



The Richness of Tea

Elective: DAM313 - Design for Social Innovation - By: Charlotte van der Sommen - M1.2 - April 2016



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Activity overview



Week 1

During the first week of the elective, in groups we created imaginary instruments or objects out of all kind of everyday utensils. We tested the functionality of the object by giving it to another group and testing if they understood how it worked. This activity was meant to give us an understanding of what it can be to have dementia and not understand simply everyday life utensils.

Week 2

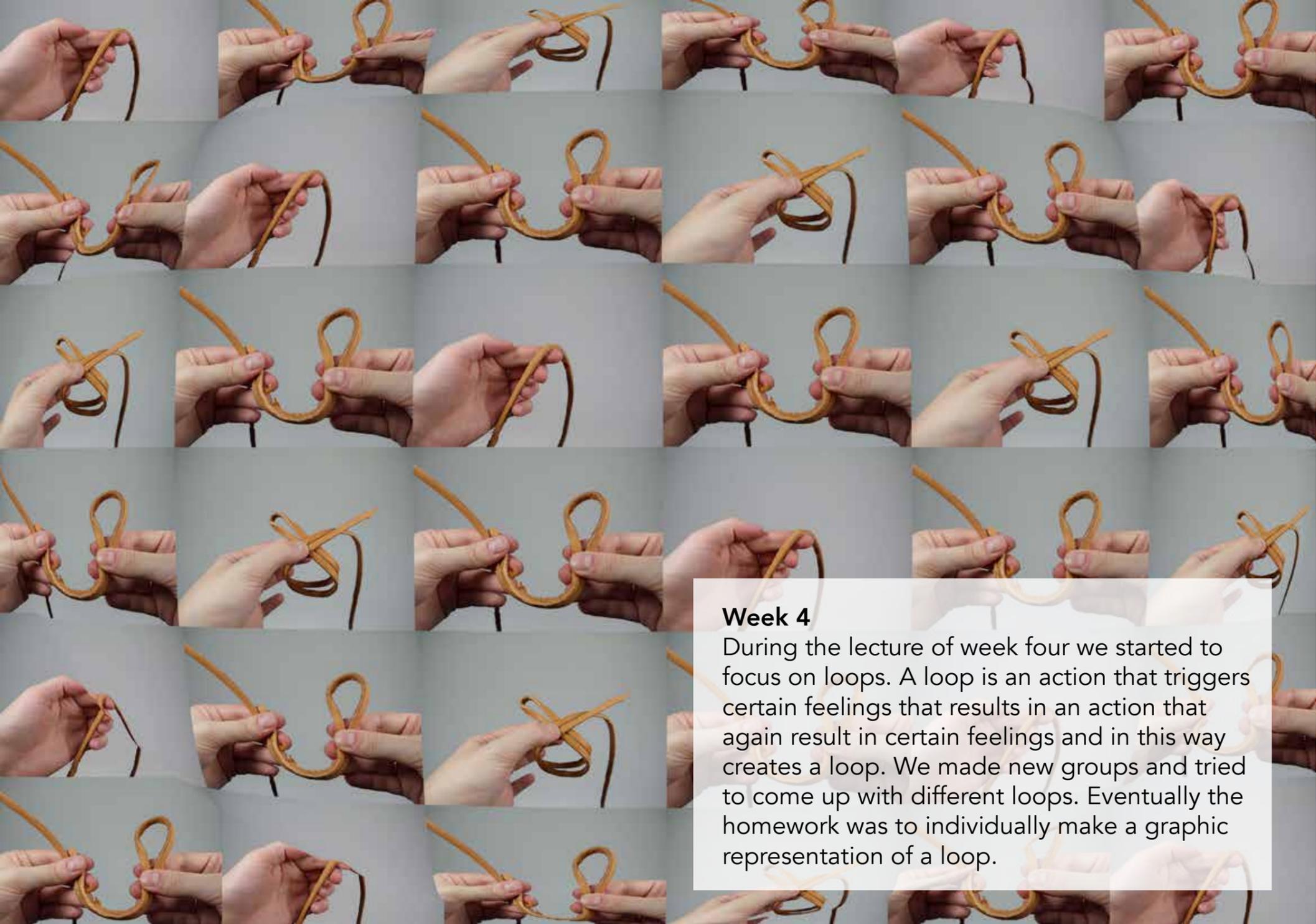
In the time between the first lesson and the second lesson, I worked in a group with two other students. We came up with the idea to design everyday objects that at first seem to be very normal but once you start to use them they will confuse you and don't work the way you think they would work. The overall idea was to make ordinary people understand what it is to have dementia. During the second lesson this didn't seem to be a good direction since the idea focus very much on the negative side of dementia instead of on making dementia a positive thing.



Week 3

During the third week we had a full schedule. During the day we had many workshops from different experts on ways to empathize with people in different ways and on creating physical loops. We build a loop with scratch materials, we acted out loops and we did various exercises where we had to use our bodies to empathize and understand each other and the group dimensions between each other.





Week 4
During the lecture of week four we started to focus on loops. A loop is an action that triggers certain feelings that results in an action that again result in certain feelings and in this way creates a loop. We made new groups and tried to come up with different loops. Eventually the homework was to individually make a graphic representation of a loop.



Week 5
During week five again new groups were made this time based on personal interest. At the start of the day the whole group reflected on what was done until then and conclusions that could be drawn by all the input we had gathered until then. Four different directions were chosen: Rituals, Food/Eating, Warmth around the house and the difference between day and night. I decided to join the ritual group and we started focusing on the tea ritual. We started with designing the concept and made some scratch models. During this week there was decided to make a documentary of the whole exhibition together.

Week 6
During week six my group made the technical part of the concept refined the concept, decided on a space to exhibit and got contact with a second hand store to arrange all the furniture.

Week 7

In week seven the tasks were divided, two people were responsible for what was on the table (the tea ritual itself), one person was responsible for the code and two people were responsible for the whole set-up. I did the set up and arranged all the furniture together with someone else. During week seven we put the whole exhibition together.



Week 8

In week eight we had the final exhibition. During this exhibition 50 people with very different backgrounds visited the exhibition. I guided people through the exhibition and so now and then told people about the design of my group.



Description of the concept

The Richness of Tea

The Richness of tea is a tea ritual system that invites people to experience a tea ritual while making use of the different senses. The experience around the tea ritual emphasizes on creating a nature inspired environment and the focus is more on the experience of preparing the tea rather than drinking the tea. The system is inspired by the way people with dementia rediscover their environment, and focuses on creating a positive experience loop for people who suffer from dementia as well as for their care givers.

"This description is made by the team."



Picture by: Dominique Fürst

The prototype vs. the concept

Overall the team thinks the final prototype did live up to the concept, nevertheless some elements were (intentionally) left out:

- Guiding light on the ceiling: we thought of a moving light beam that would guide the person suffering with dementia to the table. Due to impracticalities with the ceiling structure we decided to leave this out.
- Sound feedback on interaction with the ritual: we thought of giving the person suffering from dementia extra feedback by using sound. We weren't able to implement this in the given time, therefore we decided to leave this out.
- Nature inspired environment: Initially we wanted to create a nature inspired environment. Later on we changed the environment to an elderly home, because the familiarity of a living room setting would create a safe environment and because the furniture would make the big exhibition room a lot smaller. Additionally the living room theme created a cozy setting.

Overall the exhibition setting made the visitors more open to the new ideas and perspectives that were presented, rather than criticising them for their impracticalities.

"This discription is made by the team."



Picture by: Dominique Fürst

A reflection on the design

We received many positive reactions on the exhibition setting, many people saw the design as a nice way for people who suffer from dementia to kill some time. The main point of improvement that was received was that the ritual was too luxurious and this made it too overwhelming. There were too many elements in each step which made it difficult to understand what should be done. According to the visitors the ritual would be interesting for people suffering from dementia in an early phase; however by reducing the complexity of the ritual we might be able to make it interesting for people in a later phase.

The caretaker had a major role in the ritual as he or she had to guide the patient through each step. Sometimes this role was followed up very well, however often this wouldn't be the case. This shows that when this concept would be implemented in a care home, the caretaker should be taught how to perform the ritual. Another option would be to use objects chosen by the caretaker, in combination with the concept of guiding attention through the use of light and a rotating platform. This would allow the caretaker to create their own rituals based on the knowledge he or she has of the person suffering from dementia.

“This reflection is made by the team.”

My final reflection

During this elective I learned techniques to really place myself in the situation of the user I'm working for. This made me understand the human factor and the human characteristics that make the situation the way it is. The techniques I learned are: Acting out the situation using everyday utensils, creating a situation in which I can relate to my user and exercises that help the design team to get into the right mood to start the acting out session. I learned all these techniques by creating an experience driven design.

The overall process during this elective was very chaotic. This wasn't always a bad thing but it did ask for a lot of flexibility from the students. It wasn't clear in the beginning of the elective what the steps would be and it was very vague what was expected for the end result. The fact that these things were not totally clear created a lot of room for

interpretation and implementation for the students. All my latest projects had very clear design processes, which I normally try to create for myself, but during this elective I got a recap on how it is work in a very abstract way. During the elective the process became more concrete on the way towards the end result. It gave me insight in how much my design process has changed over the years, and that working more abstract can be very valuable as well. Because you don't know what your next step will be your thinking isn't limited by any constrains. Only by the help of reflection on action the next step was determined.

Due to the cancelation of the lecture about dementia I missed a little depth in the whole process. Off course I could have put more effort in finding information about dementia myself, but I only searched for a little basic

knowledge because I was afraid it would influence the experience focused design methodology we were learning about. It would have been nice to have more reflection during the lessons about our interpretation of dementia versus some real facts about dementia. When I'm going to apply this learning method in my future design processes I will compare my conclusions with facts from previous researches and mainly relate my conclusions to the people I design for, and really test whether my conclusions are right. This way the process would feel much more complete in my eyes.

Because I have been sick a lot during this elective I wasn't always on top of my abilities. This resulted in me being a little less controlling within the teams I worked in than I normally am. It resulted in a much more relaxed collaboration. I learned that I should

be less controlling and should have more trust in my team members, the role of team leader fits me well and becomes more relaxed and fluent if I relax a little more and have more trust in my team members. This way the end result maybe not always what I had in mind, but that doesn't mean that it isn't good.

I figured out that by placing myself in the perspective of the user and really acting out the situations in many different ways using many different senses helped me a lot in understanding people's perspective on certain situations. I will definitely use this technique when creating my future designs since the social aspect of a design is very important to me. I want my designs to really add something to society. Once people do not totally understand your design or when it doesn't totally connect to the user, the design will be worthless.