

Individual reflection Paul Roelen User-centered Design

This course didn't suit me very well. This was mainly because I couldn't really improve myself on the learning goals I set the previous project. The most important ones in my eyes were improving pitching skills and try to show things in a well-organized way, to make it clear and attractive to other people.

I didn't really improve on the pitching part, because the presentations we had to give were basically just explaining what we did in the past weeks, we didn't had to convince anyone or set a high-quality presentation, it was almost just a normal conversation.

The design and look part of the product was not really the main purpose of the course. Of course we had to design according to the user, but you wouldn't be graded on originality and the looks. I think this is a pity, because we could make a very nice product and present it in a cool way, but on the other hand I understand it because we were just doing one user cycle, so in the end we didn't really had a final product. This demotivates also in a way because from the beginning I had the idea that we were not really working towards a final product.

Furthermore I think that it was unfortunate that we had to work within strict lines, there was not a lot of space for creativity which was another learning goal for me, thinking more out of the box. This not only concerns the idea but also for example in the way we have to test our product with the user. I think there are a lot of ways to do such a test but we had to do it following quite strict lines.

On the other hand, I now know how to validate your idea, and how to find out what the users think. In this way the course helped me a lot. Because otherwise I would just think of something without really investigate stakeholders and their wishes. An example of this occurred in the course From Idea to Design. Our subject was, design something to help blind people travel in public places. We called a blind man and asked for his opinion. But when we started to design we didn't call him until the end of the project. I now learned how you can satisfy the wishes of the user throughout the project, by doing the same cycle again, and I think that is extremely important. By learning this and following this course I think I did develop a lot in the expertise area of user and society, an area of which I thought I was a little more developed than I actually am. So that is a great benefit from this course.

It also gave me insight that the things that you design can be useful for you, but for the big majority, or just your target group, it might be really useless. I found this out when we made a prototype, which was quite clear in our eyes. But when we looked at the results of the user test, nobody understood the function. I think this is an important step in designing your product, and I'm very happy I made this mistake this time. It really gave me insight.

Overall, this was a project that didn't fully suited me, that was sometimes a little demotivating, but one of which I learned a lot of. Especially in the way of thinking as a designer.