

“

Are interested in
everything about the
world around them

”

Peter Lloyd

“

Feel that things should be
better somehow

”

Peter Lloyd

“

Attend to the ethics of
their professional actions

”

Janet McDonnell

“

Interrogate the brief, i.e.
the characterisation of the
'task' or the construct of
the 'problem'

”

Janet McDonnell

“

Can communicate the
importance of design (and
design thinking)

”

Peter Lloyd

“

Are themselves! which
makes the word “good”
disappear!

”

Ade Mabogunje

“

Move fluidly between
generating and critically
evaluating proposals as
design progresses

”

Janet McDonnell

“

Seek and engage in
authentic collaboration

”

Janet McDonnell



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“

Understand that every design decision impacts a person's life, even if they can't witness the impact themselves

”

Laura Murphy

“

Lead with humility, curiosity, and empathy that each human life is worth understanding and accounting for

”

Laura Murphy

“

Manage and integrate mindsets, knowledge sets, skill sets, and tool sets

”

Harold Nelson

“

Break apart a problem to figure out what is at the very core

”

Eli Patten

“

Push for radical change while also recognizing that our lives are the culmination of small moments

”

Laura Murphy

“

Seek to build a more inclusive, joyful, and equitable future

”

Laura Murphy

“

Know how to intentionally balance optimism and pessimism in the design process to get a better design than just realism itself

”

Eli Patten

“

Intentionally decide how to decide - what design decisions need to be made, in what order, based on what information, with what level of confidence, and how much consensus

”

Eli Patten



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“

Work to empathize with
the many different
customers/stakeholders
involved and understand
all use cases, not just the
core functions

”

Eli Patten

“

Center conscientious
negotiation at the center
of design

”

Şenay Purzer

“

Fluently reason across
experiential observations,
trade-offs, first-principles,
and futures thinking

”

Şenay Purzer

“

Deliver on their
commitments

”

Ben Shneiderman

“

Try to understand their
assumptions and explicitly
test them

”

Eli Patten

“

Anticipate how design
would perform in 10 years
from today and foresee
unintentional uses

”

Şenay Purzer

“

Do something
unexpected, new, and
fresh

”

Ben Shneiderman

“

Have a portfolio of
accomplishments that are
united by a personal style

”

Ben Shneiderman



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“

Ask a lot of questions of people obviously and not obviously "stakeholder" and/or knowledgeable about the situation (and the questions get beyond the surface)

”

Sheri Sheppard

“

Connect ideas and concepts not obviously connected

”

Sheri Sheppard

“

Do not fall in love with their own ideas

”

Sheri Sheppard

“

Engage stakeholders with prototypes during front-end design work

”

Kathleen Sienko

“

Use a variety of approaches for feedback and engagement

”

Sheri Sheppard

“

Are continuous and curious learners about the world

”

Sheri Sheppard

“

Question how/where/if design is the appropriate tool for the situation at hand

”

Sheri Sheppard

“

Base design decisions on quantitative and/or qualitative data rather than anecdotal evidence

”

Kathleen Sienko



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“

Are intentional about their use of prototypes; they consider the design question(s) that they are asking, the stakeholders, and the setting prior to developing their prototype(s)

”

Kathleen Sienko

“

Consider the broader context of design throughout a design process

”

Kathleen Sienko

“

Are servants for greater good

”

David Socha

“

Understand the responsibility of being a designer, and thus are humble and curious about what they don't know and seek out diverse and contradictory perspectives in order to avoid confirmation bias

”

David Socha

“

Use multiple, diverse sources of information to develop requirements and specifications

”

Kathleen Sienko

“

Consider their positionality when engaging in design work

”

Kathleen Sienko

“

Privilege observing over asking, showing over telling, prototyping over guessing, and acting over delaying

”

David Socha

“

Focus on satisficing and abduction, rather than optimizing and proving/induction, since most of design is about complex systems where there is not sufficient stability of causal relationships to merit the effort to optimize or prove

”

David Socha



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“

Deeply engage with the communities of use in order to best understand not only what might be useful for the producers of X but more importantly what might be beneficial to the people of the community for which the product/service is being designed

”

David Socha

“

Use iterative and adaptive processes to collaboratively explore and make sense of complex adaptive systems in order to reveal new patterns and insights (a.k.a. new knowledge) that can help the community answer questions about the desirability, feasibility, and viability of an existing or proposed system

”

David Socha

“

Always try to be aware of their own existing design thinking/philosophy

”

Erik Stolterman Bergqvist

“

Intentionally and reflectively develop their ability to make design judgements

”

Erik Stolterman Bergqvist

“

Take advantage of sense-making systems like the Cynefin framework to take different types of actions in different contexts

”

David Socha

“

For software-enabled systems, consciously attend to the three interacting complex adaptive systems (CAS) that comprise a software-enabled system: 1) the CAS of the people in an organization that is creating/evolving the system of use, 2) the CAS of the people who use the resulting system being created, and 3) the CAS of the system being created

”

David Socha

“

Have a developed understanding of the complexity and richness of the design process

”

Erik Stolterman Bergqvist

“

Have a deep sense of quality, without a preset notion of what is good or bad design

”

Erik Stolterman Bergqvist



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“

Are humble but strong
when it comes to design
ideas

”

Erik Stolterman Bergqvist

“

Advocate

”

Vanessa Svihla

“

Practice joyful
tentativeness

”

Vanessa Svihla

“

Reflect deeply on their
own positionality, that of
their users, and the
industry or technology
they are working with

”

Lauren Thomas Quigley

“

Manage the impacts of
power dynamics while
taking up agentive roles

”

Vanessa Svihla

“

Critically evaluate their
own preferences,
especially in terms of its
transferability

”

Vanessa Svihla

“

Think synthetically

”

Vanessa Svihla

“

Read history, fiction, social
science, and poetry from
many disciplines and
genres. Inspiration,
understanding, and care
come from engaging with
others, the way they think,
how they see the world and
how they wish to see it

”

Lauren Thomas Quigley



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“

Explore the social implications of their products and designs and ensure that those implications align with their own value system

”

Lauren Thomas Quigley

“

Take time to understand and engage with the culture, needs, and wants of their user groups and related constituents

”

Lauren Thomas Quigley

“

Have a learning orientation—they collect lots of information by asking questions, deploying prototypes, etc.

”

Jennifer Turns

“

Ideate not just solutions but also ways of defining the problem, ways of configuring the design process, etc.

”

Jennifer Turns

“

Realize that the existence of any artifact affects everything around it

”

Lauren Thomas Quigley

“

Are oriented toward action, and seek to not get stuck; to keep the process moving along

”

Jennifer Turns

“

Find ways to try out (a.k.a. prototype) their ideas as soon as possible and continually with a goal of getting information that will make it possible to iterate

”

Jennifer Turns

“

Include as many people in the process as possible; they make design social

”

Jennifer Turns



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“

Don't just "have" an idea;
they also talk about and
through their idea a lot

”

Jennifer Turns

“

Think broadly (divergent),
think deeply (convergent)

”

Barbara Tversky

“

Reduce fixation... form new
associations, to get out of
the rut, find new stimuli

”

Barbara Tversky

“

Wandering with Other
Minds

”

Barbara Tversky

“

Change Perspective

”

Barbara Tversky

“

Sketch, model, prototype,
role play, user test

”

Barbara Tversky

“

For ideas: wander, play,
focus, repeat.

”

Barbara Tversky

“

Effortfully stand with
others to view their world

”

Linda Vanasupa



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“

Listen

”

Linda Vanasupa

“

Decenter themselves

”

Linda Vanasupa

“

Wonder about what they
don't know

”

Linda Vanasupa

“

Are humble

”

Linda Vanasupa

When you talk to
someone and say,
“Good Designers do ‘X’,”
what are the top things you list?

This card deck features responses
provided by 35 scholars and educators
from the design and engineering design
education research communities. The 180
shortened statements on these cards were
derived from full responses provided by
each respondent.

When using or quoting the statements in
the collection, we ask that you keep the
author name with each of their statements
so that the work is attributed to the
appropriate person.

For more information, see
DesignSignatures.org or contact Cindy
Atman at atman@uw.edu.

More about this
project (in a report)



Additional formats and
teaching activities



Robin **Adams** Cindy **Atman** Reid
Bailey Adam **Carberry** Nigel
Cross Dharma **Dailey** Shanna
Daly Andy **Dong** Liz **Gerber** John
Gero Gabriela **Goldschmidt**
Colin M. **Gray** Mark **Guzdial**
David **Hendry** Susannah **Howe**
Daria **Kotys-Schwartz** Gordon
Krauss Micah **Lande** Peter **Lloyd**
Ade **Mabogunje** Janet
McDonnell Laura **Murphy** Harold
Nelson Eli **Patten** Şenay **Purzer**
Ben **Shneiderman** Sheri
Sheppard Kathleen **Sienko**
David **Socha** Erik **Stolterman**
Bergqvist Vanessa **Svihla** Lauren
Thomas Quigley Jennifer **Turns**
Barbara **Tversky** Linda **Vanasupa**

C O N T R I B U T O R S



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