. About branding or typography or whatever to kind of not stray too far away from what the core discipline is. So what do you remember? Were you just like, oh, I'm really into this topic, I don't care. I just want to research this. And did you find that valuable? The sense of kind of exploration…

 **R4:** But that I mean from my perspective, I was studying Arabic in the evenings at the time and sort of had done previous prior to that, went to Palestine for a bit.
And I think there's this element of that. My perspective at the time was OK. I'm sort of more oriented towards sort of policy and sort of service design. There's a big gap between service designers and policy makers and those that traditionally study sort of economics, politics. And so how can you jump across and f see from that perspective and bring the best of both?
The reason why I didn't do policy and politics courses were actually because there wasn't that application. It was very theoretical, which was great, but for my masters I wanted to be able to apply what I was learning.
And it doesn't mean I wouldn't do that. I might still do that in the future, but it was something that I see myself doing in a night school, around other things.

And the question when you think about the question… There is that openness to be able to relate a lot of topics back. To interaction design in a certain way, whether that's sort of how people interact with technology or systems or art or people.

**RR:** Yes, I suppose it's kind of the nature of the course as well that allows you that kind of freedom, the way \_\_\_\_ kind of very much structures it to be driven by students.

 **R4:** Yeah, I do. I mean, even if you are doing a branding course, I think there is a way of relating everything back in a different way and it is as you say, with CTS, course leaders make a huge difference in shaping that it's yeah.

 **RR:** OK, cool. All right. So two final questions is, what do you think and you've kind of touched bits of this, but what do you think was good about CTS and what could have been better, what would you change if you could?

 **R4:** I mean, as I've touched on, I think it is already happening in that that change of sort of bringing of bringing, mirroring, making. There is that application of what you're learning sort of contextually and then applying it into an outcome. I think that's always been the case with mine. It was at the time it was very text based outcome. Still, it was fine and I still think that's hugely important. It's not one or the other. And along the lines of what I was saying earlier, an analytical perspective of reading and writing texts should be brought in, perhaps earlier, maybe in second year.

 **RR:** Why do you think it needs to be built in earlier? Is it because then you can do different things with it. And what are your thoughts about pushing that kind of in depth research earlier?

 **R4:** My idea is because, we've got a lot of space for research in this day and age of plagiarism, AI and misinformation. The way that sort of, well, that analytical perspective of both criticality, but also being able to read things quite quickly is key.
Whether you're writing slightly dull policy documents or you're working in a creative consultancy or branding project. Again, perhaps there is scope for different perspectives on that too. My dyslexic brother might say opposite. Because maybe there's an element of perhaps analysis and criticality that you can bring without actually having a writing based outcome. I do think it the CTS3 is great that it has the route A and B for that.

 **[discussion about new reapproved model of delivery ends the interview]**