



WHY IT MATTERS... DESIGN



Loughborough
University

Debra Lilley

Senior Lecturer

Sustainable design, in which social, economic and environmental issues are considered, is vital to ensuring a healthy, equitable and prosperous society. Designers are well placed as the interface between manufacturers users and consumers to effect a transition towards a more sustainable world. I would argue that sustainable design is good design. It is not a 'bolt on' but an integral component of every future designer's toolkit.



<p>Post 16 Education</p> <p>GNVQ Advanced Art & Design (a vocational course similar to a BTEC)</p>	<p>Higher Education</p> <p>BA Hons Interior Design</p> <p>MRes Innovative Manufacturing, Sustainability and Design</p> <p>PhD in Design for Sustainable Behaviour</p>
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Why did you choose Design?

I knew I liked art but had no real idea what to study at University. A tutor recommended Interior Design so I looked into degrees. I looked at a couple of courses. One of the tutors who interviewed me was so enthusiastic and joyous about the programme that I was inspired to take up their offer of a place.

Did you find your specialist subject straight away?

I struggled during my degree and felt very much under pressure to perform. I compared myself to other students and felt like I fell short of their achievements. In my final year I nearly dropped out but stayed and completed with a 2:1.

I realised that the subject of my degree wasn't what I wanted to do. It was the optional modules focused on sustainable (or at that time eco or environmental) design that really excited and motivated me.

In those modules I excelled!





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Debra's Career

After graduation, I ended up working in workplace consultancy designing office environments. My passion for eco design, first sparked at University, wasn't cultivated at work and so, when I was made redundant at 22 I went back to University.

I graduated in 2003 with a Masters in Research in Manufacturing, Sustainability and Design. This led to a fixed term contract as a Policy Officer in Sustainability at a local council where I worked on environmental campaigning and behaviour change around reducing waste, water and energy.

When the contract ended in 2004 I returned to education to do a PhD in Design for Sustainable Behaviour at Loughborough University. Following several short term contract positions as a researcher on projects exploring energy consumption reduction and sustainable design, I was appointed as a Lecturer in Design in 2010, when my first daughter was 5 months old.

Now, another two daughters later, I am a Senior Lecturer. My job involves teaching students in design research, sustainable design and design for behaviour change as well as supervising student projects and carrying out my own research.

I'm also responsible for developing new postgraduate programmes for the School of Design and Creative Arts and I'm also the Schools Outreach Officer.

Debra's advice: What my somewhat varied journey to this point has shown me is that you don't have to know exactly what you want to do or who you want to be when you are a teenager.

The experiences I had were seemingly unconnected at the time, but later I could see that they were all building up to my current focus on people's behaviour, design and sustainability. Each experience was valuable and from each experience I learnt something.

So my advice is, don't feel under pressure to choose the 'right' path. There are multiple paths to get to where you decide you want to be. It isn't always a straight path or a quick journey.

Loughborough University offers undergraduate degrees in

Design, Industrial Design, Product Design and Technology, Product Design Engineering, Graphic Design