Designing Designers for the AI Era

A competency-based UX/UI curriculum from day one

Henney Hyehyun Ahn

Gwangju University

Henney Hyehyun Ahn

안혜현

Associate Professor, Visual Image Design

Founder, BiiBiis design studio

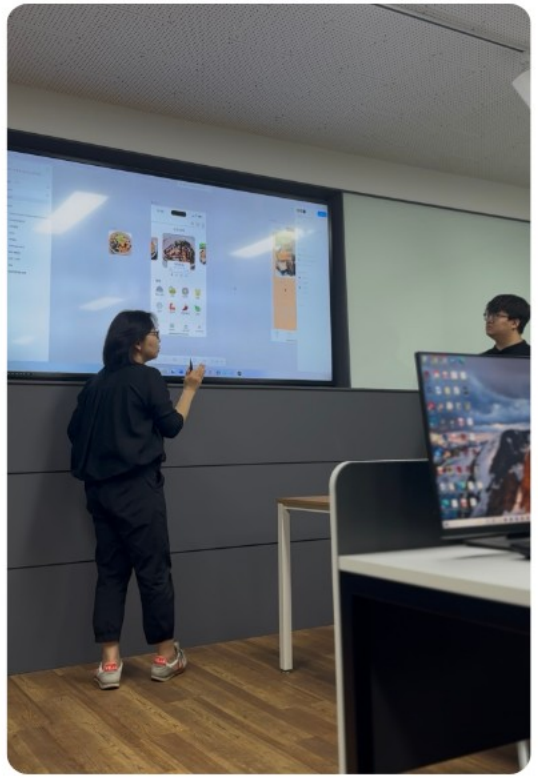
A decade of teaching design in Korea

Before that: Art Director in New York

New York



Gwangju



When AI can generate screens in seconds, what should we teach?

Teach decisions, not just tools

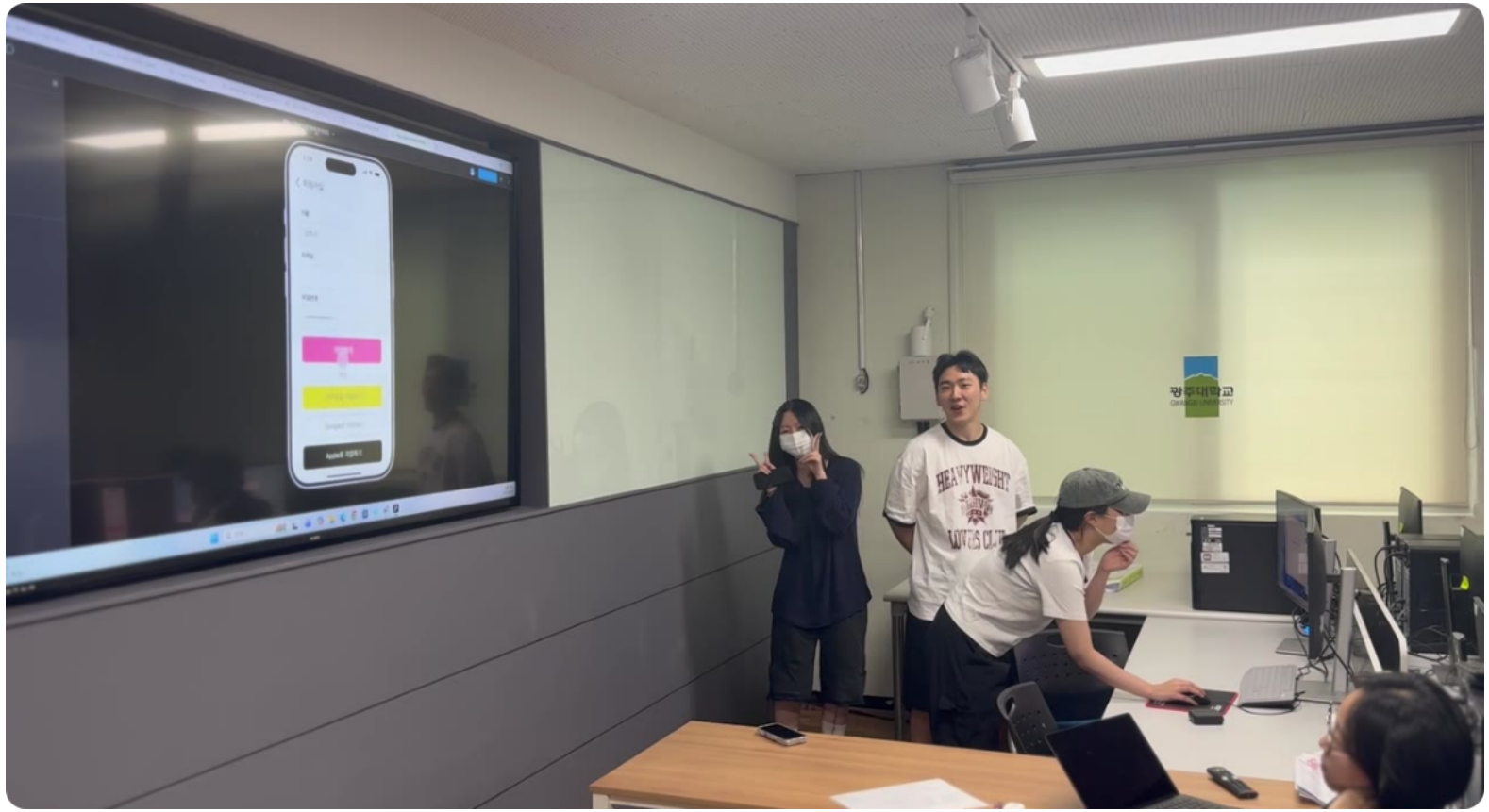
16
students

5
teams

0
UX/UI experience

1
semester

So… I opened Figma



Me vs. the updates

“Okay everyone, let's learn Auto Layout.”





Three changes

01	**Tool learning**	→ YouTube tutorials, at home
02	**AI**	→ Open, including Figma's built-in AI
03	**Class time**	→ The work: team apps, feedback over demos

Two expectations

Learning Figma

Access to AI

I hoped every team would reach a basic level

Same class, different results

Team A Custom character goods, made with AI or a designer

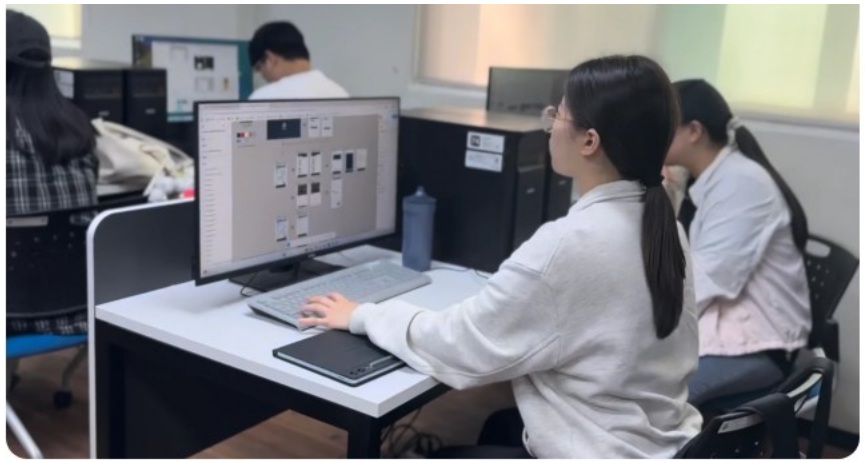
Team B Jewelry recommendations to match your taste

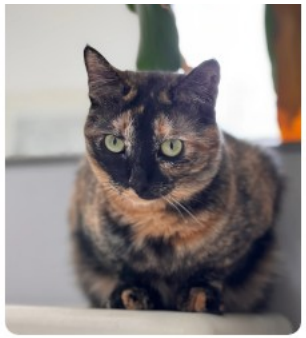
Team C A budgeting app where spending logs feed a hamster

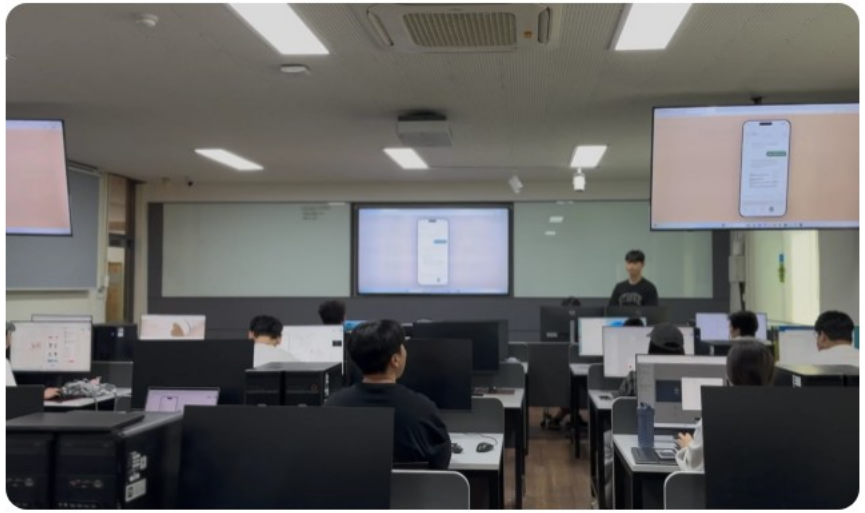
Team D Group buying for people living alone

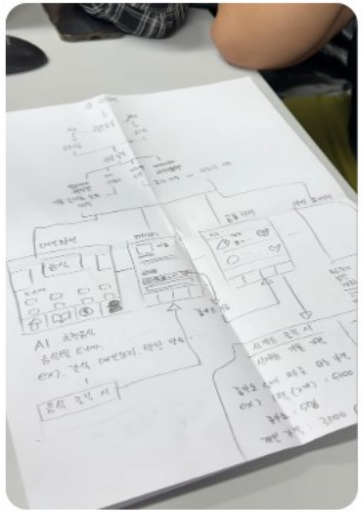
Team E Travel routes and live translation

Fifteen weeks



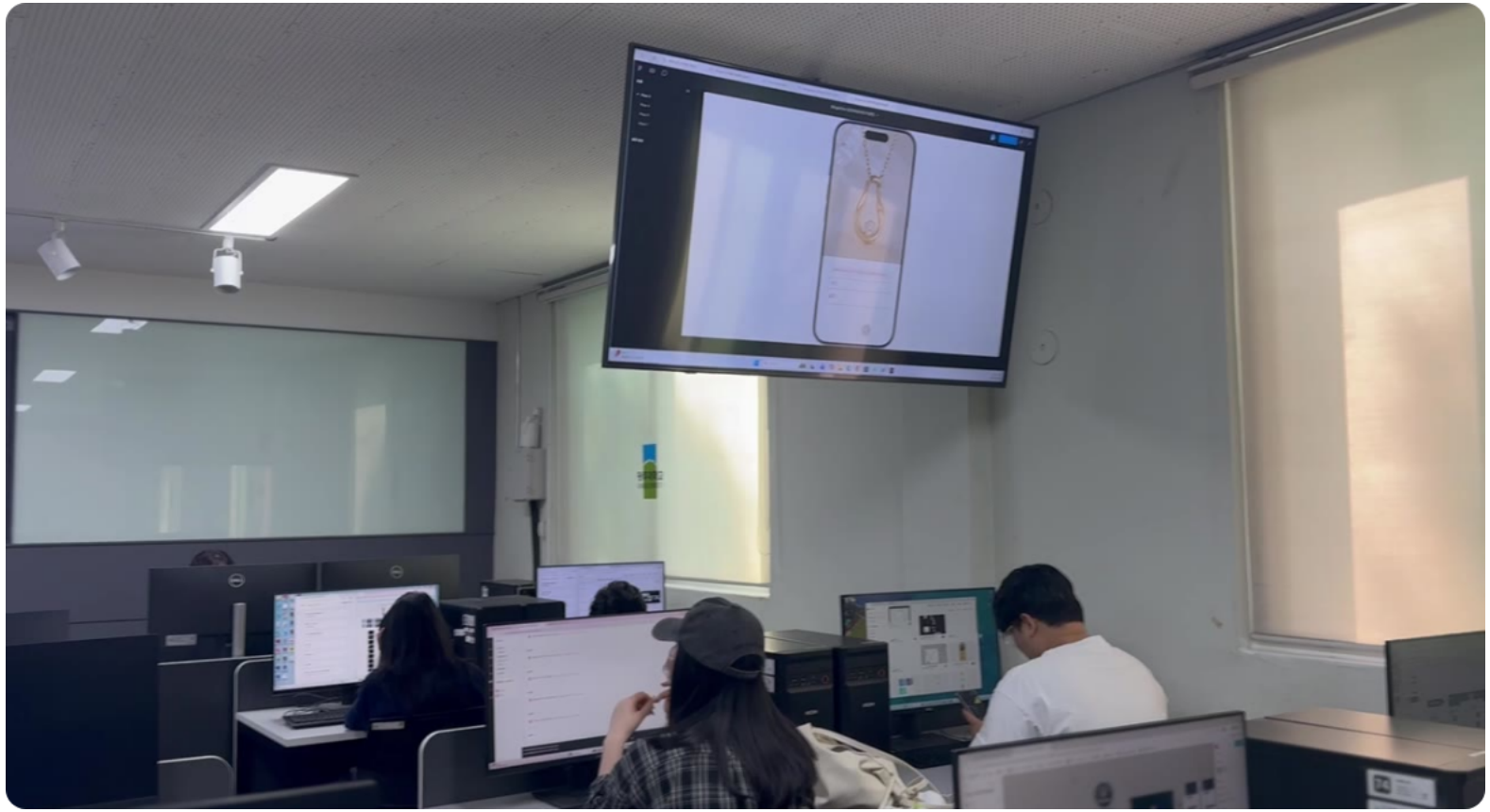




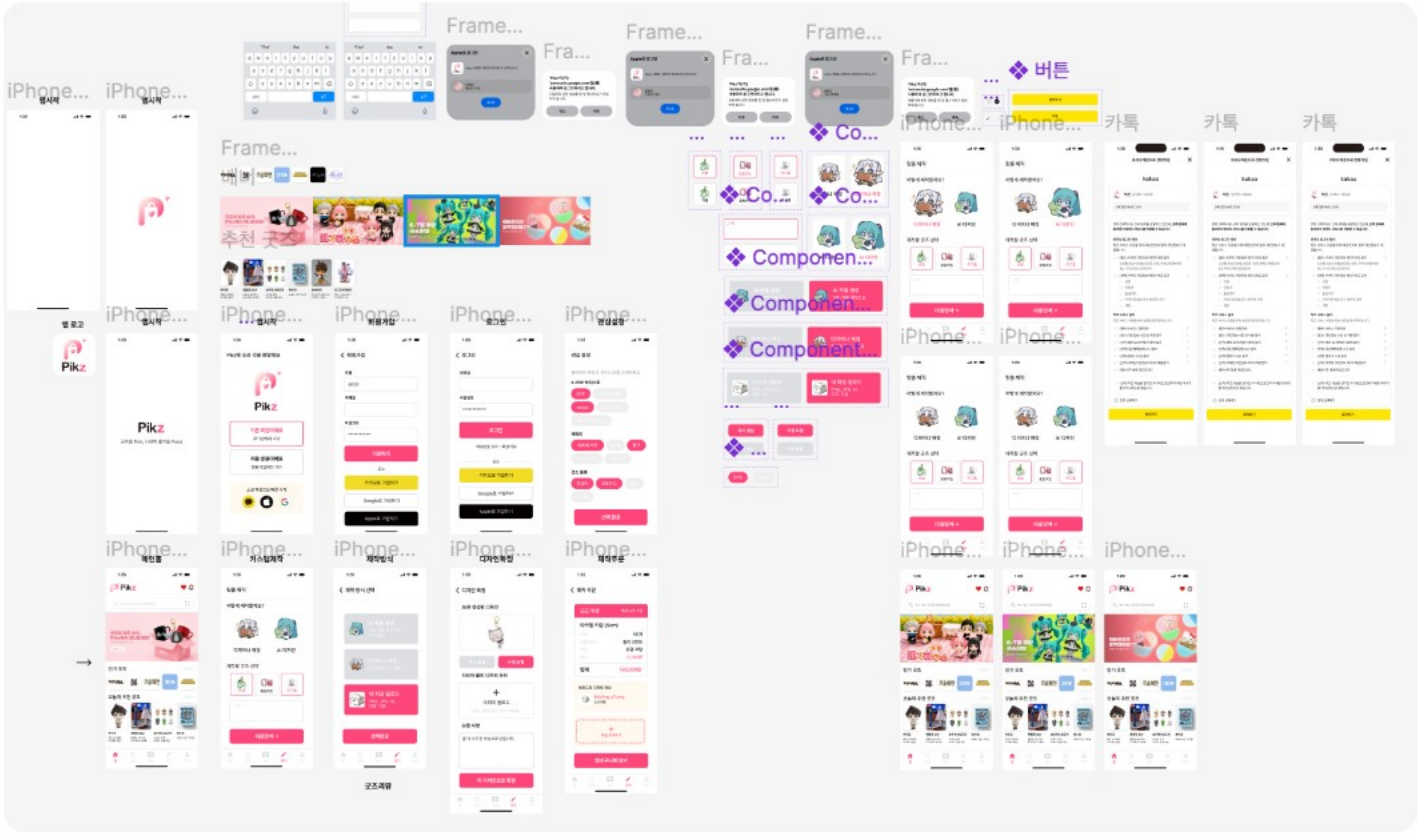




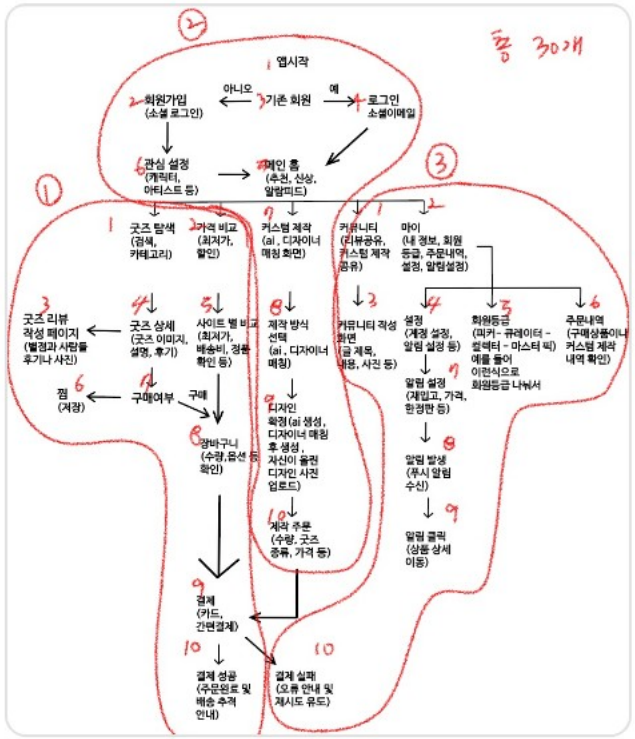
A clickable prototype



What they made



A team that worked closely together

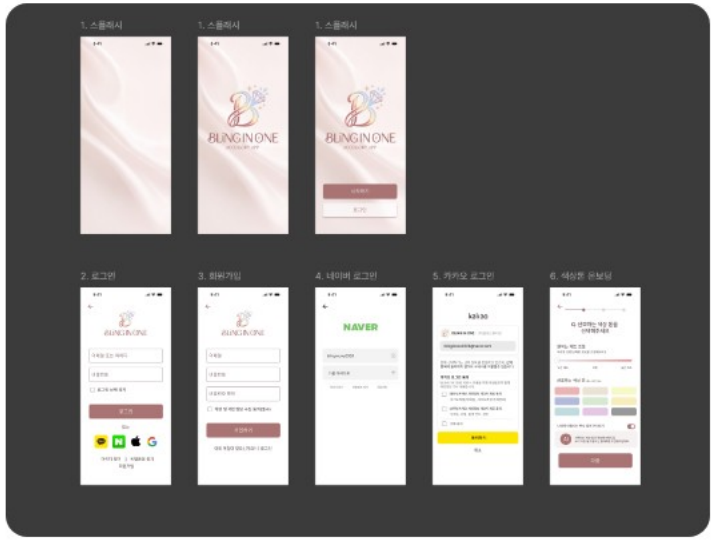


How they split the work

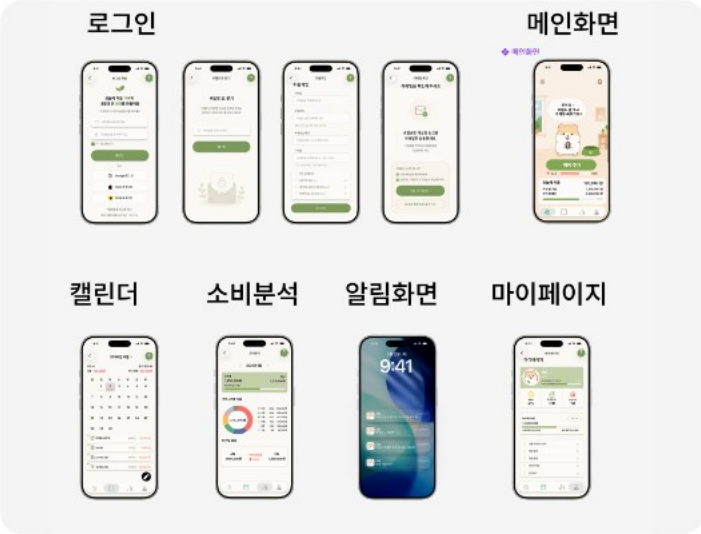


How they worked

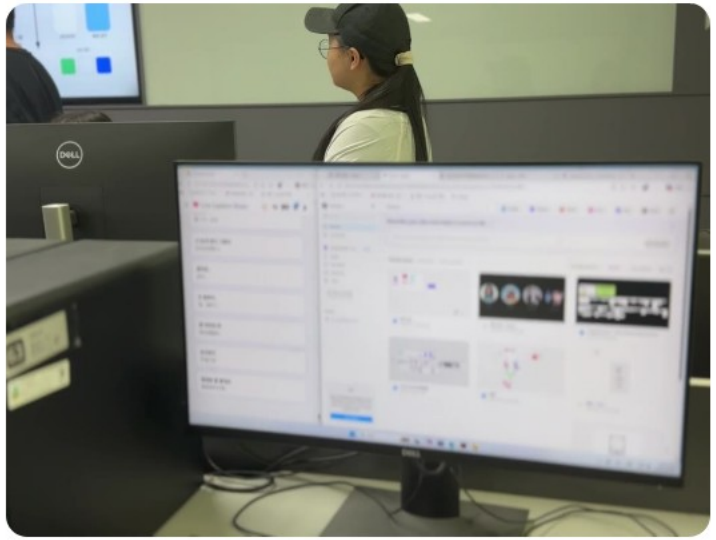
Complete interfaces



Team B · jewelry picks for your taste



Team C · log your spending, feed the hamster



Team E · routes + live interpretation

Team D needed more support

Would you recommend this course?



9 of 11 respondents said yes (82%)

11 of 16 students responded

Understanding the course material



11 respondents (6 of 11 agreed, 55%)

> “I wanted to do well. But with videos alone, the final project felt overwhelming. I needed live guidance. For a beginner, the pace was too fast.”

Team A built a clickable prototype and barely used AI

Team D needed support before AI could help

Differences in teamwork appeared before the teams used AI

I started with tools.
Then I made more time for projects.

I needed to help students build trust.

Trust grows through small promises

Week 1	A one-page team agreement
Every week	Done · Next · Stuck
Week 7	A peer check, not just at the end

Learning from one another

Each student learns one skill and teaches it to the team

Design decisions

> What did you decide, and why?
> What user research helped?
> If you used AI, what did you keep, change, or reject?

Beyond the classroom

Teamwork matters in the design industry, too

Everyday habits for design teams

01	Agree on the problem before adding a tool
02	Use real user research to guide the work
03	Review the reasons behind design decisions
04	Make time to learn from one another

손발이 맞다

son-bal-i mat-da · “our hands and feet match”

息が合う

iki ga au · “our breath matches”

Are we in sync?

The real stars of this talk say hi





Thank you