

My A-Z

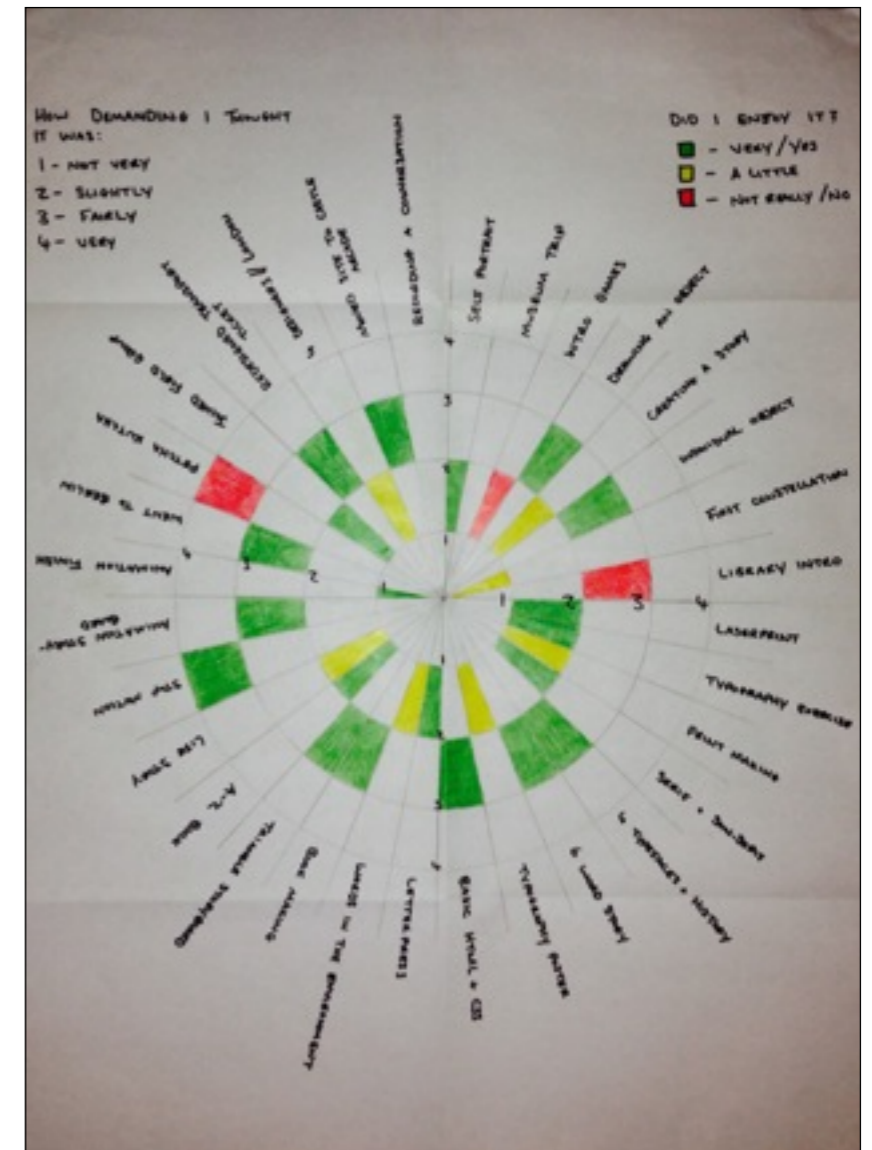
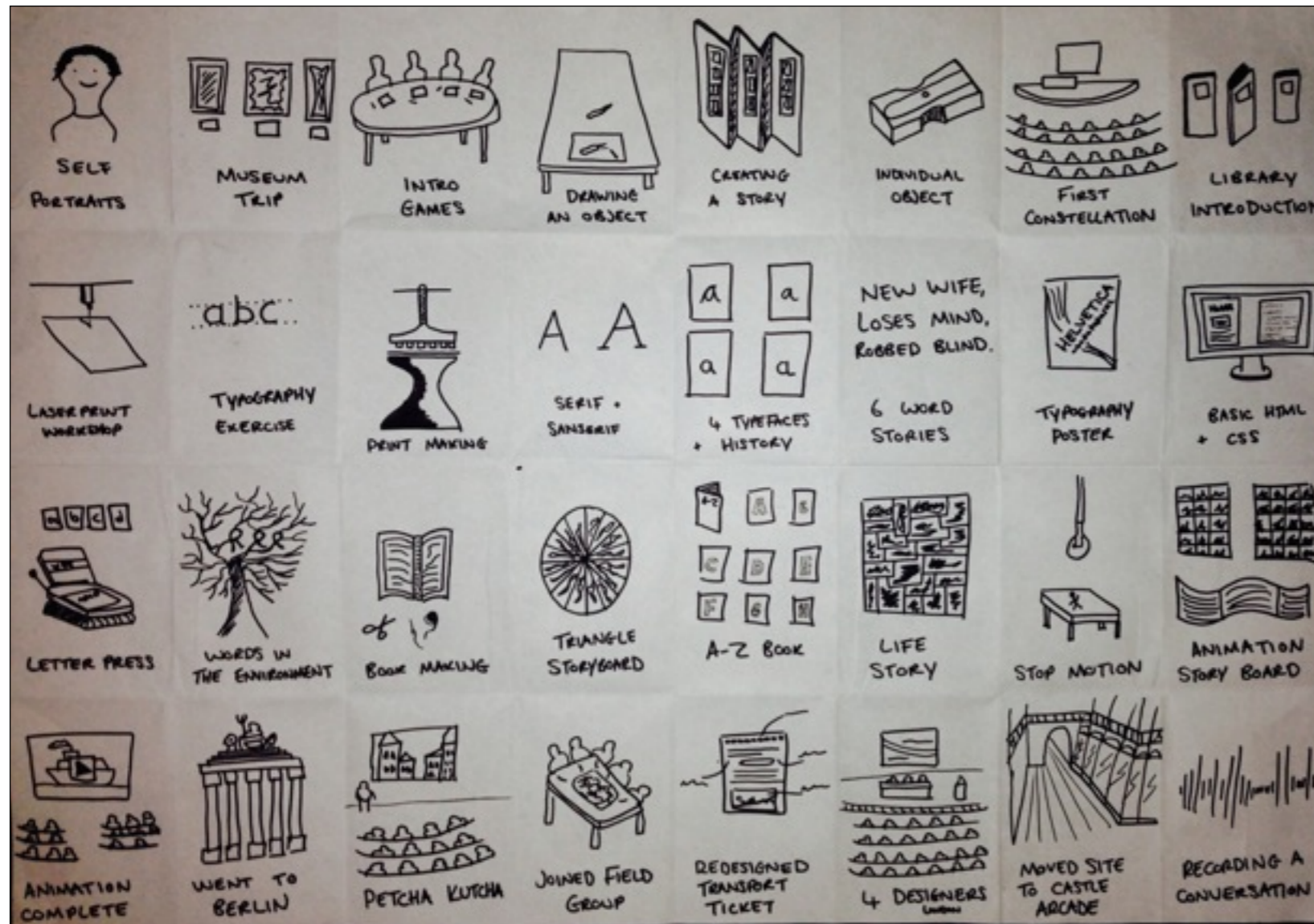
Research & Development

Ben Walton

Brief

You are asked to create an A-Z of your year to date, a retrospective of the processes, terminologies and graphic communication skills and hard learned lessons that you have learned this year. The final outcome may be in any format, as long as it is a personal, content rich demonstration of what you've learnt.

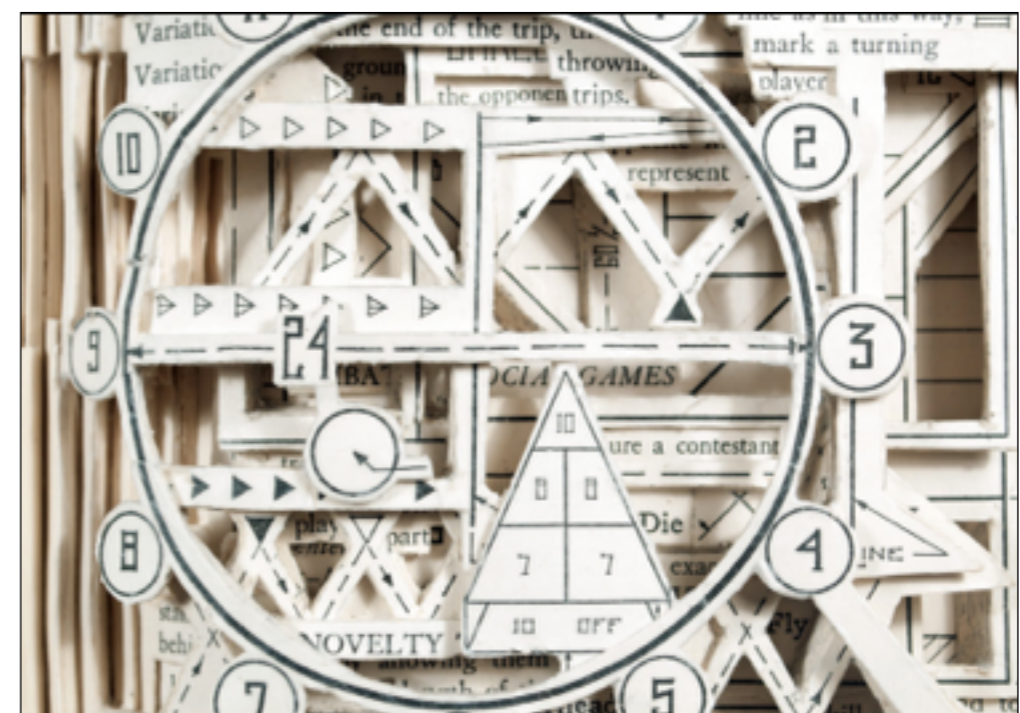
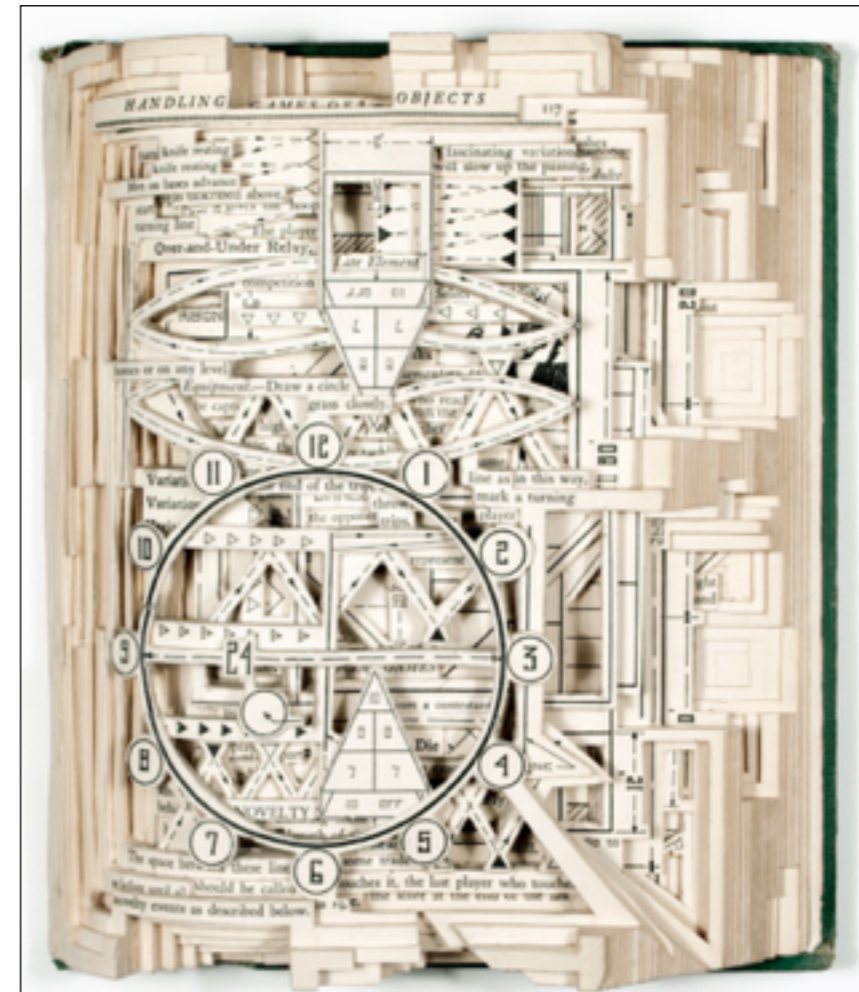
The A-Z brief is for me to reflect on my first year at Cardiff Met doing BAGC and the audience is for the upcoming first years. For the A-Z Brief I would like to create a pocket sized book to reflect on my experiences and give personal tips on how I got through the year. I would like to reflect on any external factors which may have influenced my work or my method of work. We have been given a few weeks to do this with reviews almost every week to give us support and advice on our progress.

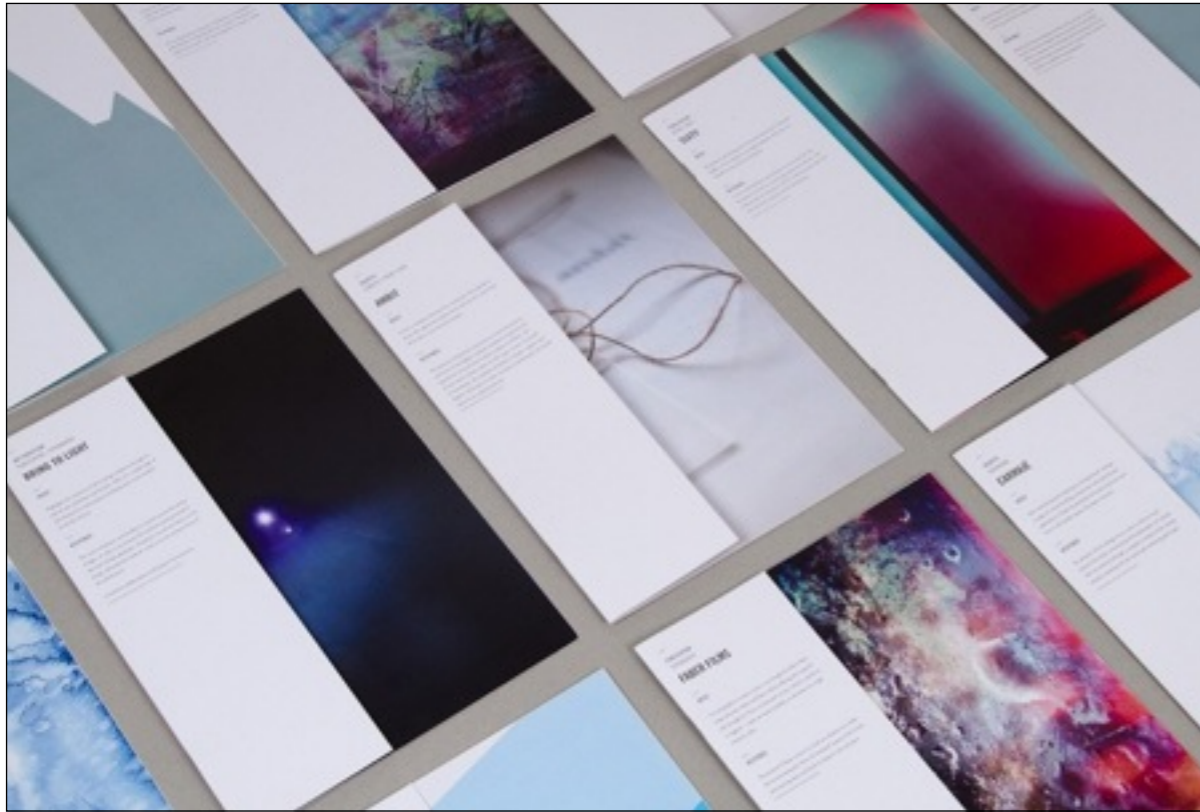


To begin this term we were asked to reflect on what we had done over the past year and record it in some way. My first move was to go through my blog as I have kept it updated as I have gone along, this enabled me to be more accurate as to what I did and in what order. I was also able to read my notes to each section and remember more detail. I then moved on to drawing out what I had done through simple drawings which mimicked what I have done, this is the image on the left. I chose to do 32 images as it allowed me to draw them at A7 which fitted perfectly on the page. I did not add any information to the images apart from what they reflected, there are no personal comments which I felt were needed. I moved on to creating an info graph after looking at info-graphic inspiration over the half term. I decided to create a circular diagram which has similarities to a dart board. I start my experiences at 12 and work clockwise, each section resembles a specific experience to which there is a colour to reflect how much I enjoyed it and the colour is placed within a ladder to express how difficult i found it.

Looking at the work Brian Dettmer. 'Active Games and Contests' 2012.

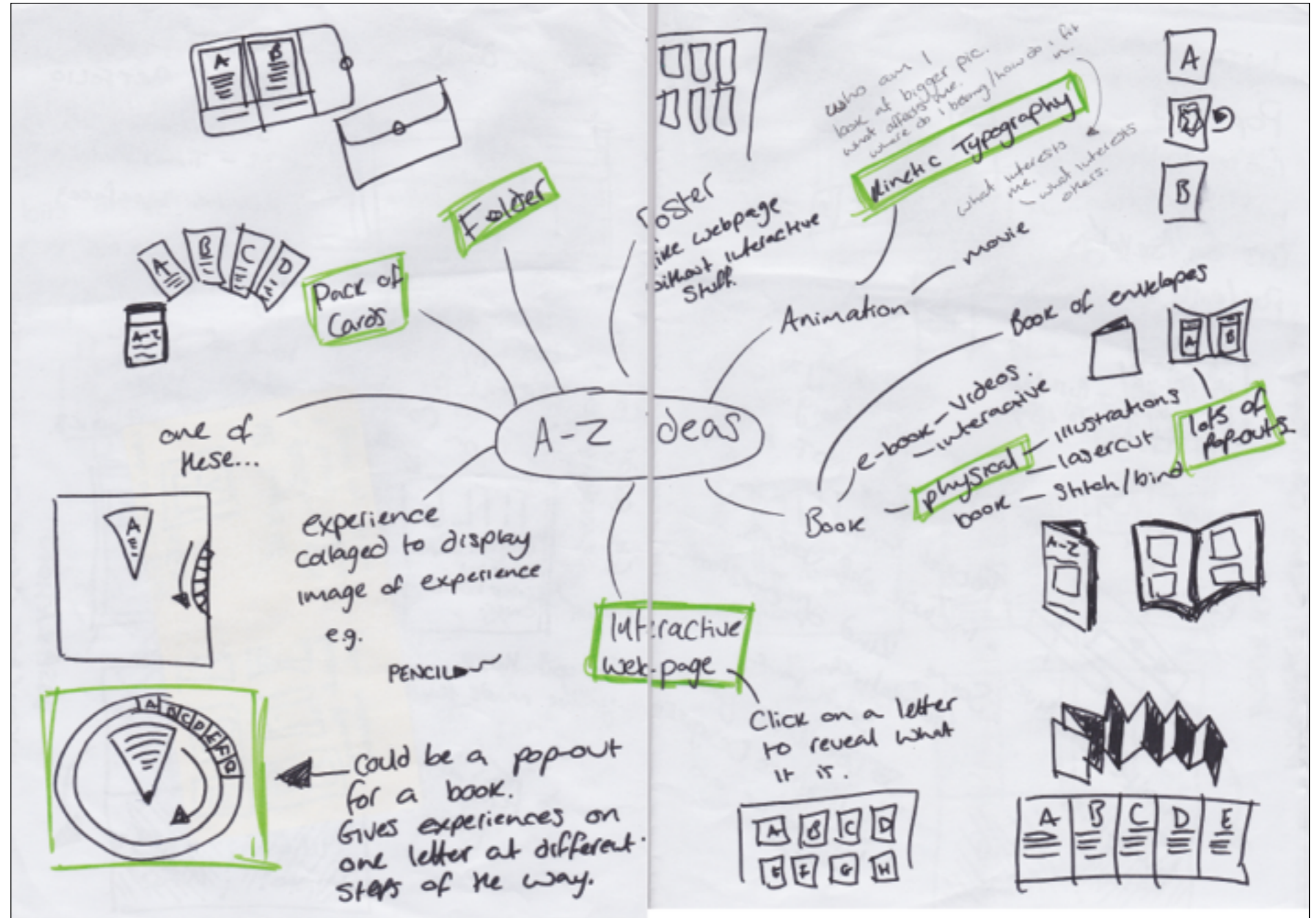
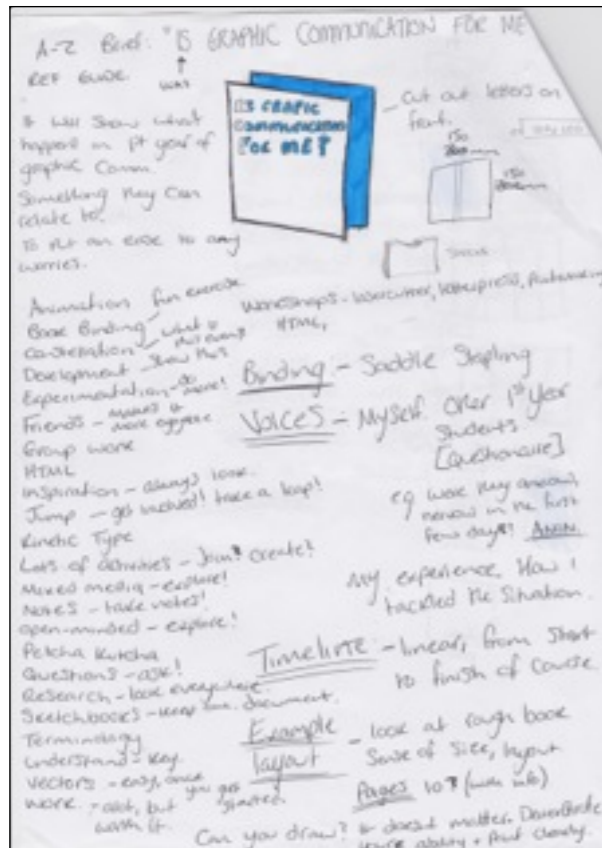
After doing some research on artists who use the every day books to present their work I came across Brian Dettmer. Dettmer completed his BA in fine arts in Chicago in 1997, and has since then moved into positions related to graphic design. He now works in various places as a studio artist. I have chosen his piece 'Active Games and Contests' as it really grasped my attention. I was fascinated at the way Dettmer layers his work in such an unorganised way. His work is similar through many of his pieces however this caught my eye due to its title. The thought of games and contests has a connotation of youth and excitement - however his work appears complicated and very complex. Upon further inspection I am able to see different connections to numbers and geometric shapes. Beyond what his work actually represents, It has inspired me to look at more creative ways to present information. I would like to look at more of Brian Dettmers work and hopefully get to see one of his exhibitions soon.





I also used sites such as Pinterest to explore different ways to present a book. I found many examples but I really enjoyed these ones. I would like to experiment with some type of sleeve for my book as it keeps the book closed until the reader engages with it.





Here are some ideas that I have for my A-Z project. I looked at the format, size and content. I had a selection of ideas which I enjoyed such as the wheel chart which reflect my experiences through a section at a time, I was also really interested in creating some type of folder which would hold the information together which could be unravelled to reveal my experiences. However, after my first feedback session I have decided to continue with the idea of a book that fits in the palm of my hand. I would like to saddle stitch the book which will be made from card to keep it smart and stop it from creasing.

Mixed Media

noun [S] (workshop)

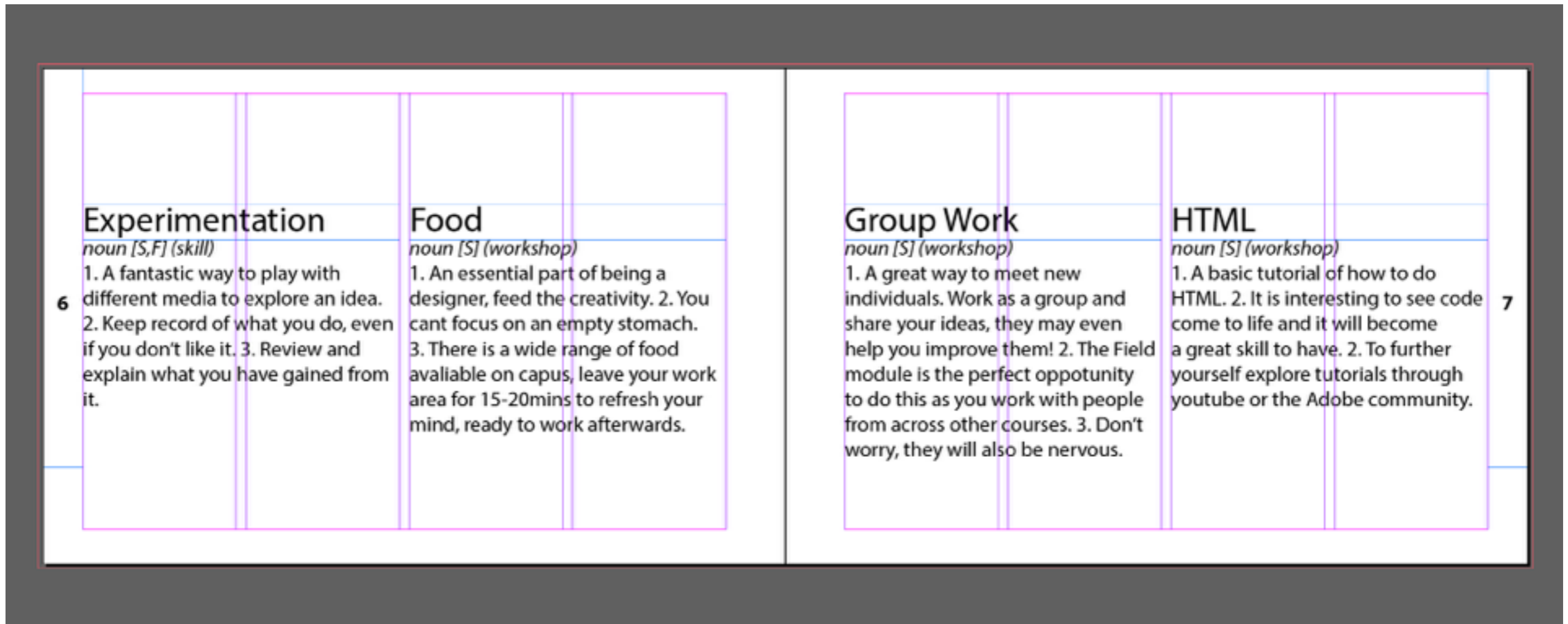
During my first year I explored a very basic scope of the mixed media available to me. I used digital and drawing methods to create my projects. I would like to explore the use of fabric, glass and even plastic for future projects to see how they influence their meaning. Now you have the chance to do just that! Explore your interests and see where it takes you.

Notes

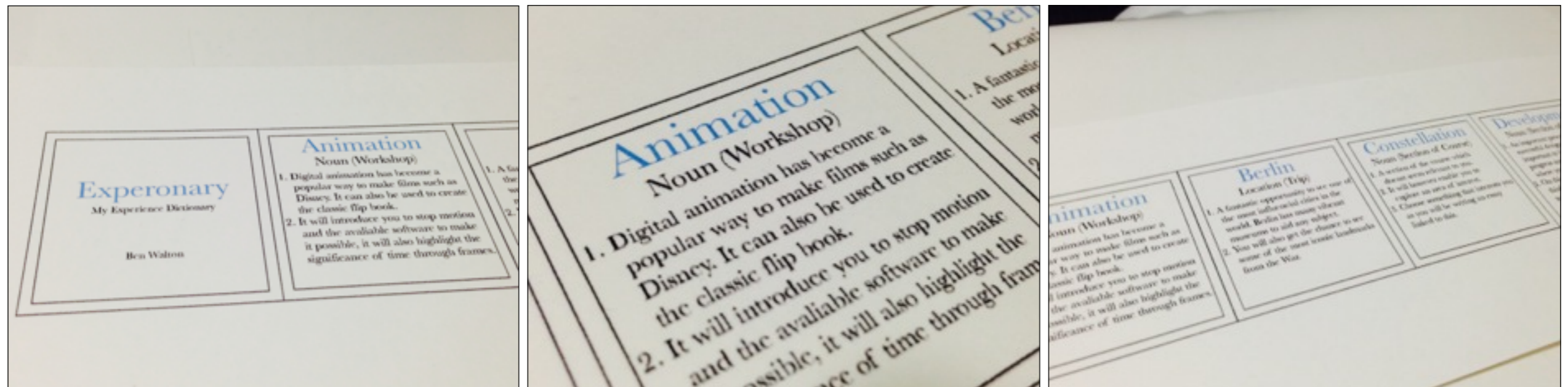
noun [S] (workshop)

Keeping notes of lectures, briefs and any ideas you have is very helpful at a later time. Especially if you find the lecture not to your taste. Draw upon your feelings and ideas at the time of the lecture and how it has influenced you. After each constellation lecture I would advise you review what you have learnt or taken away from it as you will need to review your experiences later on!

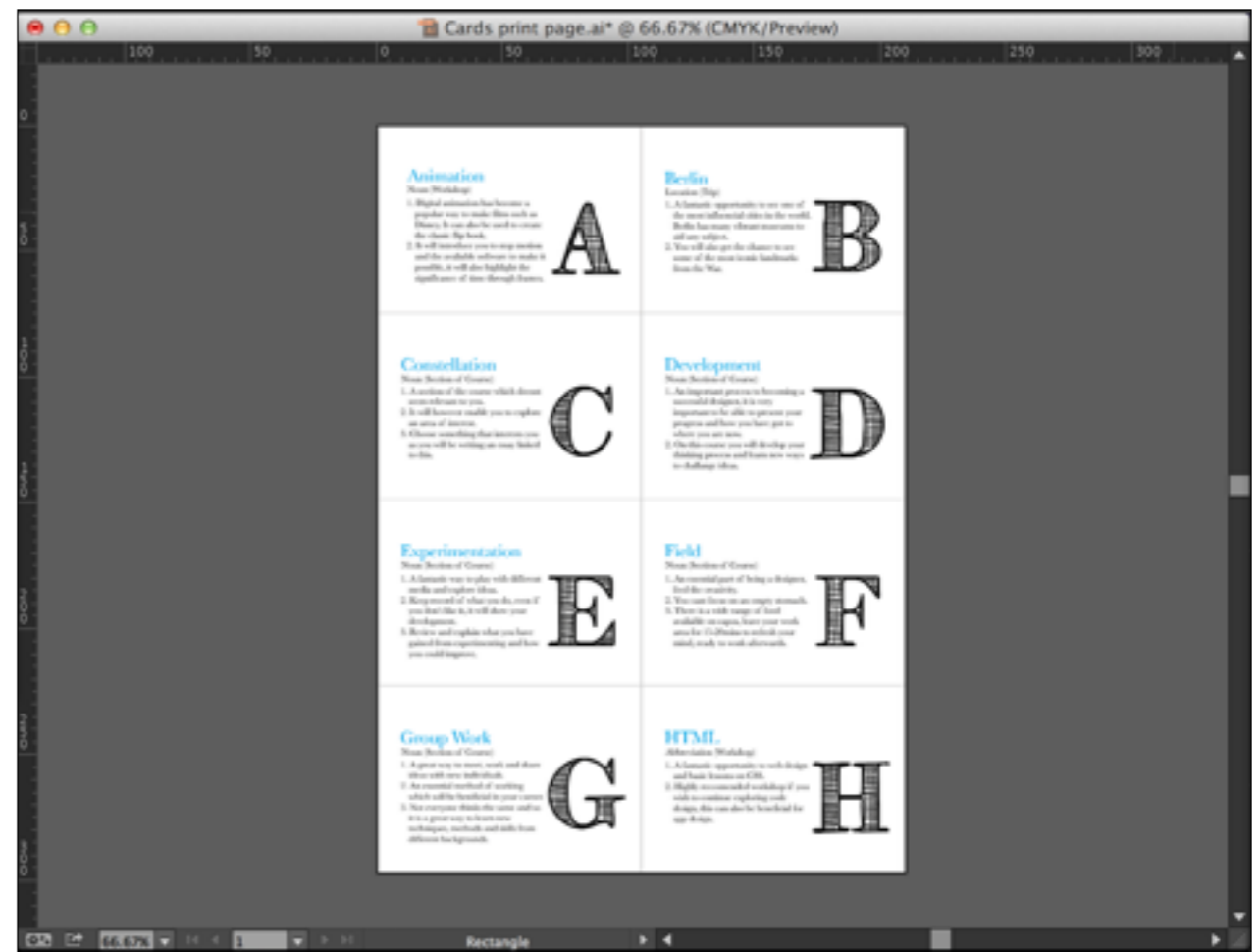
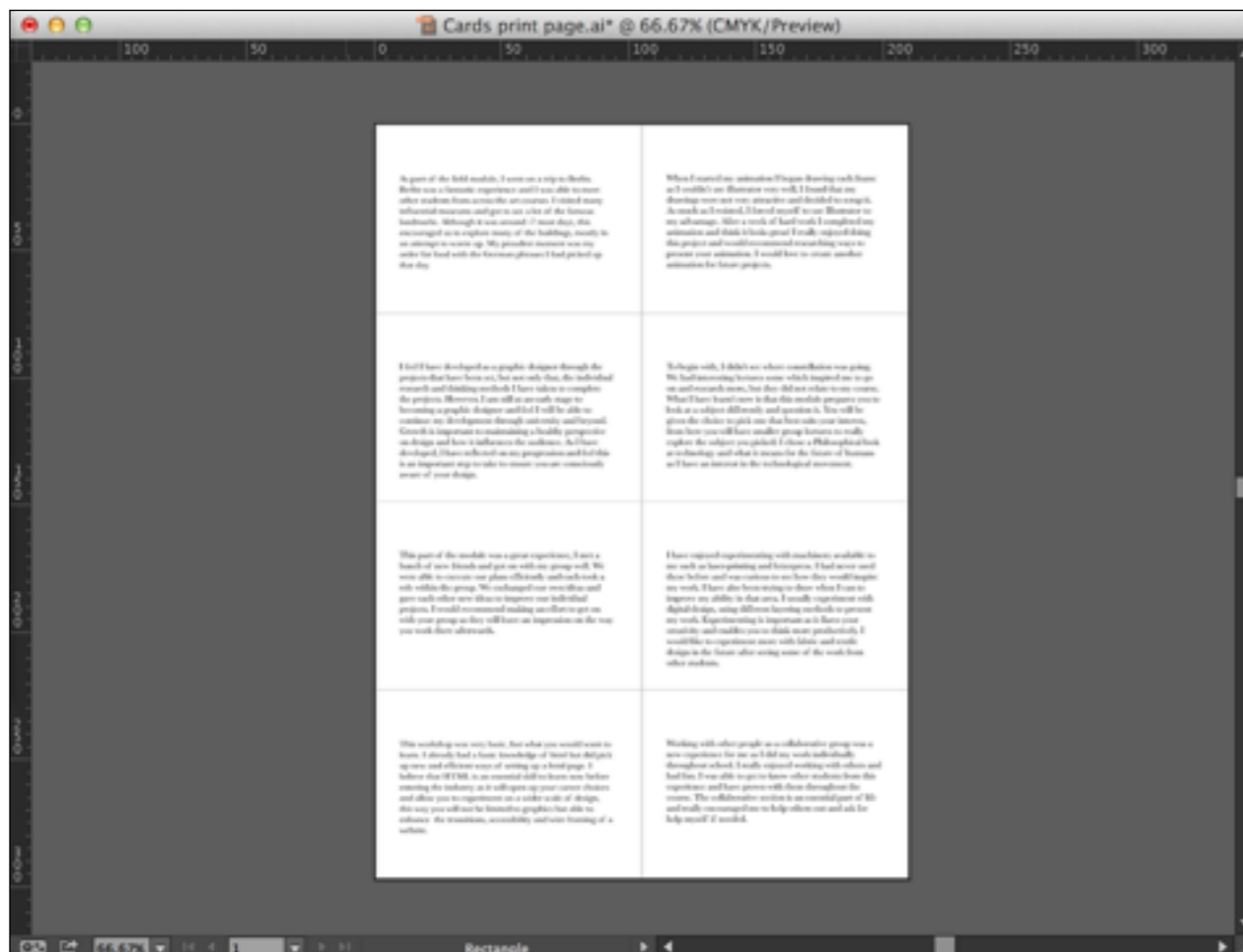
Here is one of the page layouts, I have chosen a 100mmx100mm dimension for a square book suitable to fit into a single hand comfortably. I added 2 margins to experiment with the layout early on in the design but have decided to centre the information to keep it clean and easy to read. I feel the audience would have a clearer understanding of what letter they were on if it was displayed somewhere on the page, I will experiment with this later.



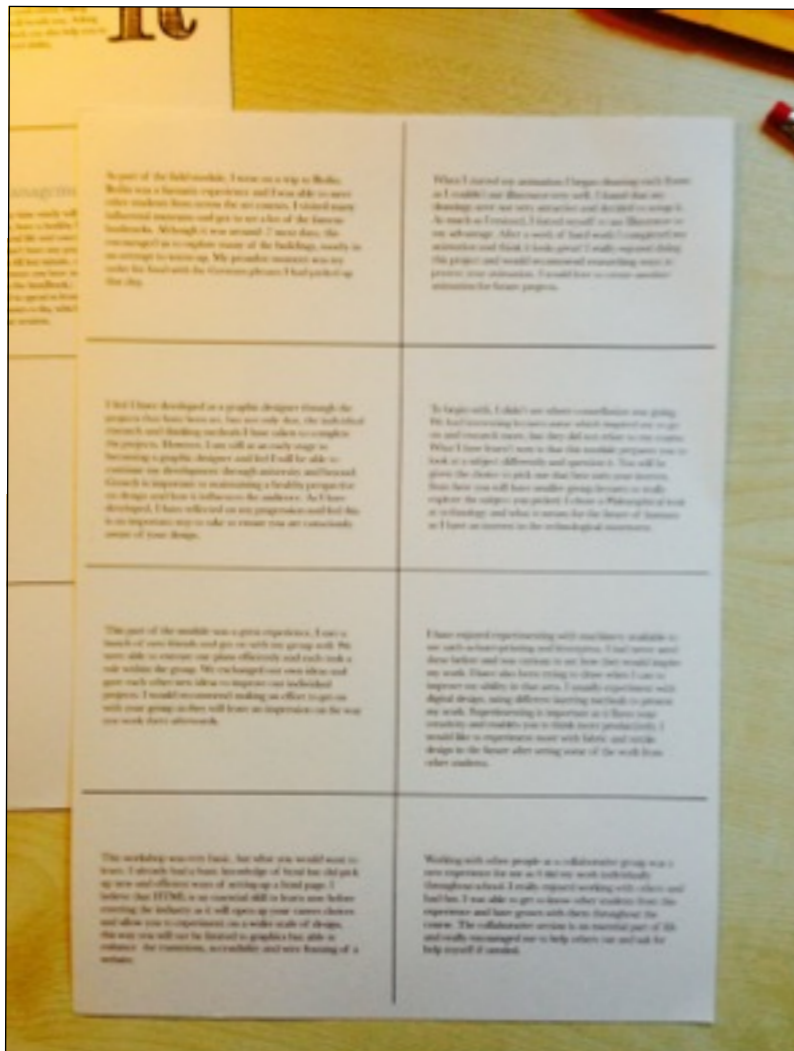
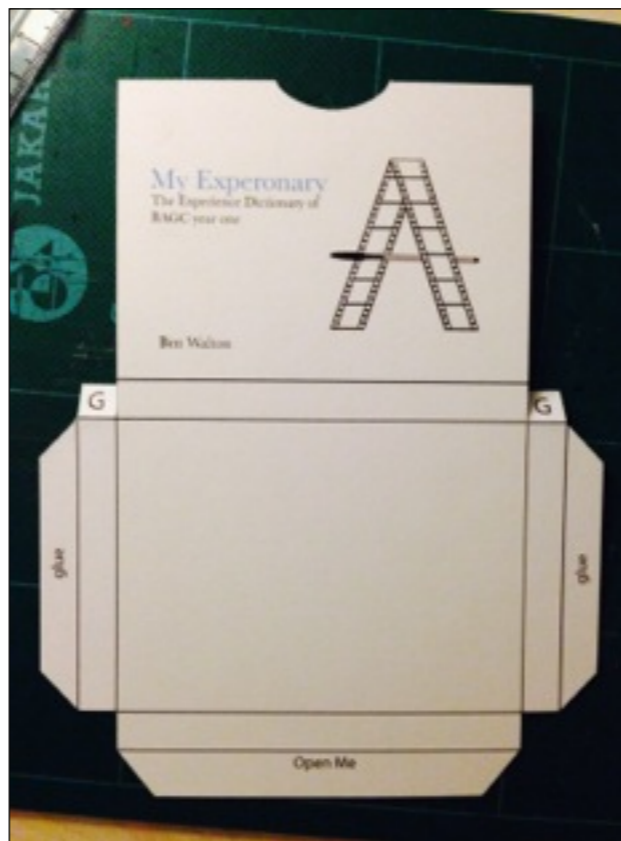
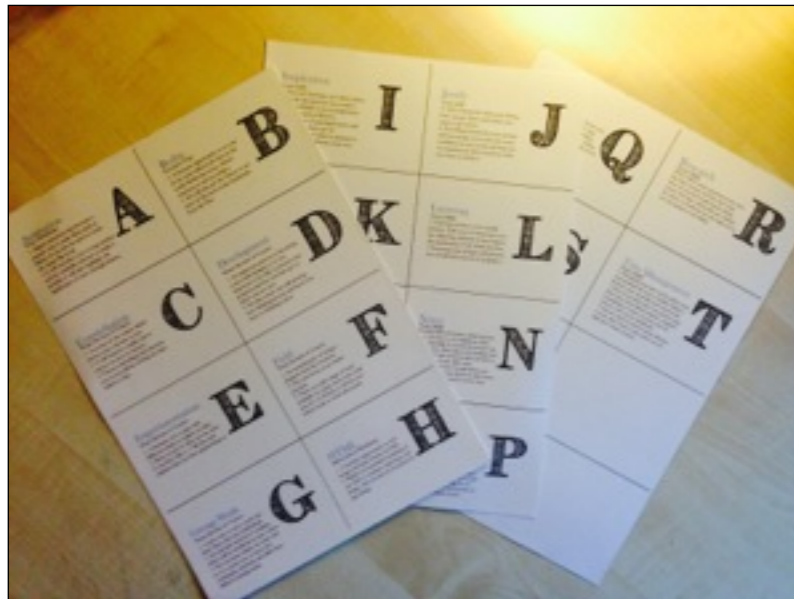
After experimenting with a square book design, I found that it was very repetitive and tile-like. I decided to stretch the dimensions to 1000mmx1500mm making it more similar to a post card. This was I could add two experiences onto one page, or stretch one experience across the whole page if it was more significant. I also added page numbers to the sides. Although, I'm not sure if a book will engage the audience in the way I would like them too. A book is interesting but a cliché when it comes to a biography or story. As I am hoping to continue as a graphic designer, one way of self-promotion is web-design but a more traditional way is through business cards. You see them in almost every shop but we don't normally pick them up in the same way we once would of. I would like to experiment with turning my book into a collection of cards which will be kept together by some type of sleeve.



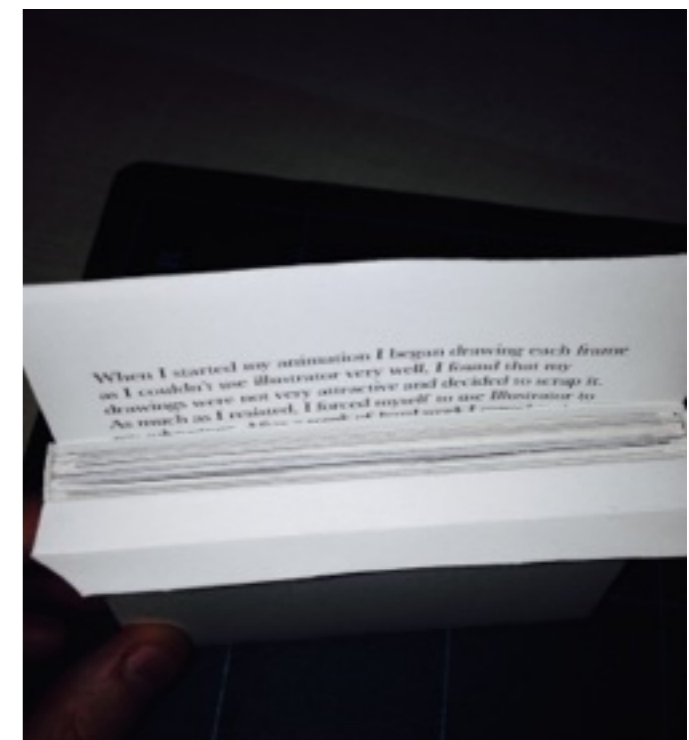
After making my book I wanted to experiment with a concertina book. I thought that this would be an interesting way to present my experiences. However after designing it, I found that it was too small on a standard size A4 sheet. I expanded my dimensions to fit on an A1 sheet at 50mm high. Although it did print correctly, when I tried to print the reverse side, for some reason it would not align correctly. This may be a fault in the digital design however I feel it is too risky to continue trying different formats out when I need to focus and develop one for its final transition into my experience outcome. I really like the idea of a concertina book and will experiment with it further on later projects. I will now make my final move onto my cards idea which I suggested in my recent feedback session. I feel this will develop into a professional looking collection of cards which will bring a clean presentation of my experiences at BAGC year one.

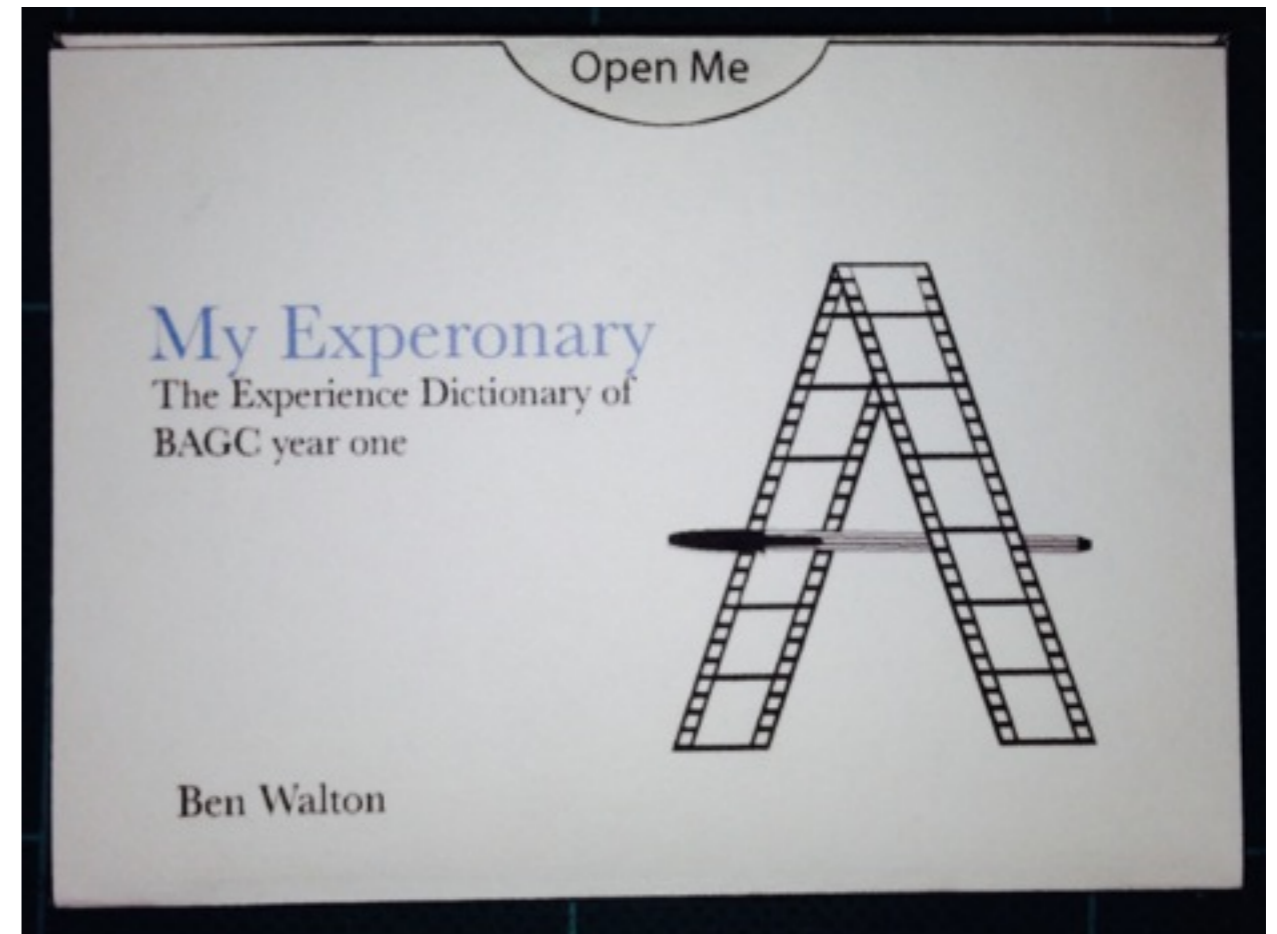
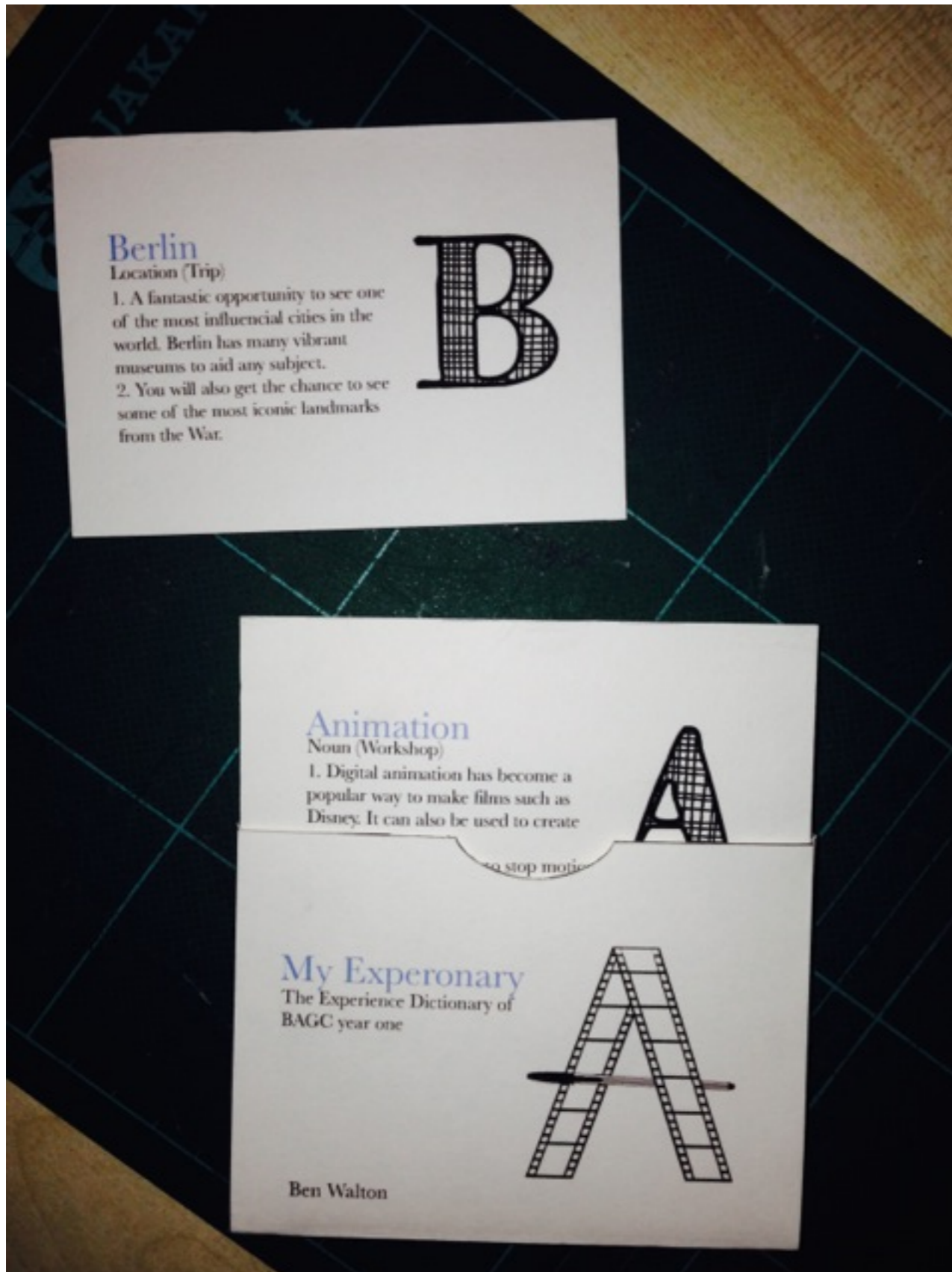


Here is the design layout of my first prototype. I am interested to see how this will turn out and whether or not the back design (left) will align with the front design (right). Reviewing the two sides I can quickly notice the lack of colour on the back page, however this is done to keep the attention drawn to the front of each card, the back design highlights my experience of the course, however I do not want this to dominate the deck of cards, instead I want the first years to see what the course is about and what they can expect to do throughout the course. It is only then I would like them to read my personal experience of the course, this way I will not influence their opinion on each project or experience.



Here is my first prototype of my 'Experonary' or otherwise known as 'My Experience Dictionary'. The cards fit nicely within the net sleeve I also created on Illustrator. I recorded my progress from printing them to the finished prototype. I am happy with how it has turned out. The sleeve and cards fit perfectly into my hand and I have no difficulties holding them. I am however unsure of the grids around the cards, I will experiment further by taking them out. I really enjoyed the hands on work as it made me feel I was a larger part of the creation as I physically built it up in contrast to just printing it and binding the final piece together.





Here are a few more pictures of my first prototype, I am happy with the progress of my outcome and hope to correct any graphical errors soon.

Time Management
Noun (Skill)

1. Managing your time wisely will increase your productivity, have a healthy balance between your social life and coursework.
2. Even if you don't have any projects due, don't leave them till last minute, complete it gradually to ensure you have met the criteria. (refer to the handbook.)
3. You are asked to spend at least 40hours a week, that's 5hours a day, which can be split into 2.5hour sessions.

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T
Times New Roman

I went ahead and experimented with the card idea and found that they were more interesting to look at and transition between each one, in contrast to bending a book from its spine. It creates an open atmosphere as the cards are not 'bound' together similarly to how each experience is not the same as the last. I think I am going to remain with this idea and enhance its appearance through trial and error. I would like to add a small amount of colour to bring life to the cards, and make them more inviting.

Here is the development of my layout. I decided to position the text towards the bottom, leaving the top area blank due to the cards being picked up from the top, this will leave room for any fingers to grasp the cards without restricting the view of information.



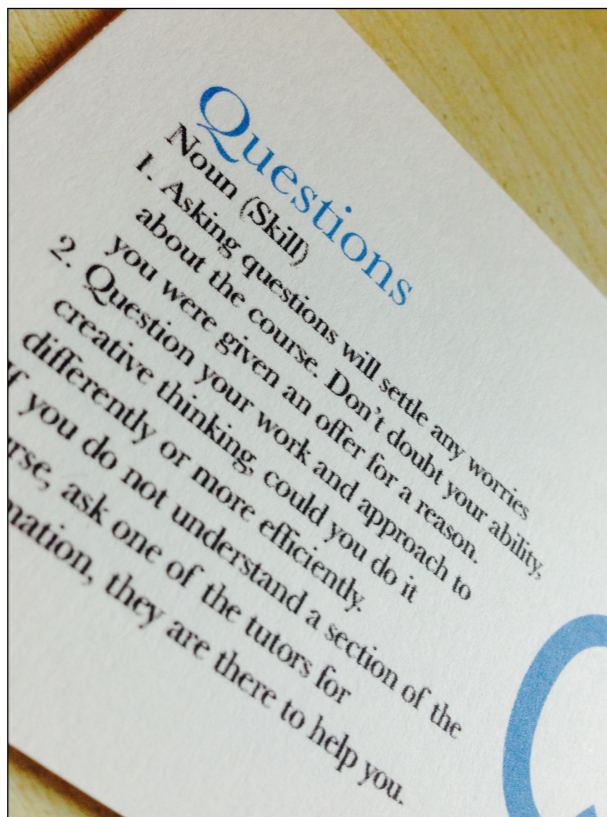
After my latest feedback on my prototype I went back and changed the formatting of the text such as the kerning and leading, so that it was consistent throughout the set of cards. This hugely impacted the listing effect and positioning of the large letters. I also adapted the large letters to match a font which begins with that letter. e.g. T - Times New Roman. This just gives that little bit more to the appeal and interest of each card. It also allowed me to make each card unique and slightly different from their strict design layout. When looking at them all together it looks messy in my opinion as they are different shapes and sizes, however when looking at each card individually it is appealing and fun to explore.



I am pleased with my final outcome for year 1 BAGC. I have enjoyed making this and have surprised myself at how formal the sleeve and cards look without the black grids. I have adjusted the alignment of the text and adjusted the kerning. By changing the repeated typeface on the right of each card, I have instead changed the typeface to correspond with one that starts with the specific letter, eg. T – Times New Roman. I then labeled these clearly underneath or to the side. My one regret is not chaining the typeface colour to cyan to match the title colour. This would add consistency and balance the cards out (but its not to late! I may change this before the deadline). Hidden under the flap is my blog url for the first years to explore if they wish. Finally, I added a content card at the start with shows the audience which letters have been chosen as not all have been done, otherwise this may have caused confusion. I also added an end card with my letterpress outcome from term 1, this promotes my blog in a traditional and inspirational way – on the back of that card I have added an informal message thanking the audience for reading my personal experiences of year 1 and invite them to say hello. I hope this will end my experiences with a friendly close.



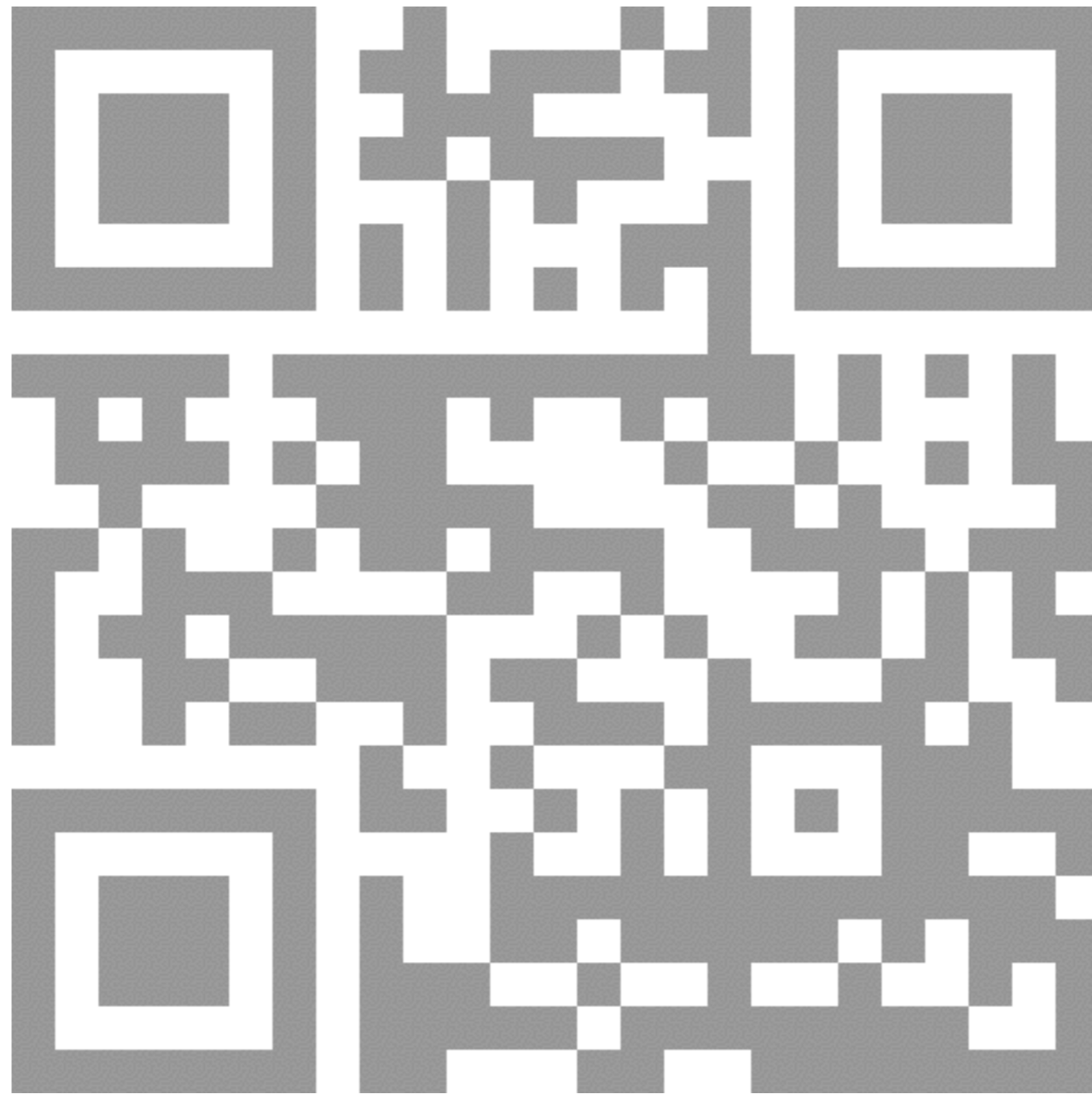
I experimented with adding some form of a visual arrangement system to the cards. I thought a tab-like arrangement would be suitable and it did work to begin with. However I ran into trouble when the printer had positioned the cards higher than expected and so they did not align properly. I would like to try this effect again however it is very time consuming to cut each section out correctly and fold the net sleeve into shape. I have taken on board different ways of presenting my work and feel that I will do a finalised outcome next which will not include the tab system, however it will include the cyan typefaces to balance out the face of each card. I also adjusted two typefaces from a scribbled effect to Helvetica for a clean approach to my work, these reflect the typefaces which I cannot find any stock types for which begin with that specific letter. I have cello-taped this experiment shut to avoid any disruption to the positioning of the cards. You are still able to see the effect through the cut out section on the sleeve.



Here is my final piece, I am satisfied with its appearance and its final format after many prototypes and hours of digital design. I decided to change my format from a book to a deck of cards because I felt that the book was a cliché for personal experiences and for others to get information. Instead I chose to take the style of a business card but slightly larger to fit but small enough to fit into the palm of my hand. I thought about how I was going to bind them together, one idea was to stitch them, but instead I kept them loose and made a sleeve for them to fit in. This also presents a connotation of each experience being different from the last. I chose to do an experience dictionary after looking at how information we take for granted is presented in every day life. I took the same approach to presenting information by having a list effect, this is an easy-to-read layout. I also added what type of experience it was whether it was a skill, workshop or lecture. To keep the cards interesting I added a large typeface to easily identify which letter the reader is currently on, beyond that it also takes the form of a specific typeface beginning with that letter, this is credited below each large letter. I also chose to add colour to my cards to give it a more inviting appearance instead of a cold, black theme. The base typeface used is Baskerville as I wanted it to have a traditional value towards information, it also helps with reading as the serifs create a clear baseline. I left negative space at the top of each card as this is where the cards will be used most when they are picked out of the pile, keeping the information clear from marks and obstruction. On the back of each card there is also my own personal experience to each of the sections of the course. These are not immediately noticeable as I did not want my personal views on the course to influence the reader, I wanted them to make their own thoughts before they read mine.



Here is a collection of my prototypes, it is clear that I quickly stuck to one overall layout and made slight changes to each one. I feel that this is one of my strengths as I am able to decide what I would like to make. This prevents me from being indecisive and allows me to be more creative and experimental with my designs. I would like to continue using this method and hope to be able to experiment more in the future. I really enjoyed this project and hope to do something similar later on in the course. I will consider making another sleeve to present an outcome as it is a formal way to present notes or ideas. After looking at the work of others, I would also like to push myself to make more graphical illustrations for my pieces, I am curious to play around with illustrations to make more detailed drawings and info-graphs. I would also like to improve on my artistic research and reflect on my inspiration. I have also found I prefer to keep my work tidy, so there is a possibility to change that and become more dangerous with my creative ideas and design to see what I create. In the mean time I will work on my graphic communication skills and learn from my errors. I recently saw a book which explains thousands of graphic designer errors and what to avoid doing from a day to day basis. I will read this over the summer and reflect on my experience in my blog. Hopefully it will make me a better designer with the correct knowledge to support my work.



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