

# Annotated Bibliography

## Texts from Reading List

1. Disalvo, C. (2012) 'Adversarial Design as Inquiry and Practice' in *Adversarial Design*. MIT Press. pp. 115–125

In our enquiry into UAL's increasing student commuting carbon emissions, we interrogated the tendency to shift blame and responsibilities in the 3-pronged network we identified: UAL, London's transport infrastructure, and students. In 'Adversarial Design', DiSalvo explores how design can contribute to political discussion and activism rather than simply producing solutions. Disalvo's perspective of not using adversarial design to resolve conflict or develop answers, but instead embracing dissensus, was critical to how our group developed a volume of findings. We needed to translate our raw data into an outcome where conflicting perspectives become visible and open to discussion. This is when we had the idea to present the problem and create space for dialogue, rather than solving, or blaming one party.

Rather than presenting data in a conventional report format, we used design to frame the issue with a tongue-in-cheek approach. It makes clear the network of dependency and encourage reflection from UAL institution members on where greater effort is required in providing students facilities to make more green transport choices. In this way, adversarial design helped us frame our object as a prompt for discussion rather than a proposed solution.

2. Foucault, M. (1989) 'Preface' in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Routledge. pp. xvi-xxvi

Foucault expresses how categories aren't neutral, rather shape our understanding of how we view the world around us. In our group project, we attempted to recategorise the activity of students commuting to campus. Commuting choices are seen largely as individual behavioural decisions, however wider structural conditions also influence the options that are realistically available to students. The current understanding that commuting is individual choice eliminates from the discussion factors such as distance from campus, access to public transport, and the timing of lectures, and how they all affect how students travel.

UAL depends on students to bring down their carbon emissions in the Scope 3 category, and we as a group interrogated how the institute could take greater responsibility of their part of the equation. For example, we noted that cycling to campus is a greener option but as of 2025, less than 4% of students choose to cycle. CSM only provides 100 stands for a building housing at least 5000 student and staff, and doesn't provide sufficient information on cycling safety. Thus by recatergoising the activity of commuting there is space to explore the complexities and nuances behind choices.

## External texts

3. Dunne, A. & Raby, F. (2013) *Speculative Everything*. MIT Press.

Speculative Everything argues that design can be used to facilitate debate on hypothetical scenarios, rather than solving immediate problems. Our group focused on the four forms of imagined futures: possible, plausible, probable, and preferable.

In our enquiry on why emissions from student commuting are difficult to reduce, it was important to consider the future speculatively to understand where systems can be changed. For example, we looked at a possible future where lectures can periodically happen in pop-up campuses in different parts of the city, to allow students living far away from CSM the opportunity to make more green commuting choices, and the option of exploring a new area. We did consider that such speculative futures comes with a new set of challenges, but presenting them is important because it opens up dialogue where constructive change can be made.

4. Shove, E. (2010) 'Beyond the ABC: Climate Change Policy and Theories of Social Change', *Sage Journals*, Volume 42, Issue 6. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1068/a4228>

Shove discusses the exact problem we as a group were trying to tackle. As students, we feel a large part of responsibility is placed on us to “make the right choice” to reduce carbon emissions. In comparison, larger institutes with more power, facilities, and ability to make change often ignore individual circumstances, and the role they play in changing it. They are the first to talk about how well they’ve done, whilst passing responsibility on to others, for example encouraging students to use “sustainable travel” while maintaining timetables that require early travel across London or campuses that are geographically spread out.

Shove’s critique of the ABC model illustrates that its limitations include assuming people freely choose their behaviour, shifting responsibility away from institutions, treating social context as external, and ignoring how lifestyles are structured. Her arguments encouraged us to dive deeper into our enquiry of identifying the network of dependency, and really examine the systems and practices (in place by institutions) that structure daily life choices, such as lecture scheduling, housing affordability, and access to reliable public transport.

## Design Practices/Projects

5. Team Giorgia Lupi (2025) Data Love Letter to the Subway Full Animation. 4 November. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlOzIY6hY5E&t=4s> (Accessed: 15 February 2026).

Data Love Letter to the Subway presents data visualisation as an expressive and narrative medium rather than a purely analytical one. The project transforms personal commuting data into an intricate visual language, using colour, rhythm, and form to communicate patterns of movement and experience. Instead of prioritising efficiency or clarity in a conventional infographic sense, the work emphasises emotional and experiential dimensions of data.

This project expanded our understanding of how data related to commuting could be represented. Rather than presenting statistics about student travel and emissions through traditional charts or graphs, it encouraged us to consider how data could exist within more visually engaging and interpretive containers. The piece demonstrates that visualisation can communicate atmosphere, routine, and personal experience alongside quantitative information.

Conceptually, this approach influenced how we filtered and framed our findings. It prompted us to explore more experimental visual formats for presenting commuting data, helping us think about design as a way of translating complex systems into forms that invite curiosity, interpretation, and reflection rather than simply delivering information.

6. WIRED (2010) 'Look Around You' Sends Up Science. 3 November. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiJVu4A7D94> (Accessed: 20 February 2026).

The WIRED video discussing Look Around You examines the British parody television series that satirises the tone and visual language of educational science programming from the 1970s and 1980s. The show imitates the authoritative style of instructional broadcasts while presenting absurd or exaggerated information, creating humour through the contrast between confident presentation and questionable content. By mimicking the aesthetics and narrative structure of these programmes, the series exposes how easily authority can be constructed through visual style, voiceover, and format.

This reference influenced the visual and tonal direction of our project. As we explored the issue of student commuting emissions, we wanted to avoid presenting the topic in a conventional explanatory format. Instead, Look Around You inspired us to adopt a tongue-in-cheek, parody style that exaggerates the confidence and simplicity often found in informational media.

Using this approach allowed us to highlight the oversimplification of complex systemic issues. By presenting our findings through a humorous infomercial-like format, we were able to question narratives of easy solutions and individual responsibility while still engaging the audience in the topic.

# Annotated Bibliography (all notes)

explaining how the reference enhances or challenges your understanding of your object. (Don't summarize the reference; instead, put it in context of your group's enquiry.)

## Texts from Reading List

Disalvo, C. (2012) 'Adversarial Design as Inquiry and Practice' in *Adversarial Design*. MIT Press. pp. 115–125

In our enquiry into UAL's increasing student commuting carbon emissions, we interrogated the a tendency to shift blame and responsibilities in the 3-pronged network we identified: UAL, London's transport infrastructure, and students. Adversarial design discusses how design can be used to add to political discussion and activism. Disalvo's perspective of not using adversarial design to resolve conflict or develop answers, but embracing dissensus was critical to how our group's developed a volume of findings. This is when we had the idea to present the problem, and create space for dialogue, rather than solving, or blaming one party.

*Reason why this is relevant:* Unlike traditional political activism, adversarial design does not aim at revolution or destruction. It works within technological and design fields to reorient assumptions and suggest alternatives. It produces prototypes and "demos" that model different possible futures, making alternative political arrangements believable and actionable.

Adversarial design is a way of using design to foster ongoing political contestation. It does not resolve conflict or seek consensus. Instead, echoing agonistic political theory, it embraces dissensus as essential to democracy. Through artifacts, systems, and processes, adversarial design creates spaces where political issues can be expressed, experienced, and challenged.

In short, adversarial design transforms design into a sustained practice of political confrontation and inquiry.

Foucault, M. (1989) 'Preface' in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Routledge. pp. xvi-xxvi

*Reason why this is relevant:* Foucault is basically saying categories aren't neutral — they shape how we see things. And in our project we're kind of re-categorising commuting, not just as individual behaviour but as something structured by timetables and institutions.

## External texts

Dunne, A. & Raby, F. (2013) *Speculative Everything*. MIT Press.

I think Shove's *Beyond the ABC* is great for this!

She critiques the “ABC” model (Attitude–Behaviour–Choice), which assumes that if individuals have the right environmental attitudes, they will make better choices and change their behaviour. Her point is that this framework shifts responsibility onto individuals and hides how institutions actually structure those choices.

That feels very aligned with what we’re doing.

Our project extends Shove’s critique by visualising how the ABC framework operates institutionally and how responsibility becomes diffused within sustainability governance.

## Design Practices/Projects

Team Giorgia Lupi (2025) Data Love Letter to the Subway Full Animation. 4 November. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIOzIY6hY5E&t=4s> (Accessed: 15 February 2026).

WIRED (2010) 'Look Around You' Sends Up Science. 3 November. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiJVu4A7D94> (Accessed: 20 February 2026).

Creating a suitable container for our critical enquiry was imperative. Since we

And here is the project Introduction: This project examines how UAL addresses Scope 3 commuting emissions primarily through advice rather than structural change. While the Net Zero plan recognises that student and staff travel is a major contributor to the university’s carbon footprint, the proposed solutions tend to focus on individual behaviour. Students are encouraged to walk, cycle, or make more sustainable choices, yet the institutional conditions that shape commuting remain largely unchanged.

Through a fictional institutional training film set in the style of the 1980s, we exaggerate the language of corporate sustainability to expose a central contradiction. Personal carbon numbers can be calculated and presented with apparent precision, but the systems that determine commuting patterns are far less visible. Timetables, campus centralisation, room allocation policies, and housing affordability all influence how often and how far students travel. These are institutional decisions, yet responsibility is framed as individual choice.

Rather than presenting the network as a harmonious system of shared responsibility, the project reveals it as a complex web in which power and accountability are unevenly distributed. By staging overly optimistic messaging alongside impractical solutions, the film highlights the gap between recommendation and action. Instead of proposing another behavioural adjustment, the work asks what might change if commuting were treated as a structural design issue. In doing so, it shifts the focus from individual guilt to institutional responsibility within sustainability governance.