

Final Reflection M1.1 - Tectonia

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I'm a very hands-on designer who designs directly for society and who leans towards leadership and Entrepreneurship within design, so the choice for a track was easily made. I chose to do the "Design Leadership and Entrepreneurship (DLE) track".

Project goals

Within my project my main goal was to design for diversity in learning. Since I'm dyslexic, I experienced that many ordinary learning methods don't work well for children with learning problems like dyslexia. Every child learns in their own way and every child asks for a different learning style. I also planned to focus on the business aspect of the concept, the realization to the real world and the visual communication for the project.

Eventually due to working in a team and taking into account other people's goals and abilities, I didn't manage to accomplish all the goals. My focus this semester was on maintaining my idea of quality in the overall concept, making sure that the concept would be accessible for children with different learning demands, building the prototype, maintaining contact with experts, making the video and playing for team leader so now and then.

I succeeded in my main goal of designing for children with different learning demands. Our learning method provides various mediums for children to obtain the information. This way, children who for instance have difficulty obtaining information by reading, can watch a video or make something in order to obtain the same information.

Building the prototype

My main responsibility within the project was building the end prototype. I chose to be responsible for this because realization of the project was an important goal for me and I saw within the group that I had the most experience in making and building. I decided to build the prototype in such a way that it looks like a high quality school method that could actually be in use. For me as designers it is very important to deliver something that is as real, finished and market ready as possible. I don't like to deliver half work. By building the prototype, I learned new finishing techniques with varnish and I learned to work with magnets and make an aesthetic interaction by the help of magnets.

Managing design projects

Since I can be very perfectionistic and since I have a clear idea on how I want a task to be done, I took on the role of team leader many times. This was something new I learned from myself. I never saw myself as such a perfectionistic and persisting person. I realized that behaving like a project manager came very natural to me, but that I also don't really like to do it. I'm still figuring out whether this has something to do with insecurity for feeling the responsibility of delivering good work, or that I just don't like to be the manager type and want to be more at the background. Next semester I'm going to do a project for the company Buurkracht where I can find out if managing projects is something that I want to do after I finish the master. Within the project this is my biggest learning point.

Teamwork

Everyone in the team was very ambitious and had clear ideas of what they wanted to design. I feel lucky working together in this team, though it was not always easy. Working together with people from all these different backgrounds asked for good communication, which takes a lot of time and effort. I realized that I tend to expect from people to just understand me, which is not always handy when working in a team. Luckily the team was evenly matched and with some good discussions and flexibility we always came to conclusions that everyone could agree on. Realizing that I can't expect people to just understand me helped me in communicating better what my ideas are and becoming more realistic in my expectations to others.

Research

Within this semester I followed the mandatory elective "Constructive Design Research". It was a good preview of what next semester will be like and I learned a lot about different research methodologies. The main thing I learned is that I'm not very interested in doing research on a very detailed and abstract level. I like to make things that are direct implementable in people's lives. I understand that research is necessary to ensure that the product works, which is why I plan on using a field or hidden-design methodology for my research project upcoming semester.

Energy

I also followed the elective "Energy, Economy and Society" at the faculty of "Innovation Sciences". I choose this subject to research whether the energy theme really is my thing and to learn more details about energy systems, energy within society, renewable energy sources, energy policies and energy economics. All of these things made me only more passionate about the energy topic.

It is my goal with design to make people aware of their energy use. I want to use my design skills to change the behavior of people towards a society that becomes more energy efficient and uses more rentable energy sources. I was very glad to integrate my preferred topic in the current project, by creating lessons to teach children about wind energy as a renewable energy source. I found out that I keep coming back to the energy topic, and that I want to spend the rest of my master education specializing in this topic. This is why I will also focus my research semester on energy. I'm going to do the project "Data enabled Design for Vitality", a project that focuses on collecting data that is used as input to design for a specific user group. Within the project I can have the freedom to focus on the behavior of people within the energy theme.

Own company

My passion about the energy topic within design started during my B3.2 semester where I designed an object for the company Buurkracht, that helps young families to become more aware of their energy use and teach them how to save energy. This semester I got the chance to go further with this project. Right now I'm in the middle of starting my own company and making the first plans for working out my concept for the real world. I came up with a logo, a name for my company and already made my first quotation. I researched all legal rules that apply when having a company. I learned a lot about having a business, so even though I wasn't able to focus on business within my project I learned a lot about translating a concept towards a real business opportunity.

Extra Curricular

As extra curricular activities I spend this semester a lot of time organizing Stukafest (<http://www.stukafest.nl/eindhoven/>), a cultural event for student that will take place in February. I also spend time working for E-lucid where I sold electrical component to my fellow students, here I learned a lot about different electrical components. I also spend time giving workshops to 3 grade high school children about design and I joined the Education Committee of the faculty where I represent the first year master students.