

'Making' Knowledge, 'Making' Impact

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‘Making’ Knowledge, ‘Making’ Impact

Presentation at:

Creating Knowledge Conference, Monday 18th June 2018

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Presented by:

Gemma Wheeler

Summary of event

This internal conference held at Sheffield Hallam University aimed to enable researchers to learn about each other’s work and identify opportunities for collaboration within the University’s emerging research and impact platforms.

An abstract (provided below) was submitted in response to the ‘Healthy, Independent Lives’ platform in order to showcase the work conducted by Lab4Living, a multidisciplinary research cluster conducting design-led research in contexts of health and wellbeing.

The abstract was reviewed by a programme committee comprising the PVC Research, four Assistant Deans for Research, the Director of the Graduate School, representatives of the Professoriate and an early career researcher, and selected for presentation.

Accepted abstract

Lab4Living is a multidisciplinary research group within the Cultural, Communication and Computing Research Institute (C3RI), with a focus on bringing Design-led research to fields of health and wellbeing. Our work spans a range of health contexts across the entire life course, and is characterised by the use of *creating* and *making*. These effective, empowering approaches include those affected by the research outcomes in the knowledge creation process, as a route to greater impact.

For a designer, the process of drawing or making something is not to transcribe ideas from their heads but as a means of orchestrating a conversation with themselves, and others [1]. Externalising those emergent thoughts, making them tangible, allows designers to extend their thinking, distributing it between conception and perception simultaneously [1]. When others are invited into this ‘conversation’, the materiality of drawings or prototypes makes it easier to share, communicate and develop knowledge in a common language, unbounded by barriers between disciplines or hierarchies. The process of making, either collaboratively or as an independent enquiry, elicits deeper forms of knowledge (for example tacit, behavioural or experiential). These can elevate research findings into meaningful, impactful outcomes that are sensitive to the ‘messy’ reality within which they hope to contribute.

Clearly, many of the principles of ‘making’ knowledge resonate with the complex, interdependent nature of healthcare services and personal, hard to articulate nature of healthcare experiences. In our presentation, we will use several key case studies from the Lab4Living portfolio to illustrate our approaches and impact to date.

[1] Sousanis, N. (n.d.). *Unflattening*.