

Dhanshree Patil

Design Strategist and Researcher

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SUMMARY

I take open-ended problems, find the question that actually moves a decision, and answer it in a form teams can build from, across healthcare, financial services, education, and social sector.

SKILLS

Research Methods: Mixed-methods research (qualitative and quantitative), in-depth interviews, contextual inquiry, ethnographic and field research, diary studies, focus groups, usability testing, survey design, participant recruiting

Analysis and Synthesis: Thematic analysis, affinity mapping, comparative analysis, persona development, opportunity framing, insight synthesis, research reporting and storytelling

Strategy and Service Design: Service blueprinting, journey mapping, systems mapping, design strategy, business model innovation, futures scanning, workshop facilitation, stakeholder management, cross-functional collaboration

Tools: Figma, Miro, Qualtrics, Dovetail, Otter, UserTesting, SurveyMonkey, Hotjar, Google Analytics, Tableau, Power BI, Notion, Google Workspace, Adobe Creative Suite

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

UX Researcher and Service Designer, Graduate Programs Office

July 2024 – Present

Massachusetts College of Art and Design | Boston, MA

- Redesigned the graduate assistant hiring process, improving efficiency by 25%. Ran stakeholder interviews and workflow analysis, then built service enhancements in Google Workspace and Qualtrics to make the process more transparent for students and staff.
- Design and field surveys for the Graduate Programs Office and synthesize responses into recommendations that inform program and service decisions.
- Lead communications for 3+ graduate exhibitions and coordinate cross-department data collection, event support, and stakeholder alignment.

Entrepreneurship Research Assistant

June 2023 – May 2024

Massachusetts College of Art and Design | Boston, MA

- Conducted experience and feedback interviews with alumni of the college's creative business incubator, analyzed the data, and recommended changes to alumni support and post-program communication.
- Ran a comparative analysis of peer creative business incubators to identify market gaps and growth opportunities.
- Designed a centralized Google Sites resource hub for incubator courses, improving access to class content by 80%, and built a resource and creative business catalogue for the incubator database.

Product Designer and Field Researcher

July 2020 – Sept 2021

Art Ichol Studio | India

- Led ethnographic field research with 50+ Indian households, studying everyday cooking and eating practices, usage patterns, and cultural context around food and tableware.
- Translated research findings into four culturally grounded tableware collections, carrying them from concept through production constraints to manufacture.
- Developed six sustainable clay bodies using locally sourced limestone mining byproducts.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY PROJECTS

Design Researcher | Financial Literacy for Gen Z Adults

Sept 2023 – May 2024

Graduate Thesis, Massachusetts College of Art and Design

- Owned the full research lifecycle: 20+ in-depth interviews, thematic analysis, journey mapping, and persona development to locate gaps in early financial decision-making among Gen Z adults in the U.S.
- Built insight frameworks and opportunity areas directing interventions toward education accessibility and trust in digital financial content.

- Designed a service blueprint and digital strategy proposal for NGO and CSR programs delivering scalable financial literacy education.

Design Researcher | VA Red Coat Ambassador Program

Sept 2023 – Dec 2023

Client Project, MassArt Client Studio | [View case study](#)

- Contributed to a 14-week studio engagement redesigning the Red Coat Ambassador volunteer program across three Boston-area VA hospital campuses.
- Ran contextual inquiry and stakeholder interviews on site, and led one of the team's synthesis workshops to move raw field observations into defined opportunity areas.
- Co-developed a revised service model, volunteer toolkit, and patient-facing wayfinding concepts addressing navigation and emotional comfort for veterans.

Client Coordinator and Design Researcher | Engagement Strategy

Jan 2023 – May 2023

Creature Conserve (nonprofit), MassArt Integration Lab | [View case study](#)

- Served as the single point of contact between a five-person graduate studio team and the client, a wildlife conservation nonprofit.
- Contributed to research planning, participant recruiting, comparative analysis of five peer organizations, and futures scanning. Narrowed the research plan from four audiences to one across three revisions after client pushback and recruiting evidence showed depth would beat coverage.
- Co-developed a two-track engagement strategy and implementation playbook, validated against an existing campus funding mechanism so the recommendation had a known path to running.

Design Researcher | HOMI: Belonging for International Students

Jan 2023 – May 2023

Experience Design Lab, Massachusetts College of Art and Design | [View case study](#)

- Investigated academic and social adjustment challenges facing international students in the U.S. through diary studies, focus groups, and in-depth interviews.
- Developed a digital service concept with curated events, peer connection, and mental health resources addressing loneliness and cultural transition barriers.
- Delivered the service concept and MVP wireframes at a lab showcase for education and wellness stakeholders.

EDUCATION

Master of Design, Design Innovation and Strategy

Dec 2024

Massachusetts College of Art and Design | Boston, MA

Cross-Registration: Designing Virtual Worlds (2.177), XR/VR

Sept – Dec 2023

Massachusetts Institute of Technology | Cambridge, MA

Bachelor of Design, Industrial and Ceramic-Glass Design

2021

National Institute of Design | India

PUBLICATIONS

- “Empowering Design Leadership: The Crucial Role of Design Vocabulary”
- “From Designer to Leader: How Designers Lead Through Influence and Strategy”
- “Mapping Homeownership: An Ethnographic Expedition through 2023’s Real Estate Landscape”

LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Policy Researcher, MIT Policy Hackathon (2024). Researched racial bias in pulse oximeter readings and co-authored a policy brief proposing more inclusive FDA device evaluation frameworks.
- Market Research Extern, NRG Human Rights NGO (2024). Eight-week externship researching policymaker networks and their influence on global human rights enforcement; synthesized findings into advocacy strategy reports.
- Service Designer, Global Service Jam (2025). Co-developed an onboarding and orientation service concept for first-year college students, informed by user interviews and co-creation exercises. Design Volunteer, Design for Dignity Workshop on healthcare access (June 2025, April 2026).