

DG000 Final Deliverable

Booklet

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Introduction

My name is Jeroen Rood, and this booklet is about the assignment DG000. DG000 is an introductory assignment, and it covers Self-Directed Learning as well as helps you on your way with competency-centered learning.

Within DG000 I did, as well as attended, a couple things. I chose to focus on how to combine the competencies 'Social and Cultural Awareness' and 'User Focus and Perspective' with my project. For these competencies I attended a couple of expert meetings. I also attended some expert meetings on Self-Directed Learning. There I learned the importance of reflecting and how to develop a Personal Development Plan.

Concerning the competencies, I didn't just attend expert meetings. I also worked on them with my group, and discussed how to implement it in our project. My experts gave us a little exercise in relation to the theme of our project. This is also a topic that I discussed with my group as well as my coach.

Connections

During the assignment DG000, I was introduced to the way of learning in Industrial Design. I started quite blank, and initially it was quite a shock to find out I didn't know anything at all about what I was going to do, in what way. It felt really uncomfortable and quite awkward to be at school, asking yourself 'what am I doing here??'.

Bit by bit I found out what we are expected to do, and I found some clarity and sense in what themes, competencies, projects and assignments have in common. I also found a link between the competencies I focused on, and also between the activities I did and some of the competencies.

As I do 'User Focus and Perspective' and 'Social and Cultural Awareness', I see now these two competencies are really closely related to each other. They are both focusing on society and taking the users of a product into account.

I also see some connections with the activities I did or am doing right now. My project is within a really abstract theme. That means we mostly did some ideation and elaboration of our ideas. I thus think the project mostly covered '**Form and Senses**' and '**Ideas and Concepts**' so far. However, in my group we did think about the technical aspects of the concepts, and had some discussions on what the target groups are for our concepts. All the team members differ in opinions on the concepts, and I had to understand everyone's vision and make clear to the others what my vision was. What's more, I found out some more about the design process in general. So I also learned some more about the competency '**Design and Research Process**'.

'**User Focus and Perspective**', '**Integrating Technology**' and '**Teamwork and Communication**' were covered to a certain extent in the group. The competency '**Social and Cultural Awareness**' was really hard to implement in my project, so I didn't find a connection so far, except that with the state-of-the-art ideas I generate in this project might have a certain impact on society.

Within DG000 I also developed '**Self-Directed and Continuous Learning**', as I was expected to find out what to learn when, and set my own goals.



Then we started all over again, and we had more time to generate ideas. That's where I learned that taking breaks is good to refill your creative energy or whatsoever. We namely were together all day, and didn't have such a fast-paced ideation process. At the end of the day I found myself quite dull and tired. But at least some great ideas came up, and we had more time to elaborate on them. Now I see that taking your time has a some pros. I learned that this way more stable ideas were generated, and that these ideas also had more potential.

Since I started, I switched from notebook to a dummy as idea-medium. I experienced that the notebook didn't suit me well, as the paper is lined. That way I didn't have all space to doodle, write down or make a more detailed drawing. I also learned that I had to adapt my environment to my style of ideation.

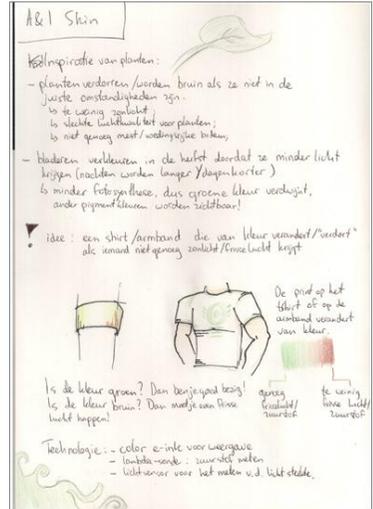
Form and Senses

With 'Form and Senses', I think of interaction with all sorts of senses like hearing, seeing and feeling. That the design, for example must look intuitive as well as attractive or that it must have a good feel besides the good looks.

With the competency Form and Senses I don't start completely blank. I already have some experiencing visualizing things. Drawing is a hobby of mine, as well as painting. I think in the years I've been practicing these hobbies I developed in this competency. I learned how to draw things to make it clear to other people, and I make little things out of paper by practicing origami. The origami is just for fun, however. That means I don't do this to explicitly give it a meaning, but I do this to impress people or to make some fun.

In my project I learned to visualize for others, to make an idea more understandable for others. I experienced that it was not always clear what I was trying to say or what I had written down. That's why I made some drawings with it to visualize my ideas.

After the pre-interim presentation we received hardly any feedback. I think that was because our ideas were only visualization, and just a little description. I think verbal or non-verbal explanation of the ideas or the concepts helps a lot, too. We made a couple of posters and prototypes, and learned that these helped people to form an opinion as well as a view on the concept.



An example of my visualization next to the idea

Design and Research Processes

I think 'Design and Research processes' covers the process of designing itself, as well as the process of researching beforehand or during the design process. This competency combines them, and makes you efficiently combine them yourself.

I was pretty blank on this competency when I started Industrial Design. After having done some pressure cookers it was clear to me the design process was more than just creating ideas. I learned that the Design process also is elaborating the ideas, which means defining the idea to make it understandable for everyone or finding out what it takes to make an idea actually work as a product. It's also about research, because one needs to find out if it's a feasible idea or to find alternatives for the idea. It could also be about finding inspiration. Then there is prototyping. Finding parts to build a prototype, and viewing it to users, testing the prototype and adjust it to critics or experiences users get by actually using it. In short, I learned that it takes more than just making nice little drawings to make a successful product.



User Focus and Perspective

'User Focus and Perspective' in my opinion is about the user who uses the product you design. It's not just about making things user-friendly, but also about giving users a good feeling about a product.

On the expert meetings, and reading the book 'interaction design: beyond human-computer interaction', I found out that designing a product isn't as easy as it looks. It must conform to users' expectations, and people need to get a good experience when using your product.

I first thought that User Focus and

Perspective was about making products user-friendly. But I learned this isn't entirely true. It's just a part of it. During the expert meetings and after reading the book it became clear to me that a designer needs to pay attention to the users as in asking them what they think of an idea or what their experiences are when they use it. I learned that the experience a user has with the product also is in the look and feel of the product.

That doesn't mean I didn't have any experience in this competency when I started this study. I made a couple with a custom Content Management System, to make users easily update their website. Whilst developing these systems, I let the users test the system, to gain feedback on it. This way the users could tell me what they experienced while playing around with the interface. Also, they could tell me what they liked about it, or discover bugs in the system I wasn't able to find.

After the pre-interim presentation I discovered that we gained too few feedback. I think that was because we were trying to put too much in too little time. That way, we couldn't explain any concept in depth, which resulted in attendants to be clueless. We could have explained a little more, and present the context of the concept. Maybe that way the attendants would gain more insight in our concept, and then we would have gained more feedback or critics.

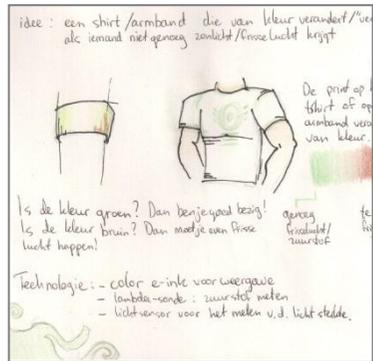


The book 'Interaction Design: beyond human-computer interaction', with chapters highlighted.

Integrating Technology

Integrating Technology is about the technology behind the products you design. It's about research for the possibilities and the feasibility of your design.

I didn't learn that much about this competency this quartile. However, I learned that Integrating Technology is more than just making stuff wires and components, screwing parts together. I learned that it's also about some theoretical research. This way, I think you can explore the possibilities, instead of having to come up with it on your own. I used this during our project, when I was elaborating one of our ideas. I had to highlight the technical part of a concept, and find out what materials and technologies could be used to make it work. I had a vague idea what technologies I wanted to highlight, but I had to research the feasibility. Also, it wasn't clear if the technology was entirely ready to be applied to the concept I was doing research on.



Some research on the possible technologies behind a concept.

Social and Cultural Awareness

'Social and Cultural Awareness' is about differences between cultures, and trending topics which change the whole society and the ethics. It's about making a product fit in in the society.



This competency was pretty hard to implement in my project. The theme of my project appeared to be really vague and abstract. Too abstract to be an actual issue in society. What I learned from the expert meetings, though, is that differences in society could be breaking or making a product. The way we in the Netherlands perceive a product, is different from the view on the same product in the United States. It's social or cultural differences that come to play when you want to bring a product to the market in a different place.

Teamwork and Communication

In my opinion, this competency covers topics like dividing individual tasks within a group, communicating with each other and making decisions together.

During our project, I learned that it's not obvious to get whatever you want. I learned that you have to make compromises. Also, it's not always clear to everyone what your concept is. I experienced that I had to clarify myself a couple of times, in order to make the others understand what my concept was about. I learned that as a team member you need to have patience. If you don't agree with someone, you can start a discussion with that person. However, you need to listen to others what they want to tell you, because they might have to clarify themselves to you, too.

My team attended the workshop 'Meeting Skills', which was about how to attend a meeting, what the importance was of preparing yourself for that meeting and how to behave during a meeting.

I learned that there are several roles to be divided among the attendants. Another thing I learned was that you may have discussions, but at a meeting you must stick to the topics. Also, discussions must not turn into fights, and get too personal.



During the workshop 'Meeting Skills' we watched the instruction video 'Meeting Menaces'.

Self-Directed and Continuous Learning

Self-Directed Learning is a competency that is not in essence closely related to any competency, but is essential for all the competencies to develop or for the design process in general. It's about drawing conclusions from activities and about being flexible. What's more important, is that you reflect on everything, not to only be aware of what you have done but also about what you have learned.

For Self-Directed and Continuous Learning we had an introduction in the very beginning of the year, where we did a pressure cooker, and were given some assignments like reflecting on the pressure cooker and reflecting on our study style. Later on we had some expert meetings with our study adviser. There I learned the essence of reflecting and how to reflect.

I already made some reflections, about which was given some critics. I learned for example that my reflections weren't personal enough. I also learned that should tell what I learned of certain activities. Throughout the time being on school, I learned that we partly need to go after the information we want to know on our own. It's not all told to us like secondary school. I learned that I need to ask fellow students or staff members if there are any uncertainties. This way I think that someone can give you insight from a different perspective.

Envisioning: transforming society

Afterwards, I tried to come up with some possible implementations for an adaptive and informative skin. My team was looking for problems in society that could be solved by a skin that changes by giving information. I think that's only possible if the information really steers people into different directions. It shouldn't be a skin taking care of something, but it should be a skin that stimulates people to be aware of something or to take action. Therefore, my team had to come up with ideas to stimulate society and to change it.



A brainstorm for creating ideas.

Back then we weren't actually trying to change society by coming up with radical ideas, but looking back on it, I see that within the theme of the project it is hard not to come up with radical ideas. That's because the theme 'Next Nature' is radical from itself, demanding a change in society. Without the 'thinking' process, I think the theme would have been too abstract, and too distant to come up with more original ideas than a cellphone skin that shows the battery life left.

Making: synthesizing, concretising

I started with my team on generating ideas, and working them out as concepts. Starting with brainstorming and mind-mapping, we later on elaborated a few concepts.

My team also built an early prototype. We did that to gain some more insight on the real esthetics, and to break away from the ideation-boundaries. I think it was a great way to make the concept clearer, and create some uniformity about the different visions we had concerning the concept.

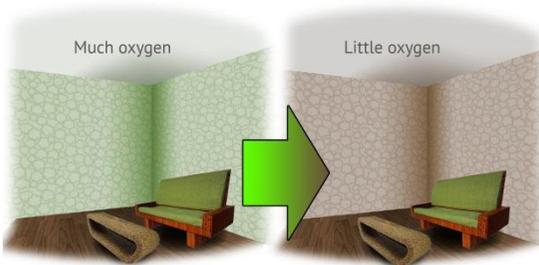


The scale model of one of our concepts.

Taking into account the other two processes we went through, it was the 'thinking' process that once again made everything clear, but it was the 'envisioning' process that made me realize we had to stick to the plan of radical ideas, otherwise nothing would be left of the theme 'Adaptive and Informative Skin'

Quality of deliverables overview

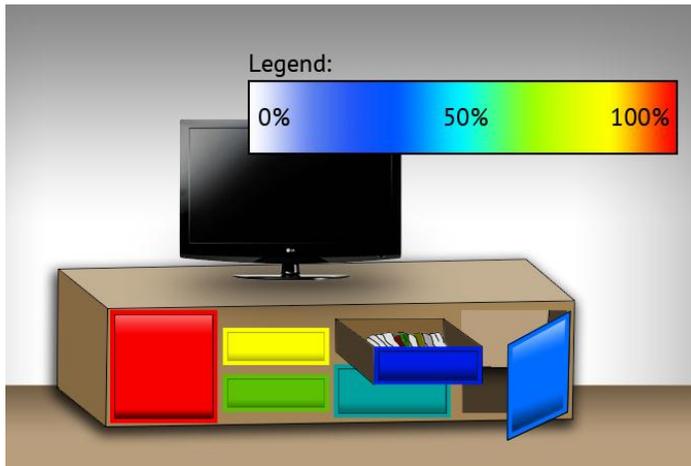
For now, I think the quality of the deliverables is only average. I don't know yet what is expected of me, so it's still a bit of guessing what I need to do. Together with my team I made a scale model of a shopping cart that changes color to indicate the shopping behavior, but it's not a working model. Also, I made some sketches, and Photoshop renderings. Those look okay, but I think I still can improve the quality of the deliverables.



A Photoshop rendering of the concept called 'Oxygen Wallpaper'.



A scale model of the shopping cart.



Another Photoshop rendering. This time a closet that changes with color-changing drawers/doors for the usage of them. Next time I'm going to get myself a drawing tablet, that's for sure.

Attitude view

With my personality, I tend to go to the background, remain unnoticed. I had this quite a lot on secondary school. The last year, however, it decreased in a certain extent. That means, I now still have a little trouble to “fight for my right”. But within the project I learned to stand up for my own ideas, and get to the front a little more. It’s my personality that I am drawing back, but I notice a change already in this first quartile.

With respect to my personality it’s quite obvious that I feel a bit uncomfortable while presenting. It’s some sort of block to present for a large audience. That doesn’t mean I don’t like to present at all. I find it really cool to make people understand my ideas, especially when I have the ability to visualize it. And at the Interim Exhibition I learned that I actually can present, although for a smaller audience, and more like a chit-chat. In the end, I really like it when people understand me. In secondary school I made a presentation for IT class. We were with a small group, and I really had some serious nerves at the start, but while presenting I did feel good about what I was telling or doing. Also, the presentation was appreciated really well. However, with my personality I tend to let others take the initiative in presenting.

On the other hand, I am very open to ideas from others. For me it’s easy to get interested in a subject, and go more in detail in this topic. I noticed that during the brainstorming or mind-map sessions we had. Also, during the Interim Exhibition I got some insight in other projects, and it was not really that hard to give some feedback for other projects, giving the other students another view on their ideas. I really liked doing that! There was this student that had a nice project, but he said he missed some feedback to the surroundings when using the product. Using the product could namely be easily mistaken for something similar, with the opposite effect. I really liked that I had a new insight for him.

Conclusion

DG000 fulfilled its purpose to me. I now know how the learning system works, and am quite aware of the essence of archiving activities with, among other things, reflecting. It sometimes has been a struggle to get after information or to even understand what the assignments were about. But in the end I think it did work out. Some feedback to the assignors could be that the assignment is a bit too abstract, and that information was given quite late. However, there's a good side to that. I experienced being given the information bit by bit was better for me to create an overview.

Getting to learn how the system works was not just looking over theories. To me it was a combination of reading to find out how it works, but also learning by doing to get a clear view on it. I also thought a lot about it, and sometimes even made some descriptive models in my head for this system. I thus also learned by reflecting and drawing conclusions. Sometimes I suddenly saw the light, also by listening to other students having the same problems and trying to define everything to them. Attending presentations didn't always work out, as I think it sometimes was too shortly explained. However, I do understand that you can't put everything in a presentation. Sometimes attending presentations was clarifying after all, but not always.

I think the hardest part was finding everything out by yourself the hard way. We had to work with the system, whilst finding out what the system actually was. That was sometimes quite confusing. Pressure cookers helped gaining some structure in what we did, but it didn't seem to make sense until just some time ago, some weeks before the Interim Exhibition.

