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'Please tell me about an idea you would love to realise'
– an exploration of abandoned ideas in design education

ABSTRACT
Choosing to pursue one design idea usually requires leaving several others behind. As a design teacher, I have experienced this at close range making me curious about what design students choose not to do and why. In this study, I look at my students' design ideation from the perspective of care and look at the reasons for them abandoning their design ideas. Through this perspective, I will probe the role that the notion of risk plays in students' management or processing of ideas. The findings are based on an empirical study using students' reflections on abandoned ideas as data. Such explorations can bring some of the regulations that students are subjected to into the foreground, thus exposing how the edu-cational system and teachers like myself affect the students' sense of freedom, hampering their ability to experiment with their ideas. Creating awareness about students' abandoned ideas in new and attentive ways can play an active role in strengthening the students' contact with and ownership of their hopes and motivations. This can make a difference in the ongoing negotiations, re-negotiations and struggles about what good design education ought to be.

Keywords:
Abandoned ideas, risk, failure, care, design education.

INTRODUCTION

The research in this article takes place at the Institute of Product Design at Oslo Metropolitan University where I have worked as a teacher in design for several years. The article aims to create awareness of some of the regulations students are subjected to by looking closer at design ideas that students abandon and their reasons for doing so. Students arrive at the university with a "rucksack full of hope" (Whittle et al., 2018). What design students choose *not* to do and the reasons why, are ongoing and changing results of invisible culminating effects of what may be considered the mundane activities associated with being a design student.

Openness to ambiguity is held as a valued part of the creative curricula that comprise design education (Orr & Shreeve, 2017; Sawyer, 2018). We (as teachers) state that we want to train empathic,

critical, engaged designers able to include complex social issues as their domain (Kimbell, 2015, p. 286). This study shows that achieving this goal is a complicated, demanding activity. Signature pedagogies associated with art and design should be based on a student-centred approach and be predominantly dialogic in nature; students' experiences should be central, and learning should be recognised as a partnership (Shreeve, 2010, p. 1).

The study is counterintuitive (Tracy, 2010, p. 840) by studying events that did not unfold, of secrets, ideas and sentiments that were not intended to be shared. In this study, I became more attentive to what I do in my role as a teacher. Learning about the drama and turmoil caused by teachers' comments and other ordinary actions reminded me of how fragile motivation is and how delicate and vulnerable one's self-worth may be, not only among students but also among my colleagues and people in general. Investigating the ideas that students abandon revealed the often-unnoticed aspects of the design learning environment. An intensified focus on care, attentiveness and time might be indispensable if we want to cultivate a learning environment that encourages students to experiment with ideas with a brave and open-minded attitude. It is imperative if we want to enable "not only practise, but critical practise to develop" (Orr & Shreeve, 2017, p. 152) and move the discipline forward (p. 151).

Design is now widely acknowledged as an interdisciplinary and complex field (Halstrøm & Galle, 2014, p. 56). Sustainability issues and sustainable value creation add to the complexity of design education, and students are expected to include cultural and ecological concerns in their development, implementation and realisation (OsloMet, 2018). However, this development is taking place simultaneously as the demands for market thinking, instrumental reason and economic factors are being emphasised in design education (Findeli, 2001, p. 6; Kalin, 2018). In recent years the design approach called critical design or speculative design has expanded the traditional framework for design. This practice and theory are characterised by an ethic of social inquiry and non -commercialism. Critical design and speculative design practises are associated with the work and teaching of Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby at The Royal College of Art in London the years 2005 to 2015 (Dunne & Raby, 2013). Critical design questions "commercial design practices that reinforce the status quo" (Coombs et al., 2019, p. 2). The critical and speculative design seeks to rethink what design can be and what questions it should raise. The idea is to use design to engage in a critical dialogue about the assumed nature of the designed world we inhabit (Haylock, 2019, p. 19). In line with other researchers in design education, the article explores whether students are given the opportunity to develop critical skills to analyse the political, cultural and social context they are becoming part of (Lutnæs, 2017, p. 174; Thiessen, 2017, p. 146).

Choosing to pursue one design idea usually requires leaving several others behind. As a design teacher, I have experienced this at close range, and it has made me wonder what design students choose not to do and why. Inspired by Tracy (1995), I aim to "make visible what is hidden or inappropriately ignored" (p. 210) and, by doing so, generate a sense of understanding of the regulations that students are subjected to and how the educational system and teachers like myself affect the students' sense of freedom and reduce their possibilities to experiment with ideas. In the article, I reflect on design education practices through the perspective of caring about abandoned ideas and the role that risk plays in students' management or processing of ideas.

The first part of this article introduces how I engage with the concept of risk in design education and the development of the conceptual approach to care about abandoned ideas. Then I go on to describe the empirical material and give an overview of the project. The analyses are constructed with the help of short vignettes in a narrative structure around emerging themes such as failure, risk, self-preservation, motivation and vagueness. The last part of the paper presents a discussion and conclusion about the possibilities of combining the concepts of abandoned ideas, care and resistance in discussing design education.

THE RISK OF FAILURE
Making mistakes is a risk in creative processes. Professional artists and designers know this and expect dead ends and mistakes in the processes (Greene et al., 2018, p. 140). They try to use the mistakes as guidance and reflect on them to identify new creative paths. However, students are not professionals

yet and are often not comfortable with failure. Students tend to avoid risk (p. 140). Without the ability to tolerate risk, there is a danger that students are "just going about things in a highly prescribed way" (p. 140).

Design is an idea-based practice. The process of developing ideas has many names: ideation, idea generation, going wide, spark of ideas, brainstorming and so on. The process is often considered to be social and co-creative in nature, and a lot of effort is put into facilitating an atmosphere that encourages curiosity, courageousness and concentration (Brown, 2008). Playfulness is considered to foster creativity, and in order to be playful we need to feel safe. A common cause of conservative, timid ideas is fear of our peers or embarrassment (Brown, 2008). Playfulness is associated with a willingness to take risks, and the aim of most design education practices is to "create an environment where the student dares to experiment with one's ideas and with a brave and open-minded attitude" (Mäkelä & Löytönen, 2017, p. 247). In design education, "[taking] creative risk is required and [is a] transferable competency" (Steers, 2009, p. 128). Risk is a "sticky concept" (Orr & Shreeve, 2017, p. 144), partly because "measuring value in creative work is problematic" (Bilton, 2014, p. 157). From the student's perspective, "voicing one's creative ideas to others is inherently risky, [as it involves] exposing oneself to the possibility of failure and rejection" (Choi et al., 2019, p. 84).

Risk exists in many forms, such as: misunderstanding/misinterpreting, pursuing an idea that has already been used or is outdated, spending time and energy on something that amounts to nothing, being disliked or embarrassed because other people do not understand the processes, ideas or aims and not passing exams. Risk is an inherent part of engaging with the unknown and new concepts where the result is not predetermined or certain. In material making processes artists and designers work with risk in manual production with hand tools. In the book *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* (1995) David Pye introduces the terms "workmanship of risk" and "workmanship of certainty" that describe the characteristics of processes or operations along a spectrum running from free to regulated. The workmanship of risk is defined as "workmanship using any kind of technique or apparatus, in which the quality of the result is not predetermined, but depends on the judgment, dexterity, and care which the maker exercises as he works" (Pye, 1995, p. 20). However, in this article, I am asking the students about ideas that may not even reach the threshold of failure in the outside world; untested and unacknowledged, ideas that they have abandoned.

The creative process is in itself is generally considered to be a process that is nonlinear, experimental and iterative (Sawyer, 2018). Drawing on the design thinking related theory of iterative prototyping and testing with users, designers must learn to expect failure and to incorporate failure productively into the design process (Cross, 2011; Greene et al., 2018, p. 128). Quotes like "failure is the key to success" and "fail better" have become common in creative industries. This modifies risk into a transient phase: "Like risk-taking the idea of failure can be appealing" but only "valued if it is entwined with some form of recognisable success" (Orr & Shreeve, 2017, p. 48). However, it is fair to assume that ideas, especially those we are excited about, are connected to ourselves, our values and motives. According to Orr and Shreeve (2017s), "[i]n art and design, it is rarely the case that the student's work is judged without reference to its creator. What this means is that the studio becomes a place or means to create (or deny) human value" (p. 45). In other words, risk is not only connected to the judgement, success or failure of certain ideas, but also closely intertwined with our perceived self-worth, capabilities and value.

Care for the abandoned

Ideas are abandoned for many different reasons, including time pressure, the demands of teaching systems, the perceived amount of work, rejection by teachers or a lack of concreteness. There is some discomfort associated with examining and confronting our abandoned ideas, including feelings of failure, uncertainty and embarrassment. Additionally, the projects and/or ideas that are abandoned implicitly convey something about our personal sense of freedom and our feelings of shame or fear, the latter often amplified by academic rules and evaluation systems. I think that to explore students' stories about abandoned ideas can move us and create awareness about some of the (hidden) regulations that students are subjected to, and how they affect the students' sense of freedom. Examining this further

can enable us to resist, perhaps even take the offensive in relation to the forces that compel us to do things in certain ways. Resistance can only take place if we have a sense of what is happening to us, knowledge of what or who is causing this to happen to us. Critically approaching the small events that occur in the encounters between humans (the students) and the institutions and structures (the university, the market) is a good starting point for doing this.

Our failures or mistakes are rarely given much attention when we present our work to others: "failure is often absent from our discussions of field work and sanitized academic outputs" (Harrowell et al., 2018, p. 2). This reflects "a reluctance to acknowledge doubt and failure in a novel idea" (Bilton, 2014, p. 157). All too often, the descriptions of our processes are smoothed over by "hiding the confusion, self-doubt, and many mistakes that are made along the way" (Harrowell et al., 2018, p. 2). The continuous push for design students to produce new results, solutions and novel ideas leads to a surplus of ideas and initiatives. Not all ideas can or should be realised. However, exploring the various descriptions and reasons as well as feelings and opinions concerning students' abandoned ideas is intended to enable critical resistance by both students and teachers and reclaim space and time for failure, fumbling and searching as fundamental parts of creative, critical practices.

METHOD

This is a case study within a master's class in design education on how things work in particular situations (Stake, 2010, p. 27). The study involves multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual material). It is a situated, or at-home, ethnographic study as I conducted research at my workplace, in an environment that is familiar and "natural" to be in (Alvesson, 2003, 2009).

The reflections in this article are based on an empirical material collected in an educational situation in the form of students' reflections about abandoned ideas. The questions given to the students were an attempt to gain more knowledge about the relationship between students' design ideas and the educational context and to explore how the structural and social factors in students' education influence the students' sense of agency (i.e. freedom) and capability and inclination to take risks. The guiding research question is as follows: what design ideas do design students choose *not* to realise and why?

In the analysis, I look for the role of risk-taking in students' processing of ideas. To build on and further develop existing research on this topic, I will attempt to critically reflect on how caring about abandoned ideas can contribute to reclaiming, expanding and supporting students' agency, ability to resist, sense of freedom and independence and ownership of their creative processes.

My position as a teacher and researcher is influenced by my knowledge of artistic practice and experiences as a visual artist. Whether something is more art or more design is not very significant in the processes I explore, rather I try to introduce practices at "the intersection of art and design" (Coombs et al., 2019, p. 4). I am inspired by a critical and speculative design approach that asks questions and "interrogates its own conditions of production and display, i.e., institutional critique" (Haylock, 2019, p. 19), similar to critical works of art. Being an artist and researcher who teaches design students has given me an opening to probe into the spaces and opportunities in-between art, design and research. In this article, I make use of Orr and Shreeve's understanding of the art and design curriculum as "a complex web of activities" that is inherently "sticky […] messy and uncertain" (Orr & Shreeve, 2017, p. 7). These activities and spaces are full of meeting points, misunderstandings, similarities and differences.

Overview of the study

In autumn 2017, I taught a course on design and culture to first-year master's students in design. I aimed to thematise the reciprocal relationship between culture and design. By the end of my first class with the students, I asked if it was acceptable to introduce them briefly to my PhD research, even though it

Please tell me about an idea you would love to realise but don't or can't … and why.
Please make a short description of why you abandoned this idea.

was not part of the course content and would not impact their grades or evaluation of their outcomes. When I told them about my idea to collect abandoned ideas, one student immediately asked why I was interested in this. I explained that I wanted to know more about the decision-making processes and the factors that influenced students to disregard or choose certain directions in their work. I said that my intention was to become aware of and reflect upon the things that influence us in our lives as students and teachers in design. After they signed the participation form, I handed them a sheet with two requests:
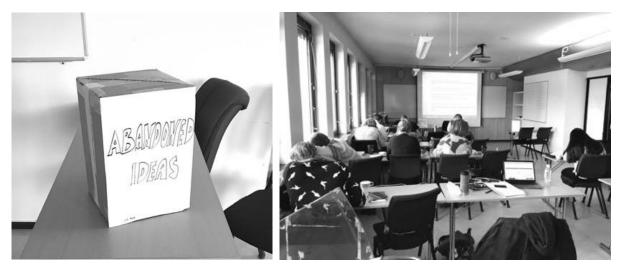

FIGURE 1. Author, Cardboard box for abandoned ideas and classroom, photograph, 2018.

Thirteen students participated, and they spent 10-30 minutes writing their answers. Beforehand, I had made a cardboard box where they could put their responses. This allowed them to remain anonymous if they wanted. If they preferred, they could provide me a memory stick with images, drawings or audio recordings. One student provided a memory stick containing a design project and a written answer.

The following day when I met with the class, I asked if anybody would volunteer to do interviews with a fellow student. Three students volunteered. The instructions given were:

Interview guide:

Find a fellow student to interview, record with video or only sound if you prefer. The interview may take the form of conversations where you, as an interviewer, can also reflect on the questions. You have a rough interview guide, but you don't have to answer all the questions; select the ones you want to discuss. Record between 5-15 minutes and give the recordings to me in two weeks' time. All questions are related to you in the context of a student in design. However, your answers can include whatever else influences you in your practice.

- Please tell me about something you misunderstood or a mistake you made. How did you feel about making mistakes? How do fellow students and teachers react?

- Please tell me any advice or insight that has been important to you

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Below is a list of the different materials and the order in which they were produced:

1. Students' stories collected in a box in the classroom (main data source).

2. One thirty-minute long interview/conversation with a student who was especially interested in the topic.
3. Three interviews (two audio recorded and one video recorded, approximately 10 minutes each) in which the students interviewed each other with a set of prepared questions about their feelings concerning mistakes and reactions from fellow students and teachers.

Ethnographic approaches inspired me to construct the analysis around the short stories collected from the students in the abandoned ideas box in the classroom. In ethnographic writing, the data is treated as "materials to think with, to facilitate the production of new ideas" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019b, p. 167) and to further develop ideas derived from previous theory (p. 167). The reflexive process from the research and analyses when I wrote this article persisted over a long period. The use of the perspective of care for abandoned ideas set things in motion; the students' individual experiences and feelings of loss and abandonment made me more aware of my own abandoned ideas and the ideas I continued to abandon. Researcher reflexivity "implies a recognition that research acts shape the phenomena under investigation" (p. 198). The qualitative data I have collected is from educational situations with relatively few participants. The material was produced in an educational context; the context is vital for the development of the analysis. Further, this is a qualitative inquiry; it must be evaluated according to its particular logic (Levitt et al., 2018, p. 28). The writing of the article is a preliminary result of reading the students' answers many times and repeated listening to the interviews. Some themes that emerged were failure, risk, self-preservation, motivation, time pressure, vagueness. In the analyses, I discuss them in relation to the notion of risk in creative processes and the perspective of care for abandoned ideas.

DISCUSSION

My initial browsing through the data material revealed two tendencies. First, abandonment of ideas was explained by or blamed on external factors, such as guidance from teachers, the demands of the school system, time pressure and lack of support or interest from others. Second, the decisions were explained by internal factors, such as a lack of skills and knowledge, personality traits and abilities. It cannot be expected from students in the process of learning and becoming designers that they can evaluate the potential or value of their idea as professionals do. Closer investigations into the material made it apparent that straightforward organizing or listing the reasons and explanations for abandoning ideas was not adequate. There was a striking overlap between external and internal factors and the students' negotiations of these in the educational context. (I am referring to the different students using capital letters (A, B, etc.) to clarify the analyses).

The quotes below come from one of the audio-recorded interviews where I asked one student to do a loosely guided interview/conversation about making mistakes with a fellow student. I begin this section with passages from their conversation because they illustrate how students try to rationalize failure and mistakes:

I have been listening to a lot of podcasts on business… entrepreneurs, and they are about all these famous businessmen who have successful businesses like Ben & Jerry's. They are speaking to this guy and saying, 'oh, you have to fail, it's the best thing for an entrepreneur, is to fail' and then it is like, 'ah, man, sure it applies in other areas that we need to make those mistakes'. (Student A)

Maybe the mistakes are an exploration, what is a mistake? Something is happening that you didn't want to happen, it might happen that it actually is perfect for another solution, another day for another thing or something. (Student B)

Time is really the issue here with the smaller projects; you don't really have time to follow up mistakes, you can't explore those mistakes, you have to do fast backtracking. (Student A)

Both the students reflect on making mistakes as a valued part of the design process; they seem to appreciate that making mistakes and failing is an essential element of the iterative, creative and innovative processes (Choi et al., 2019, p. 74). The students' discussion reflects the tendency to celebrate failure as a step towards success. The relationship between failure and success is interesting. In many accounts, the relationship is described as a kind of function; failure is a necessary event in achieving success. However, the relationship may not be that straightforward: the criteria for success might be too simple; we are gaining more and more knowledge, which makes it problematic to think about the relationship between failure and success by using established criteria. Things and designs that are perfectly functional and attractive according to established ways of thinking may be disastrous failings according to emerging ones.

In the next part of the discussion, I refer to the written responses that the students submitted to the box of abandoned ideas. Failure is also a powerful emotional concept. "Even when we know we can rationalize it, how it feels at the time cannot be underestimated" (Whittle et al., 2018). In the next, I will present quotes and stories from students' written replies submitted to the box for abandoned ideas. These stories shed light on the emotional feeling of failure and risk in different ways, including the hurtful sides of the risk-taking, such as the feeling of doing something wrong, not fitting in, and failure on a fatal/damaging/hurtful level and the silencing, stifling and suppressing effects that failure can produce. Student C wrote:

> I dream about visualizing music by means of creative processes that I've learned as a product design student. I feel like my starting point is "wrong" because the idea emerges from passion, instead of solving a problem for someone. (Student C)

I wonder where the feeling of *doing something wrong* comes from. Why did this student feel that their interests were wrong and that he or she should be doing something else? The student's personal motivation does not match the notion of what is expected of designers and what is appreciated. In a sense, the answer illustrates a risk that the student does not take: the risk of pursuing a task that is not intended to solve a problem for someone. The demand for clarity and accountability hinders this student from engaging in open, explorative creative processes. Teaching manuals imply that students are expected to challenge established perspectives and norms in the field (OsloMet, 2018). However, doing so involves, at least to some extent, challenging the established culture of the educational system – the very system on which they depend to achieve a professional career in the future. Challenging what you are dependent upon is risky, and the space to do so is somewhat limited, fluctuating and difficult to trust.

Several of the students' reactions followed a kind of a pattern when they tried to explain or outline their ways of managing the risks involved in the processes of making new things and ideas. When they grow insecure about their ideas, or meet resistance, they first deny that they will give up on their ideas, tell themselves that they will put them aside, wait until the circumstances change, or the ideas have matured. Sometimes, however, as I write in the article "Abandoned ideas and the energies of failure" (Sjøvoll et al., 2020) this insistence on the value of the idea is abruptly replaced by the student declaring that the idea was nevertheless stupid, unworkable. The student rejects, abandons the idea, not infrequently accompanied by feelings reminiscent of shame. The events within these rejections take place at a furious pace; the imaginations of how the "outside" will judge their ideas manifest themselves in bursts rushing through the bodies; the power "snaps into place", as Kathleen Stewart expresses it in her book *Ordinary Affects* (2007, p. 15).

In ideation processes, especially in the early stage, it is necessary to have an open mind, which requires accepting uncertainty and enduring it both by the student and the teachers (Laamanen, 2016, p. 4). In the responses I had from the students they often avoid saying "yes" or "no" to their ideas initially. They try to adopt to more flexible ways of relating to them, for example by waiting – the circumstances might change, something may happen to their ideas, they might be made into something useful later, or function in settings they do not know of yet. The flexibility, however, does not last. It is as if the uncertainty in not deciding is unbearable to them, and the unbearable makes them gravitate

towards ending the ambivalence by rejecting, abandoning, sometimes even cursing the idea – by declaring that their idea was stupid all along. Witnessing these processes revealed the vulnerabilities involved in creative activities – the risk involved in pursuing ideas, the uncertainty of pursuing "wrong" ideas and the danger of being stupid in doing so.

To be a student is to be exposed to the institution, teachers, curricula, aims, goals and the "proper" ways of doing things. Some of the answers from the students indicated that what the teachers say and do can have devastating effects on the student's motivation:

> When the teachers said that I should direct my focus on another group of users, I did not feel that this fitted my original ideas in this project and I lost the motivation to continue with it. I concluded that it was better to postpone the idea for a future project. (Student D)

This student also concludes by postponing the idea. This implies that the student thinks the idea is good enough, but not for now. There are signs of refusal and defiance here, too, but they are more passive; the student is obeying the teachers but not quite, only postponing the project. Minute signs of disobedience followed by loss of motivation are also mentioned in the next student's story:

> When I have presented my idea to a few teachers often the question has been: 'But what are you going to make then?' This is not very motivating when my idea was to first observe the field and then find the problems to work with. I do not know if I have abandoned the idea but I may need a different approach. Perhaps it is better to work with smaller themes within the overall theme (Student E).

The loss of energy is apparent in these examples. Motivation is a fragile and unstable concept and pedagogical moments like this can affect us for the rest of our lives even if we are not consciously aware of it (Van Manen, 2015, p. 15). When the students are disturbed, interrupted or corrected, they report that they lose energy and abandon or downscale their ideas or projects, cutting off edges and removing what does not fit. In an educational setting, it is often uncertain what is being evaluated. Is it the ideas, the motives behind them, the results, or the subject that created them? The ambiguity of this is somewhat intimidating.

Lack of time is a recurring theme. In education, the demand for visible and understandable results is strong, and if students do not want to risk failure, they have to deliver within the time frames presented to them, as the story below illustrates:

> I have not rejected the idea, but I have not had time to proceed with it. This is an overall issue when I come up with ideas. As the school requires a specific process and approach, it becomes difficult to use an already existing idea or plan for a product, because I have to justify all choices and use the methods and tools presented in the course. (Student F)

Similarly, another student said:

> Rather an ongoing problem. I think too big. I often have big ideas with intricate and complex parts. I am one person, I have my limits, and several ideas cannot be prawn (sic) or justified in one single medium. (Student G)

An open and playful learning environment should "allow for adequate time to develop, revise, and iterate creative ideas" (Choi et al., 2019, p. 87). To some extent these examples show how limiting the demand for instant and instrumental justification can be in education; this makes it difficult to search and experiment openly. Once more we are faced with the tension between "accountability and transparency" and the need to allow for "open-endedness, playfulness and ambiguity" in art and design (Orr & Shreeve, 2017, p. 13). This context features a conflict between the ideals of play and exploration, which welcome the accidental, unforeseen and new, and the stultifying effects of time pressure and the

demands for results and immediate clarity on both students and teachers. In the next student's story, the reason for abandoning an idea is vaguer and perhaps more many-sided than those presented above:

> I have an idea that I have long dreamt of developing. This dream is to create a furniture collection inspired by my grandfather's drawings and furniture when he lived. What is stopping me is what others say about this and that it is a huge project that is difficult to accomplish. (Student H)

What happens if we continue to get everything set for a culture in design education that only rewards the justification for imagined outcomes and ignores and belittles what touches and motivates us? If the vivid dream of this student is subject to comparison, or forced into square containers, if the edges are cut off to make the idea more "feasible", the shape becomes more like something we already know, such as triangles, circles or squares. If we are forced to abandon what moves us, we will be in danger of constraining the complexity of thinking, feeling and making into manageable procedures and losing ownership of our questions. The singularity of making will fade away and it will be thought of as a kind of post-industrial manufacturing, detached from the all-too-human fumbling, feeling and hoping. In my experience, making involves a plethora of approaches and experiments. It is fuelled by imagination; it is an improvised (or planned, or both) dialogue conveyed through gestures, materials, objects, ideas and coincidences. Designers (teachers and students) are pushed to create the illusion of linearity and clarity despite the often frustrating, foggy character of the design process. Appreciating that which we do not know, "to accept the unknown" (Orr & Shreeve, 2017, p. 148), may be a prerequisite for searching or finding something valuable. Undue demands for instant justifications and solutions are an obstacle for students' ability to live with, flourish in, nurture, and enjoy their own creative processes.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS
Risk and failure
In this analysis, I have explored different notions of risk identified in the data and how they affected the students' managing or processing of ideas. The emerging themes were tensions and concerns regarding failure and uncertainty, demand for clarity, strategies for self-preservation, motivation, time pressure, vagueness and openness. A shift in the quality of thinking and acting means tolerating a certain amount of risk and willingness to let go of fear. I believe that the risks associated with creative processes are connected to more than enduring a phase; they are an unavoidable part of creativity, making and living (Scharmer & Senge, 2016, p. 174). The risk of failure is imminent throughout our lives; before ideas have shape, they are vague fragments that we are forced to adapt into something useful, productive, a result. Even long after an idea has been realized as a product or service, there are the severe risks of having done something wrong, inadequate, dangerous, insignificant, meaningless or immoral. It never ends. We are always in the middle of risk; it surrounds the process, permeates it, defines it, and embodies it. To perceive risk as merely part of a phase, and thereby a *temporary state*, is to miss the point. I suggest that a simplistic, one-dimensional understanding, and use of the concepts of risk and failure should be replaced with more nuanced and careful understandings and approaches that take the specific creation and ambiguities of design processes into consideration (Choi et al., 2019; Orr & Shreeve, 2017, p. 13). The care with which work is done, be it in the material-making processes or in how teachers and students make space for imagining new, never- before-seen work (that I worry often become aband-oned ideas), could make students, teachers and researchers reconsider and practise a more extended process of making. These are nonlinear processes in which ideas and imaginations emerge from the process of working with materials (Sawyer, 2018, p. 142).

Care and respect
Creating awareness about why students abandon and give up ideas is a way to show respect and understanding for the students' motives and underlying reasons for their creative ideation. To do this would mean including what students tend to give up while gently also showing them other aspects that should be counted in deciding further development. Such care and respect can be a way to give space

to that which does not fit and is neglected and often alien to the present educational climate. Curricula reflect, reproduce and produce the values and aims of those who influence and create them and not necessarily the values and aims for emerging knowledge (Orr & Shreeve, 2017, p. 42).

Limitations

This study's research question and methodology have several limitations that suggest opportunities for further research. It is crucial to keep the circumstances in which the students provided me with the data in mind: Even though it was not part of a graded assignment and participation was voluntary, the research project was nevertheless conducted within a context of a teacher-student relationship. Thus, it is fair to assume that the students did not fully elaborate on their frustrations with the teachers or the course and that there is some probability that they were inclined to formulate their answers within the established language of the educational setting. To avoid some ethical and methodological problems associated with the insider position and at-home ethnography, I have had frequent discussions with colleagues about the research data and listened to their thoughts about risk-taking in design education. However, this is a single study, and the validity of the research would be strengthened if I could repeat it with other participants in similar contexts. Doing several studies with different students would offer opportunities to explore possible variations in the students' experiences depending on the context and if they worked (alone or together with others) in the ideation phase of their design.

Further research

It is both important and necessary to recognize the "who" or the "what" behind our tendencies to abandon our ideas and other notions, sentiments and hopes. However, beyond being useful as an analytical concept in research, to care about the abandoned can have transforming effects if we dare to make use of it in our daily activities as teachers. To include care for abandoned ideas in learning and working processes can serve as a catalyst for exposing other neglected experiences and practices, revealing the attempts to control us and taking control ourselves. By caring for the abandoned in new and attentive ways, we can play an active role in strengthening the students' contact with, and ownership of their hopes and motivations, and thereby make a significant difference in the ongoing negotiations, re-negotiations and struggles about what good design education ought to be.

This article attempts to initiate such work primarily by thinking about design education's relationship to failure with the help of a set of problems and questions, experimenting with them in a given situation: a small selection of students in design education. The article indicates possible directions for investigating the topic more thoroughly, using a larger sample and a more developed conceptual apparatus.

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