

# Personal Development Plan

B2

C.M. van Riet



# Identity

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I'm an enthusiastically generative designer. It doesn't matter if the prototypes are actual physical props, pieces of code, or lesson plans. What I enjoy is the process of designing from the ground up, seeing a design come to life in front of me. My passion for design springs from the desire to see if something that exists only in my mind can be made reality. However, I don't just create purely for the sake of it; I often stop to think about the ethical ramifications of my design (*should I* versus *could I*) because I find it important to have a positive impact on the world around me. I try to make this positive impact in both my design and teaching practice.

*My versatility and broad interest is my biggest asset during design projects.*

My fundamental motivation and interest means I'm almost always enthusiastic about what I'm trying to do, but it also means I'm not the best at following a top-down approach where a more theoretical design approach is used. Nevertheless, because of this intrinsic motivation, I produce a lot of work, and I've noticed that when I encounter a new design problem, I can usually depend on my previous experience and build on solutions I've come up with in the past. This makes me a swift designer with hands-on problem-solving skills.

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My versatility and broad interest is my biggest asset during design projects. As a designer, I'm fascinated by the inner workings of things. My first question when encountering something new is usually: "So how does it work?" This interest in the mechanical engineering side of things helps me create working prototypes rapidly and allows me to iterate on those designs successfully. One of the downsides of this focus is that I find it harder to effectively analyse a problem space and define the problem I'm designing for. One of my goals is to develop my skills in this initial design phase. Nevertheless, my extensive experience as a language teacher enables me to communicate my ideas effectively both in speaking and writing. I continuously strive to combine the best of these two worlds. This versatility allows me to perform well in different settings as I can adapt my role to suit the needs of the team.

# Vision

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What attracts me to both teaching and design is being able to focus on the needs of the individual and designing concepts that can make a significant impact on someone's life. To maximise on this interest, I want to focus on making technology humane. I'm mainly interested in designing products and concepts that improve quality of life, or that enable people to do things that they previously couldn't. My main drive is to help people live up to their full potential.

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I believe design is a mentality instead of a product that we develop. I want to apply design thinking to my educational practice, both in how I design education materials, but also what I actually teach my students. Too often, I see technology, such as online learning environments, simply turning students into mindless machines because the technology allows for optimisation and optimises student behaviour with it. A fun course turns into a series of graded assignments that remove the human from education. Instead, we should find ways in which learning can be better online, and create solutions that honour the student as a person with hopes and desires.

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This human aspect of design is what also draws me to the health domain. I want to create designs that involve users as people and respect their interests and needs. An initiative like e-NABLE, volunteers who 3D-print open-source prosthetic hands, to me is a great example of all the values that I cherish and that I look for in humane design. Although the open-source approach has many detractors, I think we should develop and support it in this age of giant tech companies. Despite the numerous challenges ahead of us, I feel the way forward is to be positive and critically enthusiastic about what technology can bring us.



# Expertise Areas

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## Business & Entrepreneurship

As a language institute director, my daily business life consists of strategy meetings, benchmarks, finding and exploring new markets, conversion, etc. This is why in my studies, I'd like to get away from my daytime job and focus on the materiality of design, as this is something I miss in my work at the moment. However, this year is a big year for our language company as we're trying to expand our existing business into new markets.

**GOAL:** I hope to have expanded part of our business to other higher education institutions, namely HKU and/or Design Academy. My goal is to become better at cold selling our unique approach to institutions that are similar to the ones that we're already developing specialised courses for. To become better at networking and cold engaging professionals, I've joined Lunch Club and I will meet with one professional online to network once every two weeks.

## Creativity & Aesthetics

I don't consider myself particularly good at creating beautiful designs or posters, but I understand the value of selling yourself and using beautiful design to do it. In B2, I should work on creating a visual language that quickly shows people that a design has my personal stamp on it.

**GOAL:** I will make at least 1 sketch per course/project in B2 to practise applying design sketching methods to actually conveying a message. I will teach myself freeform soldering together with other interested students and build a small sculpture with LEDs because I love the freeform aesthetic. I will continue sparring with other motivated, ambitious students as I notice they spark my creativity and are one of the main reasons I want to study ID at TU/e.

## Technology & Realisation

Technology & Realisation is still the reason I want to study Industrial Design and the area I want to explore and flesh out most. I'm beginning to see how well this expertise area can be integrated with other areas, such as when I studied the emotions a 7-digit LED display could convey. Throughout the rest of my B2, I want to further examine how I can make technology *feel* human and the types of interactions work well with certain technologies.

**GOAL:** At the moment, I'm really interested in developing my printed circuit board development skills. I will create one pcb (smd) through KiCAD and order it at PCBway for my freelance work at PlanB. I will attend my weekly electronics meetup at least once every two months due to overlapping schedules.

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## User & Society

I'm starting to find this area much more interesting as I progress and develop a better understanding of the impact that design can have on users. In B1.4, I also became more aware of the ethical issues involved in design, and I'm starting to develop my own opinions on these matters. I'm also continually linking this area to course evaluation as continuous course improvement is an important part of my responsibilities as a director.

**GOAL:** In B2 I will continue to analyse user evaluations (mainly from my language students) in Jupyter notebooks and Python to improve our teaching methods. I will take a course in User Evaluation Methods to get better at asking the right questions to what I want to know in questionnaires. This year, I will create all of the questionnaires I use at the language institute and evaluate them.

## Math, Data & Computing

This is still the area I feel most insecure about, as I don't work with this area every day, as I mostly do with the others. However, I do see the importance of this area, especially in conjunction with other areas. As a teacher, I want to dive more into the power of play in education. As an avid boardgamer, I'm fascinated by game mechanics and the effects they have on players.

**GOAL:** In B2, I want to learn how to code games in Unity. To achieve this, I'm taking Games for Design and Play I in B2.1, in which we will create a 2D side-scrolling platformer with at least one level in Unity. In B2.1 I'm a student assistant for Creative Programming and my goal there is to design some new teaching materials for future student assistants. I will create at least one powerpoint presentation and ask for feedback on my assisting.

## Design & Research Process

During the P1 Demo Day I learnt that the research you do is sometimes original and might benefit others. Although I often share my designs under a Creative Commons license, I hadn't considered sharing research findings. My biggest area for improvement is getting a good grip on the problem space I'm designing for and applying viable design strategies.

**GOAL:** In my B2 projects, I will pay particular attention to creating a strong design rationale and following a design methodology. I will ask help from fellow students and coaches on focusing more on applications instead of only methods. I'm going to try really hard to write a paper in B2 and get it published, although I realise the chances are slim indeed. I will also have occasional meetups with Joost Liebrechts to get some critical feedback on how I'm doing. He was my coach for Project 1 and he kindly offered to give me some occasional feedback.