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Developing design method as teaching tools: the dual role of design methods in practice and pedagogy

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ABSTRACT: This paper draws on Method Content Theory and the Method Teaching framework to analyze the User Testing Toolkit, in its dual role as a design and a teaching tool. The paper shows how the toolkit, by supporting the contextualization of user testing in a broader design context, not only support design activities, but also the critical reflection on design context and actions, necessary for development of appropriate design practices. As such, the paper sheds light on how design methods can be developed to support both effective design action and the development of appropriate design practices.

KEYWORDS: design methods, method development, design education, method teaching, design practice

1. Introduction

Novice designers learn to become designers by designing and acting as designers (Jones, 1992; Nelson & Stolterman, 2012). As such, design methods play a critical role in supporting and developing design practice. As *design tools*, methods serve as procedural aids to guide activities such as research, ideation, or evaluation, enabling designers to work more effectively and systematically (Cross, 2008; Hjartarson & Daalhuizen, 2021; Jagtap et al., 2014; Lavrsen, 2024; Lawson & Dorst, 2009). As *teaching tools*, methods are employed pedagogically to help novice or non-designers develop their own design capabilities, introducing them to fundamental processes, mindsets, and strategies that underpin expert design performance (Lavrsen et al., 2024).

Despite this dual role, design methods are often considered primarily as tools for facilitating design activities, with less attention given to their role in teaching people to act as designers. When developing new design methods, overlooking the role of design methods as teaching tools can limit the effectiveness of the methods. For example, design methods often fail to include practice and contextual knowledge crucial for their successful application (Daalhuizen & Cash, 2021; Wallace, 2011). This is especially problematic for novice or non-designers who lack the practice and conceptual agency to understand the affordance of a method in relation to the context of use (Jänsch et al., 2005; Lavrsen, 2024).

This paper presents the case of the *User Testing Toolkit*, a methodology developed specifically to introduce multidisciplinary students to user testing, as an example of how *Method Content* and manifestation can be structured to foster both practical application and learning outcomes.

Drawing on *Method Content Theory* (Daalhuizen & Cash, 2021) and the *Method Teaching* framework (Lavrsen et al., 2024), the analysis investigates how the toolkit communicates goals, procedures, and underlying rationales, while also embedding the knowledge, values, and perspectives necessary for novices to act as designers. Through this case, the paper contributes to a broader understanding of how design methods can be developed and evaluated not only as instruments for carrying out design activities, but also as vehicles for building design capabilities and practice. In doing so, it addresses the gap between methods as tools for design and methods as scaffolds for learning, offering insights into how design method can better support novice designers in bridging the divide between novice and expert practice.

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2. Theoretical background

Learning to become a designer is not only a matter of acquiring knowledge. Design practices is distinct professional dispositions, shaped through the immersion in the field's way of thinking, acting, and feeling (Andreasen, 2003; Jones, 1992; Shreeve, 2015; Shulman, 2005).

In learning to act and think like a designer, design methods can be seen as carriers of practice knowledge, encapsulating and externalizing design activities, values, and beliefs (Lavrsen, 2024). Design methods make often tacit design knowledge explicit, transferable, and open to improvements (Cross, 2008; Dorst, 2008; Jones, 1992; Wallace, 2011). In this sense, engaging with a design method is not merely to engage in a design activity; it is engaging with the community of practice.

2.1. Developing practice through method usage

As carriers of practice knowledge, design methods can to some extent stand in for embodied knowledge and design experience when designing (Lavrsen, 2024; Sweller, 2023). Design method allows novice designers or designers engaging with very complex or novel situations to structure their design activities and the design situation itself, thus reducing the uncertainty and making design tasks more manageable (Curry, 2014; Daalhuizen et al., 2014; Newstetter, 1998; Royalty, 2018). Method usage do so by highlighting some features of the design situation while ignoring others, thus helping the method user to structure the design situation and prioritize activities (Daalhuizen, 2014; Dalsgaard, 2017).

In the context of learning to become a designer, the use of design methods act as scaffolding for learning (Lavrsen et al., 2024). As presented in the *Method Teaching* framework presented in Lavrsen et al. (2024), design method support the learning process by guiding behaviors and action, supporting reflection-in- and on-action, frame the conception of design practice and structure the design context (Figure 1). The method becomes the baseline on which the novice designer assesses the design situation and they ability to navigate within it. In employing design methods, the novice designer is guided through unfamiliar or more advanced design activities, simulating design practices and providing concrete experience with the activities. Through cycles of concrete experiences, reflection, conceptualization and experimentation, practices that improve the designer's control over a situation can become part of their individual practice (Kolb, 2015; Lavrsen et al., 2024). In this process the method user engages in a negotiation of meaning with the design situation and the actors involved in it to build a conceptual understanding of how the method work and is to be used (see Bornasal et al., 2018; Greeno & Van De Sande, 2007). As such, method usage encourages particular ways of thinking about and approaching a design situation, ultimately informing how a designer approach design problems (Lavrsen, 2024).

With more experience with both design practices and situations, designers become able to adapt methods to the specific needs of the design situation (Cross, 2008; Jänsch et al., 2005; Lawson & Dorst, 2009; Wallace, 2011). In other words, the designer starts to act with conceptual agency, making judgments about appropriateness, utility, and relevance of methods (see Greeno & Van De Sande, 2007). Considering that performance of methods is dependent on the fit between the method, the design situation, and the needs of the method user (Badke-Schaub et al., 2011; Daalhuizen & Hjartarson, 2022; Gericke et al., 2016; Lavrsen, 2024; Mansoori et al., 2023; Newstetter, 1998), the ability to critically assess, choose, and adapt design methods is crucial for their successful application.

As practice starts to develop the method user become less reliant on methods to navigate the design space and guide activities and, consequently, method usage becomes less about following the method as prescribed (Daalhuizen, 2014). Ideally, as the practice knowledge encapsulated in methods is internalized by a method user, the methods should no longer be necessary for the designer to act appropriately and effectively in familiar design situations (Daalhuizen, 2014; Daalhuizen & Hjartarson, 2022). While method usage might still support the development of practice (e.g., in identifying and correcting inappropriate practice and contaminated mindware), at this stage the primary role of design methods shift from being a learning tool to become more a tool for planning and coordinating design activities (Daalhuizen & Hjartarson, 2022; Lavrsen, 2024).

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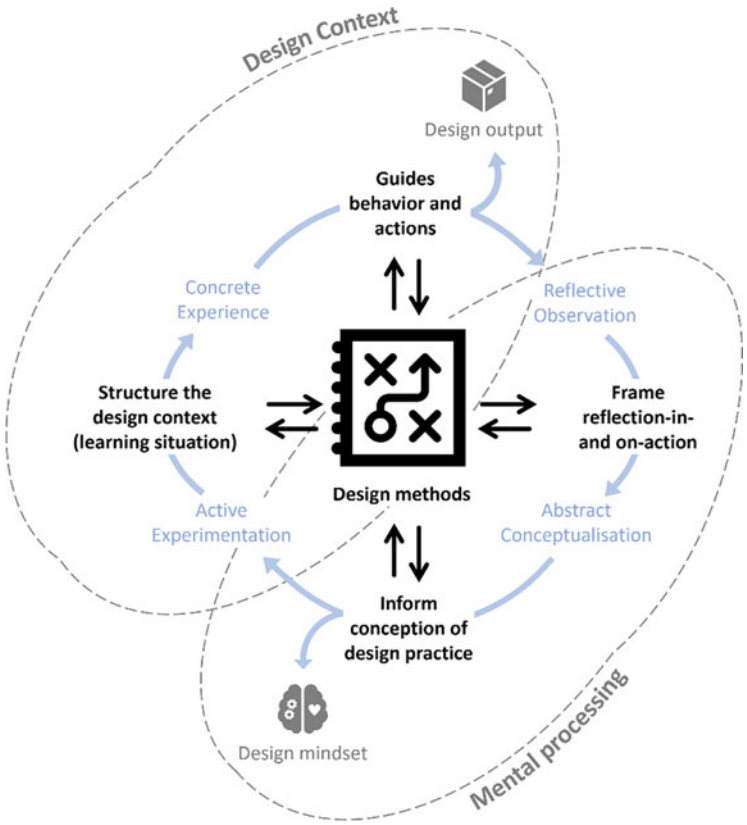


Figure 1. Method Teaching: How design methods inform the experiential learning process (Lavrsen et al., 2024)

2.2. Developing design methods

Design methods are design artifact themselves, which can be designed to improve a situation. In the case of design method as teaching tools, the aim is to improve the design capabilities of the method user. In other words, design methods act as the intervention through which the design outcome is to be realized. Generally, the development of design methods is informed either by a practice-driven bottom-up approach, a theory-driven top-down approach, or a combination of both, where design knowledge is translated into a formalized description of how to achieve specific design goals (Lavrsen, 2024; Lavrsen et al., 2022).

2.2.1. Design methods

According to Daalhuizen & Cash's (2021) *Method Content Theory*, design methods should contain information about *Method Goal, Method Procedure, Method Framing, Method Rationale, and Method Mindset*. The *Method Goal* should specify the intended outcomes of the method and clarifies the design objectives it supports. *Method procedure* should describe the structured set of activities intended to achieve this goal. The *Method Framing* should situate the method by outlining when and under which conditions it is applicable, including contextual requirements and how it relates to the surrounding design process. The *Method Rationale* is the justification of the method, the proposed activities, and the relevance of the Method Goal. Together, the *Method Framing* and the *Method Rational* allow the method user to assess the method in relation to the design situation and navigate uncertainty or conflicting information. The *Method Mindset* should cover the perspectives, values, and knowledge that a user must bring to apply the method successfully. Collectively, the method content should provide the necessary information for the effective use of a method (Jagtap et al., 2014), organizing knowledge about variables, relationships, and appropriate actions within a domain (Daalhuizen & Cash, 2021).

Ultimately, the information contained in the method and the specific manifestation of the method—how the information is packaged—determines what design activities the method affords (Gray, 2022; Green & Blackwell, 1998), and how it preform as a teaching tool (Lavrsen, 2024).

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3. Method

This study adopts an interpretive qualitative approach to illustrate how the lens of design methods as teaching tools can inform and improve method development. The selected case is the *User Testing Toolkit* (https://designfactory.aalto.fi/toolkits/), a set of methods, guides, and templates for user testing, and accompanying pedagogical tools for teaching it to novice and non-designers within multidisciplinary design education. The toolkit and its methods function as exemplars of design methods, illustrating how methods as information artefacts can support both the execution of design activities and the cultivation of design practice.

The analysis proceeds in two steps. First, we examine the physical manifestation of the toolkit in relation to its *Method Content* (Daalhuizen & Cash, 2021), considering how its structure and visual presentation influence its use in practice. Second, we interpret its function as a teaching tool through the lens of *Method Teaching* (Lavrsen et al., 2024), connecting it to the broader discussions on the development of design competence in educational settings. Furthermore, as one of the authors participated in the development and testing of the toolkit, the analysis also draws on insights from participant observations and student feedback collected during the development process.

4. Developing the toolkit

The *User Testing Toolkit* was developed by Aalto Design Factory, in collaboration with the design factories at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Cali, and iCubo, Universidad del Desarrollo (Figueiredo, Eriksson, et al., 2025). The toolkit was developed to support inexperienced or non-designers to integrate user-testing in the early stages of the design process, translating expert user testing practices into structured, learnable activities (Figueiredo, Kirjavainen, et al., 2025). Inexperienced designers tend to jump ahead to problem solving without first questioning a design brief or exploring the design space (Cross, 1990, 2004; Lawson & Dorst, 2009). Going into solution-mode with a superficial understanding of the design space runs the risk of overlooking essential aspects and opportunities, reducing the quality and creative potential of the possible solutions (Ball & Christensen, 2018; Dorst & Cross, 2001; Nielsen et al., 2025). Consequently, learning how to integrate design activities such as user testing is crucial in the development of design expertise. To this end, the *User Testing Toolkit* aims to support integration of user-testing throughout design processes (Figueiredo, Eriksson, et al., 2025).

The development of the *User Testing Toolkit* followed an iterative, practice-driven process grounded in design education. From the beginning, the toolkit aimed to balance procedural clarity with pedagogical support, providing enough structure to guide action while leaving room for reflection and adaptation. In project-based learning situations like design projects such scaffolding is crucial to help students to make sense of and navigate the situation (Curry, 2014; Lavrsen et al., 2024; Royalty, 2018). In helping to stage user testing and providing structure to the activities, the toolkit also aims to support educators in teaching user testing (Figueiredo, Kirjavainen, et al., 2025).

Throughout the development process, educators from the three partner institutions exchanged feedback in educator-to-educator sessions, reviewing the toolkit's clarity, pedagogical framing, and contextual adaptability. Since the work was distributed across Finland, Colombia, and Chile, special attention was given to ensuring that the toolkit could be adapted to different types of students across cultures and varying educational settings. In the initial phase, the toolkit was tested with a small group of multidisciplinary students in Finland, and in later stages it was piloted with student teams across all partner institutions. In these sessions, the toolkit was also used by educators who were not involved in its development, allowing for independent perspectives on its usability and learning impact.

To collect insights systematically, a digital reflection survey was developed to capture feedback from both educators and students using the toolkit. The testing sessions varied in duration and structure depending on the local curricula and learning environments, which limited direct comparison but offered valuable insight into the toolkit's adaptability and robustness across contexts. The development concluded with a collaborative workshop where educators and experts tested the toolkit collectively, both as a means of dissemination and as a final opportunity for refinement. In parallel, the toolkit's applicability beyond education was explored in Finland through a reflective exercise with a medical startup, which used the toolkit to analyze its user testing process for a new medical product. This example was later integrated into the learning material as an industry case.

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5. The toolkit as scaffolding

Consisting of a series of methods, placed in relationship to subsequent activities, and guidance on how to manage the process, the *User Testing Toolkit* can be seen as a methodology for conducting user testing (see Gericke et al., 2020). The *User Testing Toolkit* structures user-testing into three phases: Pre-Testing, During Testing, and After Testing, each with its own methods, visual templates, and guidance on conducting user-testing. These phases mirror the typical flow of a user-testing process and help students situate their learning within realistic design activities.

5.1. Pre-testing

The overall aim of the Pre-Testing phase is to plan the user test (Figueiredo, Kirjavainen, et al., 2025). It includes three methods: one for identifying and defining the purpose for testing, one for selecting the right users to test with, and one for choosing a testing method and plan the testing.

The first two methods help the students to reflect on the design space and its important aspects, supporting their understanding of what to test and why. The first method and the accompanying template (A.1) provides guidance and a framework for considering the questions to be answered by testing. The framework suggests three focus areas (Look, Feel, Usability) to structure the exploration.

The second method and template (A.2) provide a matrix constructed around impact and accessibility, splitting users into four types: Priority users, Strategic users, Quick wins, Limited value users. In doing so, it forces the method users to consider different characteristics of potential users to test with.

The latter of the three methods is less of a traditional design method and more of an aid. While not directly supporting the achievement of the design goal, as a teaching tool it plays a crucial role in tying the methodology together, translating the insights generated using the other two methods into appropriate method selection, thus, supporting the development of good design practices. The first of the two templates (A.3) provides an overview of nine user testing methods, what they do, and when and why to use the different methods. The second template (A.4-A.5) provides guidance on planning the user testing. In doing so, it prompts the user to reflect on the chosen method, its concreate implementation and, thus, its relationship to the context of use.

5.2. During testing

During the During Testing-phase the *User Testing Toolkit* functions primarily as a methodology and not a method. The toolkit does not provide any specific methods for the user-testing, instead referring to already established methods like A/B-testing, Card Sorting, or Guerilla Testing.

The function of the toolkit in this phase, is primarily to help make sense of methods and the context and stage the method usage. Rather than providing specific methods or procedures, the toolkit provides general guidance regarding the preparation for testing, observation and engagement during the testing, and how to conclude the session (template B.1-B.3).

Building on the Pre-Testing phase, the additional activities and information ensure the staging and implementation can be a success. The surrounding activities and guidance provided, first through methodologically setting user testing up in the Pre-Testing phase and secondly by providing general guidance for the During Testing-phase, help contextualize the method usage. As such, the toolkit ensures some framing, rational, and even goals setting. In other words, the *User Testing Toolkit* provides crucial practice knowledge that might be absent from the *Method Content* (see Jänsch et al., 2005; Wallace, 2011). Furthermore, by helping to stage and contextualize the method usage the *User Testing Toolkit* help prime the method user before the actual user testing, thus, priming the method user to apply user testing methods using an appropriate *Method Mindset* (see Daalhuizen & Cash, 2021).

5.3. After testing

The After Testing phase focuses on making sense of the findings, identifying patterns and translating it into usable insights (Figueiredo, Kirjavainen, et al., 2025), and includes three methods: one for mapping and identifying themes and patterns (C.1), one for translating these into opportunities and next steps (C.2), and one for prioritizing implementation of the insights (C.3-C.4). Like the Pre-Testing phase, these methods provide additional context to the user testing, aiming at ensuring that output from the method usage is utilized appropriately in the further design process. Again, these methods provide practice knowledge on how to act on the user testing findings, that often is not included in the *Method Content* of

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the user testing method themselves. As such, the *User Testing Toolkit* help place user testing in the broader context of the design process.

5.4. Method manifestation

Generally, the methods are manifested as visual templets for generating information artifacts with a short text describing the *Method Procedure* and *Method Goal* (https://designfactory.aalto.fi/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Templates_User-Testing-Toolkit.pdf). The visual templates were intentionally kept simple to reduce cognitive load. On their own, these templets contain minimal information regarding the *Method Rational*, the *Method Framing*, or the *Method Mindset* needed for effective staging and implementation of the methods. This is not uncommon for design methods and presents a particular challenge for novice designers who have not yet developed the necessary experience and skills to assess the appropriateness of a method or identify the need for adjustments in the staging and use of it (Daalhuizen & Cash, 2021; Jänsch et al., 2005; Mansoori et al., 2023).

However, while the templates themself lack information on *Method Rational*, *Method Framing*, and *Method Mindset*, the *User Testing Toolkit* includes this information in the accompanying handbook, describing each stage of the user-testing process and the purpose of each method (see Figueiredo, Eriksson, et al., 2025). Splitting up the sources of information ensure the flexibility of the toolkit, allowing it to be used by more experienced users without the distraction of too much information. On the other hand, novice users still have access to the information, aiding in appropriate method selection, staging, and usage; even though having to consult the handbook might come at the cost of split-attention and increased cognitive effort (see Sweller, 2023).

Furthermore, as discussed above, the activities and reflections prompted by the toolkit help ensure that crucial information for the successful application of user testing methods are available throughout the testing process.

6. Teaching through the user testing toolkit

As discussed above, the toolkit supports user testing and method usage by ensuring the necessary information for appropriate decisions and practice is available even if not provided by the chosen user testing method itself. The toolkit provides a structured entry point into user testing, helping the students to plan, conduct, and interpret user testing in accordance with good design practice. In doing so, the toolkit scaffolds design activities associated with user testing, lowering the threshold for a successful user testing and positive experience with the chosen method. Positive experiences is crucial for whether or not methods might be used in the future (Daalhuizen et al., 2014; Lavrsen et al., 2022).

As educational scaffolding, the *User Testing Toolkit* allow the students gain practical experience with method usage. Method usage itself provide opportunities for learning, prompting both concreate experiences and reflections in accordance with good design practice (Lavrsen et al., 2024). In prompting activities and reflection going beyond the mere implementation of a user testing method, the *User Testing Toolkit* ensure that the learning opportunities extent into the important practices that surround method usage, e.g., method selection and utilizing method output. The *Method Content* act as a baseline for reflection on and making sense of a design situation (Hjartarson & Daalhuizen, 2021; Lavrsen et al., 2024). As such, the toolkit lay the foundation for experienced-based learning (Kolb, 2015; Lavrsen et al., 2024).

However, the *User Testing Toolkit* goes beyond scaffolding the core design activities themself; it also provides dedicated teaching material to teach user testing. The toolkit includes real world use cases, showing how the toolkit has been used in the industry. These cases provide information related to *Method Rational*, *Method Framing*, and *Method Goal* for the toolkit as a whole, helping the students understand how to implement user testing appropriately. Furthermore, the toolkit includes fictive company briefs, user profiles, and products that can be tested in educational settings (Figueiredo, Kirjavainen, et al., 2025). This allows the students to gradually build their competence in a low consequence setting outside bigger design projects. These fictive cases also allow the students to step into the role of the user, roleplaying, getting first-hand-experience on how user testing feels for the participants, thus fostering empathy and broadening the students understanding of the user testing context. This aligns with broader research on design capability building, which highlights the role of structured tools in developing reflective and autonomous designers (Dorst, 2019). By embedding reflection and contextual understanding within its structure, the toolkit illustrates how design methods can function simultaneously

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as instruments for practice and vehicles for learning, bridging the gap between design execution and the cultivation of design expertise.

Furthermore, the *User Testing Toolkit* also functions as a scaffold for educators. It offers a pedagogical framework for introducing user testing into varying educational settings, and to students of varying background and experience. By making user testing teachable as a discrete and structured activity, the toolkit enables educators to introduce user testing practices even when courses lack full-scale design projects or access to real users. This lowers the practical and cognitive barriers to teaching user testing, while ensuring that learning still reflects the complexity and ambiguity inherent in real design work. In this way, the toolkit supports not only student learning but also the professional development of teaching staff, strengthening their instructional competence in design-based learning.

7. Discussion

The *User Testing Toolkit* was developed at Aalto Design Factory to help students and early-stage product development teams integrate user testing earlier in the product development process, positioning it as both a design tool and a teaching tool. Structured around three main phases: pre-testing, during testing, and after testing (Figueiredo, Eriksson, et al., 2025), the toolkit makes expert user testing practice into accessible and learnable activities. It offers step-by-step templates for defining testing goals, selecting participants, planning sessions, observing users, and analyzing results, while also prompting reflective design practices using visual templates. Complementary materials, including fictional company briefs, user profiles, and role-play cards, enable simulated testing when no real project is available, allowing learners to practice in a low-risk environment before applying the methods in the real world (Figueiredo, Kirjavainen, et al., 2025). Through this combination of procedural guidance and experiential learning, the toolkit transforms abstract method knowledge into situated, hands-on activity.

The analysis of the *User Testing Toolkit* provides insights into both how teaching design practices through method usage might require scaffolding beyond the methods content itself, and how focusing on this scaffolding in the development of design methods can help inform better method development.

7.1. Method teaching and design education

As an exemplar of a design method(ology) developed for teaching, the *User Testing Toolkit* provides insights into how method usage might be scaffolded. Firstly, it places user testing in a broader context, ensuring that the necessary information for appropriate method selection and usage is made available. Secondly, it contextualizes the output of the method usage, ensuring that the results of the user testing can be integrated into the further design process. The role of the toolkit in providing the necessary understanding of the design context to efficiently apply a method becomes especially evident when considering the lack of inclusion of methods for the actual user-testing. In practice, the methods and templates of the toolkit are all in service of user testing methods not included in the toolkit itself. The toolkit steps in and ensure the information often missing in design methods about context, staging, and appropriate mindset is made available. In doing so, it helps the inexperienced designers to reflect on the context of use, the questions they need answered, the method to be used, and how to utilize the output, teaching them not only about methods but how to assess their affordance for different design situations, and how to implement them appropriately. On the method-level, this suggests how important it is for individual methods to contain information about the needed input, e.g., knowing what to test and who to test with, and how the output of the method can be used. The *User Testing Toolkit* solves this challenge by embedding user testing methods into a methodology of methods designed to provide context for the user testing itself.

Framing the *User Testing Toolkit* as a teaching tool in its development allowed the method developers to go beyond the methods as mere procedures to be followed and integrate them into a larger eco-system of methods and guides that help set the stage and frame the activity of user testing. Consequently, what could otherwise have been disconnected activities becomes structured into a methodology for conducting user-testing, which supports the students in getting into the right mindset and develop an understanding of relationships between *Method Goals, Procedures, Rational*, and *Framing* of each method in relation to the overall process of user testing. As such, the analysis of the *User Testing Toolkit* point towards the important role methodologies can have in supporting use of individual methods.

By building small clusters of methodology around the design activity, method scaffolding like the *User Testing Toolkit* could be developed to support design education and appropriate method usage for other

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categories of design methods and core design activities like idea generation, concept development, or prototyping. Tying methods and toolkits together across activities by specifying they relationships, a broader design methodology supporting both the teaching and the conduction of the whole design process could be developed.

7.2. Method development and testing

By highlighting the role of design methods as a teaching tool, the paper also highlights the need for considering this aspect of method usage when developing and evaluating new design methods. By framing method as teaching tools, rather than just design tools, it becomes evident that methods need to contain more information that just *Method Procedures* and *Goals*. While experienced designers might have the necessary practice knowledge to appropriately and effectively use a design method the lack of information is likely to impede usage among less experienced users or usage in unfamiliar contexts (Daalhuizen & Cash, 2021; Jagtap et al., 2014; Jänsch et al., 2005; Wallace, 2011). Considering that strict formal method usage often is abandoned as expertise increases (Curry, 2014; Hjartarson & Daalhuizen, 2021; Lavrsen et al., 2022; Lawson & Dorst, 2009), it is likely the method users most in need of the support of a method that will be incapable of making sense of it, implement it appropriately, and effectively.

Furthermore, as teaching tools, design methods also need to be assessed on more than their ability to generate quality outputs. Assessment of method quality need to consider design methods ability to support designers in appropriate design practice. While a method might help achieve a satisfying design output, it might at the same time promote inappropriate behaviors or cognitive processes, contaminating the users' "mindware" (Daalhuizen & Hjartarson, 2022; Lavrsen, 2024). By their very nature, design methods as design tools aim at cognitive efficiency (Lavrsen, 2024; Lavrsen et al., in press). However, as teaching tools, they also should prompt critical reflection regarding the use of the specific methods and the broader design context (Lavrsen, 2024). While the prompting of systematic reflection promotes learning (Kolb, 2015), it might come at the cost of cognitive efficiency and the quality of the design output itself (Lavrsen, 2024). Designed only for output or even cognitive efficiency, design methods can potentially end up lacking the *Method Content* that makes them useful for anyone else than the people who already possess the necessary experience to handle the design situation. The *User Testing Toolkit* try to navigate this through its modular design. By keeping the templates simple, more experienced designer or people familiar with the methods avoid having to spend cognitive resources on reading through all the information, while less experienced users can find additional support in the handbook, and even the teaching material.

Taken together, the analysis of the *User Testing Toolkit* shows how method development can purposefully combine design and pedagogical considerations. Rather than focus narrowly on the design output the toolkit shows how crucial *Method Content* can be made available through embedding user testing method into a broader user testing methodology. This suggests a broader opportunity for method development: to design methods and toolkits that not only facilitate competent design actions but also foster the reflective capabilities that underpin professional growth. By showing how procedural templates, contextual framing, and reflective prompts can be combined to support both method usage and the development of design practice, the case advances a view of method design as a means of cultivating design capability—not just supporting design execution.

8. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the *User Testing Toolkit* through the lens of *Method Content Theory* (Daalhuizen & Cash, 2021) and the *Method Teaching* framework (Lavrsen et al., 2024). The analysis showcases how framing design methods as teaching tools provides a powerful lens for developing methods that support not only executing design actions but also the development of design practices for appropriate method selection, staging, and usage. By placing user testing within a broader methodological context and making available information often lacking from *Method Content*, the toolkit exemplifies how teaching-oriented methods can close the gaps between knowing about design methods and knowing how to use them effectively. This underscores the broader relevance of integrating pedagogical scaffolding into method development to advance both effective design action and the cultivation of design capabilities and practices.

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