

Collecting for

User Stories

*User-centred research in higher
art & design education*

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Collecting for User Stories

User-centred research in higher art & design
education rooted in The Netherlands.

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Summary

The research thematic for my graduation project *Collecting for User Stories*, has been inspired by conversations with students at the Willem de Kooning Academy (WDKA), where I teach Research & Design. In these conversations students expressed difficulties in formulating the urgency of a design. Through observing students working on several (social) design projects it became clear this seems to be associated with a gap between how design students associate their own commitment to a project, and the need of the alleged user of the project. This resulted into the subject of this research: an update on how to teach user-centred design.

At the WDKA the curriculum is built around preferred profiles of commercial-, social- or autonomous designers. I am committed to find out how this new generation of designers formulate their purpose with design in the context of the cultural diversity of a city like Rotterdam, and in an age where technology is changing the way designers work.

In this research, I observe designers in relation to the future users of their work. I learned how documenting the different stages of a (multi-media) user story, can help to discriminate and contextualise subjective information about the user. Understanding the relevance of user stories to the design process, I set out to experiment with and observe potential ways in which students might acquire user stories. I used the method of transformative learning to design tangible tools for experiential research into the empathic moments in what I call 'user-centred research'. Using the method of user stories, designers can share the urgency of a design within a team, and fuel the serendipity of ideation. A collection of user stories can potentially inform a design practice on the purpose with design in a larger social-political context.

'Collecting for User Stories' describes ways to conduct empathic research into the urgency of future designs among users in the current context of cultural diversity and technology changes. A User Story reveals knowledge on user-needs and context, and inspires any designer on the serendipity of ideation. Photography: Artotem (2016)



Glossary

Design thinking

Design thinking is a process, through which one analyses and synthesizes and solve et coagulates. Design thinking is a combination of both analytic and holistic thinking. Design thinking is an iterative process, components are: lateral thinking, user-centred, co-create, prototyping, visual thinking.

Design

Design is an action to make an event that is going to be used in the near future. Brassett and Marenko (2015, p.11) bring together design theorists Simons and Buchanan on design saying: ‘design is always future oriented, as it is constantly engaged with turning what is, into what could, might or ought to be’. Both keep from formulating design being a thing (subjected to taste) and negotiate it is not a thing but a process. (Brassett and Marenko, 2015)

Decentralised design

In a networked society, ‘Decentralised design’, ‘Open design’, ‘Open structures movement’ are systems (or platforms) intricately linked to the idea of self-organisation—a phenomenon in which local interactions between components of a system establish order and coordination to achieve global goals without a central commanding influence.

User

Design is about people. Designers create things that people will use. By calling them ‘users’, I mean people. Specifically, people who will use the product or service that designers design for. They may not be a current user, but optimistically they will be a future user. Sometimes when users are asked to participate during the design-process, they have a participative role. But they will still be users, a common term in the design industry.

User-centred design

That’s why it’s called user-centered design (UCD). The design is centered around the user. User-centred design may be considered

a practice, craft, framework, philosophy, discipline, or method to describe a design processes in which users influence how a design takes shape. I coined the term ‘user-centred research’ to corner the momentum within a design process.

Human-centred-design

Human-centred offers problem solvers of any stripe a chance to work with communities, to deeply understand the people they’re looking to serve, to dream up scores of ideas, and to create innovative new solutions rooted in people’s actual needs.

Social design

Social design is a type of design that places the role and responsibility of the designer in the heart of society. The design process is designed in such a way that social change takes place. Within the design world, social design is seen as a design process that can add to human well-being and living standards. Often the target group itself is also actively involved in the process, but this is not a must.

Participatory design

‘Participatory art and design works, products, workshops and so on in which the makers and participants are involved, as ‘projects’ as defined by A.telier. This collective describes a project as a common form in which resources, such as people and technology, are brought together in creative achievements’. (ed. Huybrechts 2013, p11)

Pedagogy

For educators the term Pedagogy is used to describes the means to point at something. Didactics is practicing how to point at something. Teaching is to show, point out to the student.

Introduction

As a designer I am committed to the person I design for. A simple statement, but it implies empathy for the other, a sustainable view on function-follows-need, and suggests local knowledge. Being a tutor for research & design at Willem de Kooning Academy (WDKA) Rotterdam for higher art & design education, has demanded to articulate such commitments in relation to my students and the constantly changing conditions of the design field. This is why this research for Master of Education in Arts, is sparked of by conversations with my students. I recall talking to a newly graduate at the final show of WDKA, who expressed her concerns: “Now that I am a creating pioneer¹ in design, how do I decide on a client or assignment?” The momentum of such an important question in the career of a designer, has led directly to the subject of this research. How do designers look for the urgency of a design with the people they design for? This is perhaps not a question particular to this century of designers, but it does call on exploring it in our current context. This research project will look at the relation between designer and user in the current context of cultural diversity and technology changes. Students want to connect to their (future-)users, as they represent valuable information on the urgency of their designs, but sometimes they find themselves in complex social settings. Which raises following questions as: How to recognise common ground? How to inform yourself about things you do not know?

The theoretical framework of this research describes the changes in design and the current strengths and weaknesses of education in relation to an ever-changing society. I reflect on those with education projects MARKT010 and DOUBLE DIARY against the backdrop of the city of Rotterdam. This city provides a cultural diverse users-public for these projects in participation

1 A creating pioneer at WDKA is used to describe a young creative with a multitude of talents and skills, the ones who look beyond the borders of their original discipline. Its most common meaning as a noun in English refers to a person who is the first to settle or explore a new country or area.

with the students of WDKA Lifestyle Transformation Design. I use the method of transformative learning to design appropriate tangible tools, to script and amplify the empathic moments of connecting (in something I call user-centred research). I experiment and observe how user stories can be generated to promote empathy and reveal the complexity of the context and culture of the user. The form of stories is chosen because it reflects the transparency, and ownership over a process this generation has grown accustomed to. The aim of a user story is to share collected information with a (progressively decentral) design team.

I set out to experiment and observe potential ways in which students acquire stories about their user, along the route of traveling and spotting, finding common ground, relating to different cultural heritages. Those are described by three designated moments during user-centred research: meet, relate, create. Meet, is researched through a case study at the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht (HKU) and reveals how traveling can stimulate students to spot commitment connected to 'the other' (potential user). Relate, is about empathy and needfinding. With the help of new tangible tools like Double dairy, Trojan horse, Photo talk, I test the pedagogical theory of transformative learning with a focus on time and momentum. Create a User Story is the overall chapter on how to document gathered information in every step and pass it down the line without losing its intention. Two education projects, WANDERSCHAFT and NLM2, stand example on how elusive matters like value are documented, and how values and facts have their own preferred medium for transmitting the message.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design-thinking and user-centred-design serve as an inspirational literature for the methodology of this research. The steps are followed to pin point the current status of engaging with users by the students. This revealed a few of gaps of knowledge on how to lead such a social encounter and what



Photography: Methaphors (2017), Puck Litaay, Ella Gerritsen, Janne van de Weijer.

The images on this page and the next are an attempt to visualise the differences between the cultural references of a group of design students and one of the local users, both stakeholders in a social design project. User-centred research looks for ways to find common ground amongst those. (Education project MARKT010, see appendix: MARKT010)



Photography: Prakash Sahe (2018),

forces and mindsets play a role when designer and user meet and relate. These gaps fed the topics of experiential research.

I compare projects from different art & design institutes Willem de Kooning Academy (Rotterdam), Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht (Utrecht), departments Lifestyle Transformation Design, Product Design and other renowned social design (or participative) projects. I observe and analyse those on issues of common ground, location and collecting with notes. The findings feed the scripting of educational projects.

Experiential² research is done to develop and test new tangible tools to the ability of promoting empathy at the moments of interaction between designer and user (user-centred research). The tools focus on time, momentum and the context of such a meeting to hopefully reduce preconceived ideas. The use of these tools are observed and analysed at the education project DOUBLE DIARY. Together with students from the institute we use local social platforms as a hub to meet and work with users outside of the educational institute.

In drawing conclusions, I will evaluate as to which instruments encourage user-centred research, this is incorporated in the surveys used by the students. The success of the method is measured by the practical purpose of user stories for ideation during the design process and how it serves cross-pollination within a project group and whether the method of User Story helps students to uncover the urgency of a design.

RELEVANCE

In the professional design field, emerging systems for design (Open Design, Decentralised Design) no longer require for the members of a team to be in one place at the time. With the World Wide Web platform, stakeholders (including customers),

² Experiential research is research on persons in which the subjects of the research contribute not only to the content of the research, i.e. the activity that is being researched, but also to the creative thinking that generates, manages, and draws conclusions from the research. Beginning in the 1970s, David A. Kolb helped to develop the modern theory of experiential learning, drawing heavily on the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget.

sources and production teams can be located anywhere on the globe. *Visa versa*, this system leads to a new generation of consumers, that demands voice and customisation over the designed object they wish to purchase. They are called ‘user’ (of a product) since they take on a more active role contributing to the applicability of the outcome. This changes not only the role of the designer, but demands to relate across nodes. The International Journal of Design, dedicated a special issue in 2016 to the roots of the popularity of open access platforms in the last 10 years. “Important research in this regard has been done in Italy (Meroni, 2007; Manzini, 2015), Australia (Dorst, 2015), Scandinavia (Binder, Brandt, Ehn, & Halse, 2015), and the UK (Kimbell, 2014), among others.” (Chen et al, 2016, p1). They point (besides the world wide platform evolving) at political changes, for example, the withdrawal of the welfare state in Europe, financial crisis of 2008, which have pushed designers to seek more customers from the public sector and from non-governmental organizations. “Simultaneously, the growth of design education has pushed many young designers to seek new markets, which are being created by a substantial number of complex societal challenges” (Chen et al, 2016, p1). These new conditions faces the designer with new forms that rely on social and empathic skills.

In education, the Educational Vision of the Rotterdam University of Applied Science has adapted its learning environment to the new structures: “... Creating knowledge takes place within social structures and processes of *collaboration*, supporting innovation and development of knowledge. The focus is on learning *collectively* versus learning individually.” (Vision on Education, 2016). For design students to organise a design project in collaboration, whether this is with fellow designers or external users, asks for specific social skills. Communicating values amongst each other can be hard, especially in transdisciplinary teams.

In learning, (with my students) I witness gaps in the current collaborative approach of students with their users. I

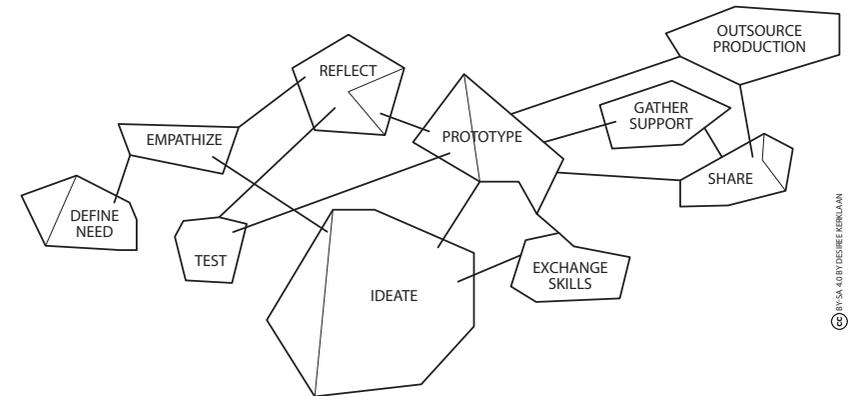
observed students in an education project called MARKT010 [see appendix: MARKT010]. This project implied complete user-centred-design. I documented their collaborating efforts in a survey. This immediately showed how open the students are to social design, but also revealed a few gaps on *finding common ground* and *relating across commitment* with some of the users. Students show difficulty to recognise common ground across cultures. This is correlated with a practical problem with organising time and momentum to relate to the other. Learning how to organise this prevents the students to fill in the needs of the user with preconceived ideas.

In pedagogy for the curriculum of Lifestyle Transformation Design (WDKA) we use the existing theory of user-centred design, which suggests many social oriented design tools. But it is mostly written for when designers and the subject have actually met and the ideation phase has begun.

Updating user-centred design

Design field in flux

New conditions in the design field are instigated by the World Wide Web 3.0 with the developments of a networked society setting the future of design with decentralise design initiatives like modular design, open structures, open design are born. Both producers and consumers now have potential access to a communication infrastructure that is geared towards sharing and exchange. This shift is profoundly changing our current models of creation, production and consumption.



Decentralised design model

↻ Every step and as a whole DD has an iterative character

Networked society, Decentralised design, Open design, Open structures movement. These new systems are intricately linked to the idea of self-organisation, a phenomenon in which local interactions between components of a system establish order and coordination to achieve global goals without a central commanding influence. Some professionals foresee open structures to evolve to: “Creating a new standard for sustainable and democratic design” (Lomée, 2010). Democracy implies giving voice to whom you design for. Education should concentrate on skills for discovering the urgency of a design.

Brussels designer and open-design-structure-guru Thomas Lommée updates the status of open design at his expo *Yes-we're-Open* at Kortrijk (Belgium) in 2010. The poster of the expo explains: “In a network design practice, the (participating) consumer is no longer judging an object for what it is, but rather imagines what it can become, hence fulfilling a personal need.” The added value for the future end-user, can be a motive to measure the success of your job as a designer. The expo liner notes further describe: “Objects of design are evolving into dynamic puzzles, self-improving product versions rather than rigid monoliths”. When multiple experienced players infuse a design, it is challenging to measure the voice of an inexperienced user, yet it is vital to keep the urgency of the design alive.

It is my intent (for design education purpose) to describe relating- and cooperating tools, for designers to get better acquainted to the end-user needs. To be able to share this knowledge with the team of worker on a (social) project. This is the main part of my research question: How do designers inform themselves about things they do not know? And the second part: How can designers translate users’ information to help evoke ideation?

Design research adaptations

This might point towards user-centred design, a method already used in design (education). However there are a few shortcomings.

The term user-centred design (UCD) refers to both a collection of techniques and the philosophy at the heart of these techniques. The overall philosophy of UCD is to place the user at the centre of the design process through the use of rigorous methods. For instance, the designer tries to get to know the users initially through techniques such as interviews, direct observation in context, forums and questionnaires, before moving on to design prototypes for the users to test within a real-life context. Practice shows that interviewing

and observation is insufficient when relating ‘across borders’. Because it is difficult to comprehend and interpret material that is not tied to your own cultural heritage.

There are slightly different flavours of UCD in existence. Some suggest using participatory design, some contextual design but they all share the following principles:

- The design is based upon an explicit understanding of users, tasks and environments
- Users are involved throughout design and development
- The design is driven and refined by user-centred evaluation
- The process is non linear
- The design addresses the whole user experience
- The design team includes multidisciplinary skills and perspectives.

With new technology lined up for the design field, it seems that user-centred design approach doesn’t cover the complexity of the challenges we face. We do not longer design just products for users. We design for the future experiences of people, communities and cultures.

Professors in design and research Elizabeth Sanders at Ohio State University, and Pieter Jan Stappers at TU Delft clarify in their research on ‘Cocreation and the new landscape of design’ how the changing of the role of design in general, influences the change of purpose for a designer. They write: “We are moving from the design of categories of ‘products’ to designing for people’s purposes”. (p7, 2008) The draw up the next table ‘Emerging design’ which shows how the traditional design disciplines on the left, are centred around the product or a technology. The makers of these, the designers (and indirect design education) are focussed on the skills needed to expertly conceive-of and give-shape to products such as brand identities, interior spaces, buildings, consumer products, etc.

Table: Emerging design. A snapshot in time of traditional and emerging design practices (Sanders & Stappers, 2008)

The traditional design disciplines focus on the designing of "products"...	... while the emerging design disciplines focus on designing for a purpose
visual communication design interior space design product design information design architecture planning	design for experiencing design for emotion design for interacting design for sustainability design for serving design for transforming

On the right we see the new experience design, which demands extensive knowledge on the values of the future-user. New observational skills during the research phase in design are needed. *Designing value* is a popular discussion in the professional design field. One of Japan's leading designers Kenya Hara (with client names as Muji and the Nagano Olympic Games) states that designers considering how to create — or design — value, could think of culture as a resource. In an interview for the Japanese Times, Hara explains: "When we typically think of resources (for a design ed.) we think of materials and minerals, but a resource can also be aesthetic, or even cultural" (McKean, 2014)

So, in due respect to designing with 'the user in the centre', we should get to know his values, needs and context before we even start. Discovering a need that no one else sees, is called 'needfinding', a term allegedly originated at Stanford University Design School. It helps a designer to focus on a customer's fundamental problems/needs (which rarely change) instead of solutions (which change a lot). Needfinding implies to get closer to the end user to find the explicit and implicit needs. Critical needfinding principles include letting users guide the flow of research, collecting data in a variety of different forms, and integrating research and design in a series of iterative stages as a way to fine-tune results. A professional 'needfinder' is in a way gaining empathy for the other and its specific context. 'It

involves noting, watching, looking, listening and to cast aside your biases.' (Stanford, 2007).

The global design platform IDEO has trod ground in ways to hear the needs of constituents through an extensive toolkit for Human Centred Design: 'It offers problem solvers of any stripe a chance to design with communities, to deeply understand the people they're looking to serve, to dream up scores of ideas, and to create innovative new solutions rooted in people's actual needs' (IDEO, 2018). Where IDEO is more concentrated on research *through* art and design, as Frayling (British educationalist and cultural historian, and critic at, amongst others, Royal College of Art and the design Council) so adequately has dissected different means of research. This research is looking at ways to research *for* art and design. Where 'research through art' shows a convergent picture, 'research for art and design' is a divergent activity. The artist Picasso considered this as: "the gathering of reference materials" (Frayling, 1991, p5). To research *for* art and design³ in a user-centred fashion, I would like to rephrase the method as 'user-centred research'. This refers to the action as well as the momentum for designer students to discover how to inform about things they do not know about users. For educational purposes, further research should fill in the method, inspired by the demands for the future platforms I described earlier.

Design education reacts

Rather than suggesting designers rely on standards and guidelines, I suggest that designers need to develop a real empathy with their user groups. Under the title Social-design, Sanders & Stappers suggest a number of ways to get close to the user groups, including the use of ethnography and techniques

³ Research for design = research to enable design (practice based). This research area provides the information, implications, and data that designers can apply to achieve an end-result in their design projects (Downton,2003; Forlizzi et al.,2009). Aim: helping, guiding and developing design practice. How: giving input to the processes/practices of designers, design practice as the object of study.

derived from professional theatre. Both for requirements gathering and for improving designers' empathy with external clients. Hence, empathy is a necessary personal quality for the first steps of design thinking. It is the ability to understand and identify with another person's context, emotions, goals, and motivations. As soon as design projects expand to multiple communities (worldwide) for example in projects about immigration, humanitarian help, the designer is set to relate across cultures. It is a common instinct when historically different cultures or communities meet, to look at the other through your own 'historical glasses'.

For art & design educators this is a point to take into consideration, since students in design projects today more often run into social issues with greater complexity. George Aye, Founder of the Greater Good Studio and teacher at School of the Art Institute of Chicago mentions in one of his blogs online, "For all the talk about being human-centred, one very human factor often gets overlooked—a basic understanding of how power operates in relationships between people." (Aye, 2017) How can we as educators speak of teaching human-centred-design if we do not pay more attention to how to listen beyond cultures or how to create empathy?

AWARENESS ON THE POSITION OF THE DESIGNER

There are times when a (future-)user is sharing information about the urgency of a need, it feels to a designer as he is acting as a 'client'—in some cases this triggers an authoritarian design attitude. It takes some humility to be a 'civic professional', as Thomas Bender (professor of the humanities at New York University) describes those who understand that they need the public and its knowledge in order to do their work. He regularly publicises in the Chronicle of Higher Education, and speaks directly to the educator when he states: "Those who educate civic professionals will have to teach them to integrate their scientific learning into the public's practical reasoning. And that will require substantial changes in our classrooms." I hope

with publicising this research, to help spread this notion. In this case I will apply it by considering the public within the educational project of this research. *And from this day on, I will incorporate in every one of my lessons how a designer can not enter the role of leading a collaborative journey (with his public) without first acknowledging the personal history of the designer-role (to his public).* For any design educator, every opportunity allows for addressing counteractive directive design and how its invisible powers influence both designer and user during research. George Aye, on his blog about human-centred-design, cuts this down into practical pedagogy: "A great starting point for the student is to at least acknowledge that:

- a) another audience other than oneself exists and
- b) this audience has needs different to one's own

The more experienced the students get in understanding the mechanics of power, they will find that power is remarkably renewable. Power is restorative the more you give it away." (Aye, 2017) The set up of assignments in design education should appeal to the humility of the designer by acknowledging his skills but giving the public an opportunity to have a voice.

INCORPORATING THE POSITION OF THE OTHER

It is an anthropological challenge, no doubt, to bring together; perspectives, objectivity, and understanding of others; to separate a fact of experience from its interpretation. While researching similar problems, I found The theory of Transformative Learning, which is originally meant for adult education. It should be an ideal helper showing techniques to open-up to different views when meeting divergent commitments. Transformative learning is the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic world view and specific capacities of the self. Transformative learning is facilitated through consciously directed processes such as appreciatively accessing and receiving the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analysing underlying premises. Jack Mezirow developed the theory of transformative learning

in 1978. Dr. Patricia Cranton and John M. Dirks, both professors in higher adult education, added alterations to the theory from 1994 on. Cranton (1994) explains, “Transformative learning (TL) theory leads us to view learning as a process of becoming aware of one’s assumptions and revising these assumptions” (Cranton, 1994, p.730). Cranton (1994) simply states, “If basic assumptions are not challenged, change will not take place...” (Cranton, 1994, p. 739). It has influenced the education projects of this research on the topic of location, and taking the student out of their comfort zone to infuse learning. One can imagine how such assimilation takes time. This theory supports me as researcher when I design bridging-tools in the relation between designer and the public. It also functions as such in my practice as a teacher. It helps to recognise pitfalls during new or difficult collaborations. *Related to this subject it has taught me as an educator to take smaller steps, or rather, more time. When I sometimes found students ‘did not seem to hear me,’ I now know, it is debit to me not tapping into their proximity learning zone. Proximity learning zone refers to the learning that occurs when a person is assisted with a skill set higher than that of the subject, but not too far from his knowledge. At one time in class, I found myself explaining to a team, how they could be interviewing people out on the street, on the subject of offline-games (their topic). This proved to be unsuccessful, as they muttered and turned to their mobile. I revised my energy and started to do a simple group exercise on the wall, with Post-its. I asked each of them to poster their favourite offline-game and to accompany it with a personal (user-)story. Soon they adopted the subject and were open to search (first in school, later out on the street) for more and other peoples’ input.*

Transformative learning addresses relating to the other, by looking at yourself. Transformative learners, are trained to question their perspectives, open up new ways of looking at their perspectives, revise their views, and act based on new perspectives (Sokol & Cranton,1998). More importantly, the pedagogical qualities of experiential learning and the theory of transformative learning, imparts fluently in the interpretation of

complex relationships. This is used for pedagogical underpinning in the educational projects that are part of this research.

CONSIDERING THIS GENERATION OF LEARNERS

For the structure of the educational project, I look for familiar structures this generation students recognise. Professor Dick Rijken on information technology and society, links me with the heritage the digital natives (our current students in higher education) are dealing with. On the website of ‘Open Design Now’ he describes how this generation is used to dealing with network-communicating through nodes and links, i.e. identities and relationships, “Nodes have their own unique identity, but that identity is meaningless without links to other nodes.” (Rijken, 2011) At first, it seems very individual, but at a larger extent, it shows how the system depends on who we relate to and interact with.

Ahlers and Boenders consumer- and communication strategists in The Netherlands, have done brought research into Generation Z (GZ) and come up with some characteristics that are useful for designing education projects. The conclusion of their research shows, how once you have connected to GZ, they are loyal and follow you faithfully and are used to feed you with input and suggestions. Another point of Ahler and Boenders, and potentially an opportunity for education, is the goal driven learning preference of generation-Z: It is important for a student to get the chance and time, to truly relate to the goal of a project described. This generation recognises the quality in life in products and services with a personal approach by a transparent company. Students are using the cloud to gather decision making support, being it prompt. I can see how the use of different nodes (smaller assignments that interconnect) could hold the attention while researching into the needs of the other. And how stretching the initial interest (momentum) is crucial.



Suzanna van Oers (HKU) Photography: Desiree Kerklaan (2017)

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Collecting information on research travels. By the use of cultural probes (research with 'things') is a means of gathering data about people's lives, values, thoughts. Probes can be any sort of artifact (map, postcard, camera, object,



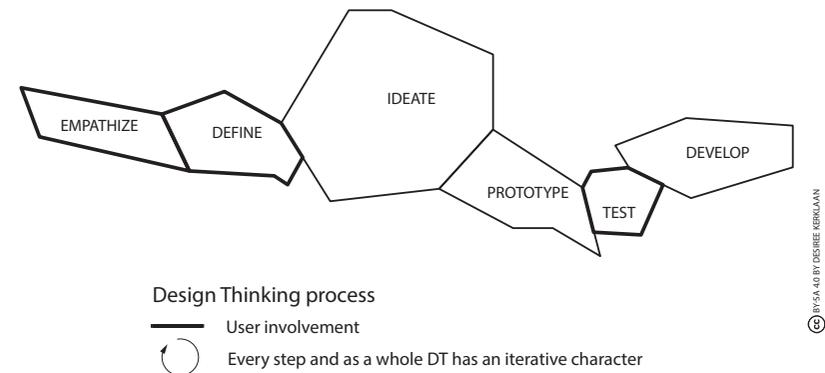
Renzo de Pablo. Photography: Desiree Kerklaan (2017).

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diary etc.) along with evocative tasks, which are given to participants to allow them to record specific events, feelings or interactions.

Collecting information through user-centred research

Design-thinking and user-centred design serve as an inspirational literature for the methodology of this research. When I speak of a design-process I follow the steps of design thinking. For this research I focus on the research phase of such a process, and therefore concentrate on the first 2 steps shown in the graphic below: Emphasize and Define. Like the other steps, emphasizing and defining are not inseparable, they both support each other. Also for educational purposes, I found their iterative character very helpful in designing the educational projects.



Design thinking is a process, through which one analyses and synthesizes, and solve and coagulates. Design thinking is a combination of both analytic and holistic thinking. Design thinking is an iterative process, components are: lateral thinking, user-centred, co-create, prototyping, visual thinking. Its used by a designer during the process of designing the arrangement of the features of an artefact.

From educational publications like International Journal of Design and Design Issues, I gather characteristics of similar user centred theories and approaches, and come up with a long list of what seems to be the qualities of user-centeredness. I conduct qualitative analysis by segmenting the data, to distinct phases that are manifest to user-centred design: Invite, Receive, Relate, Measure.

Table: UCR steps. User-centred research steps and characteristics. During this research this model serves as a framework for analyses to verify the steps in creative communication tools.

Invite	invite participant
	use a safe environment to invite people
	think of timing when players are involved
	divide responsibilities and powers to players
Receive	truly understand the user, tasks and environment
	empathise with the potential user
	tap into the context knowledge
Relate	iterate the research phase throughout the process
	let the process lead the design
	involve the user throughout design and development
	use multidisciplinary skills and perspectives
Measure	design user-centred evaluation
	how to lead prototyping
	iterate evaluation throughout the process
	involve the whole user experience from beginning to end

Integrating the social qualities of user-centred design that I found earlier, I consolidate basic steps for user-centred research to work with in the next steps of this research:

1. Meet and recognise a common ground with your subject. Discover the urgency of a design with the user, discover a subjective position towards a commitment.

2. Relate asks for empathy for objectively collecting knowledge on the subject.

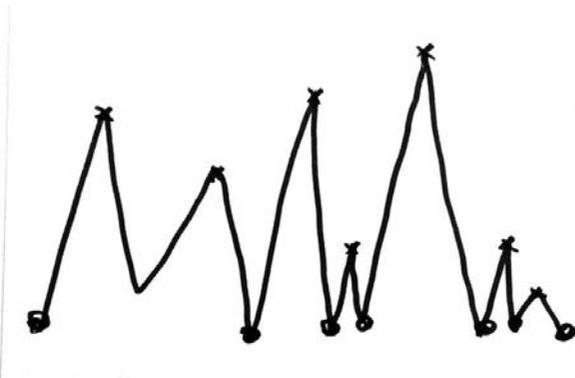
This reconciles with the method of needfinding, mentioned earlier. When pulling this forward in time, ahead of the research phase of a design process, it reveals a new sub-question for the student. How do I recognise common ground? A designer needs to share a commitment to a subject or need, before he recognises common ground. And that has to be done: out there, out of the building. A strategy is to look at traveling.

Spotting common ground [case study: WANDERSCHAFT]

For inspiration on the first step ‘Meet’, I study a 3rd year project at HKU (Utrecht Art Academy) product design, about ‘meeting common ground in the field’. This three-months project, is meant as final rehearsal for students into the individuality of the exam project. Ingrid Schuffelers, co-head of the department, explains what WANDERSCHAFT is about: “WANDERSCHAFT gives space to endeavour on the relationship between designer, their fascinations, projects and the outside world. Students discover independently the relation between behaviour as a person and as a maker in the connection to the world, while traveling and making for three months.”

For this research I study the correlation between the means of traveling and the collected materials of the students. When I meet them on the return days at the Utrecht Academy, I look at their gathered materials and listen to the stories. I deduct three different ways of traveling and how these show different ways of collecting information: The daily explorer, the adventurer and the traveller on a quest.

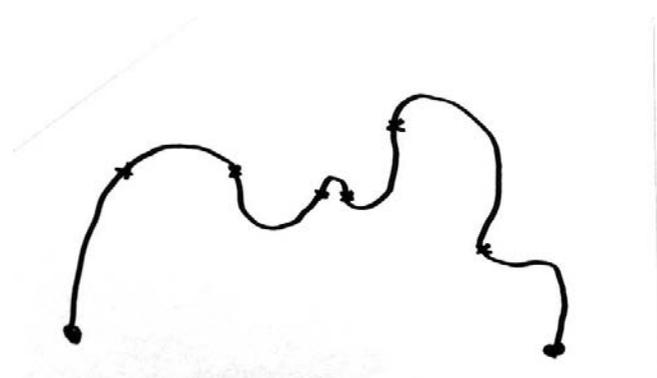
The daily explorer, with her ‘viewfinder’. She uses her home-base as a download station. All information gathered from the short trip is documented and processed in the context of a familiar place. The experiences are incorporated into the familiarity of her daily life. She ventures into the next trip with a sorted head.



The travel movements of a 'daily explorer', a typical researcher backed by the safety of their own context. Information is downloaded daily which is a precise method for documenting facts.

I compare it to the attitude of the adventurer. To prepare for his travels he shuts down all communicating lines with his social life. He did not want 'home' to interfere with his new experience for him to keep an open mind. He wanted to be a wanderer and not himself. He dismantles his old identity by shutting off his phone, bring no luggage, and even by taking off his clothes when he stays at couch-surfing addresses of nudist locals. He quotes it freely to Kierkegaard: "By going deep, far outside your comfort zone, you will meet yourself." Was he afraid his own identity would prevent taking in new impressions? "Yes", that was probably his main concern.

Once back home from his travels he at once 'downloaded' his heavy head, in a man-sized painting. The different colours and shapes interlocking, each represent an experience. When he shows us the painting, you can tell by his eyes, every square or line play a story in his mind. In this abstract painting he has shown his travel experience, but he has not revealed it to us.

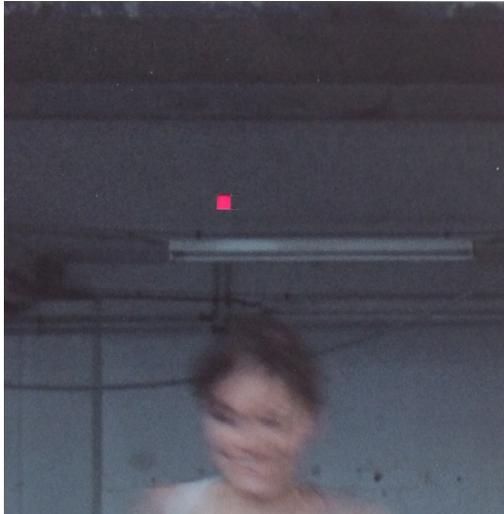


The experiences of the 'adventurer' are all undergone in a continuous manner from one place to another. In the end similar experiences, that could be miles apart, are blend together in a story in which the most emotional events predominate.

I ask the adventurer if he has interacted with knowledge from one place at another, for example from Stramproy at Lille? "Yes actually, I visited a church in Lille, something I would have never done if it wasn't for a monk in Stramproy I stayed with. And I talked too much at the silent-seeker, after staying with the political discussant."

'How do I inform about things I don't know', has been opened up by the qualities of WANDERSCHAFT. The way inspiration is recorded and processed show the different mindsets of ways of travel. From the safety of your own context, or by stepping out of your familiarity and learn new paradigms. Such different ways in looking during travels serves to be an important aspect of meeting and spotting common ground with users. On the go, the students collect information about 'things they do not know'. To articulate common ground from the documentation presented, it seems the most productive way is that of the 'traveller on a quest'. Rowan from the HKU group, went looking for evidence of Science Fiction during his WANDERSCHAFT. Because he was traveling with a single question, he could look very sharp. Everything he saw he could

relate to his question. For example, in architecture from the area 'the new building' (1915-1940), he identified the same idiom as Science Fiction (or vice versa) and articulates it as: "A point where two moments meet in time". In addition, the freedom of continuous traveling fed him daily with new information. Without the 'download' (at home), the hunger grew into a daily addiction. He is starting to recognise his world everywhere. "Traveling is a way to ask questions that you do not ask at home, not necessarily about the country in question, but about yourself." (Herman de Coninck) He has reflected Science fiction in every possible mirror including himself and states: "I have found others who make like me, I have found my maker-family." He has recognized the visual language in many more parts of the world than film and art, and in many more crafts than design. He has broadened, deepened his inspirational field immensely. He has met people on common ground.



The 'traveller on a quest' has the benefit of the wanderer en-route, but looks at the world committed to a certain subject. This technique offers unexpected discoveries on common ground.

Place and time of a meeting

Once the location and context of common ground are established, relating to the people and retrieving information on the urgency of design starts. From reflections on education project MARKTO10 (see appendix: MARKTO10) I have learned how place and time are important factors in such meetings between designer and user. With the students, I discuss the survey I collected from them on the interactions they had during this social design project. Timing and time spent together was linked to the success of an interaction. Failing random street-interviews had been discouraging to the group: "People do not have time to talk to us." *As an educator to this project of MARKTO10, I should have provided means for the students to set up an informal public place to meet for a longer time period. A location local to the community, out of the educational building and on common ground. How do other (social) projects create such hubs for informing?*

Prof. Dr. Liesbeth Huybrechts (highly knowledgeable on the topic of digital media, art, design and participation) teaches as an associate professor at the ArcK research group, Faculty of Architecture and Arts, University of Hasselt. She has been associated with a collaborative project in one of the neighbourhoods of Genk (BE). This group used a local building to set up base, the space is designed to be a 'living lab'⁴ for collaborative research. All the local interventions, labs and outcomes are publicly shared via an online platform. Such a set up enables participatory exchanges during the project, and even after the designers have left. This makes the project 'De Andere Markt' sustainable and running for at least two years.

Another example on location vs time comes from the British Arts Catalyst's programme; King's Cross Editorial Office. The office in the neighbourhood is for collecting stories, memories, knowledge and impressions from the locals. By adopting an open-door approach, the office will function as a place for listening to, recording and narrating (multi media) the

⁴ Living Labs are ecosystems where the research is not carried out in closed design studios, but via a systematic participatory approach, integrating research and innovation processes.

lives of the many constituencies and individuals who inhabit (or who once inhabited) the neighbourhood in an immersive, non-linear manner. The big shop window of the office, shows stories from then, now and soon to attract visitors.

For the next educational project DOUBLE DIARY, the teams assembled from my group of students, had no funds to set up a local or digital platform. But rather than establish ourselves an informal space to meet local citizens on common ground, for DOUBLE DIARY we looked for a platform we could hook on to. For the benefit of the education project DOUBLE DIARY with students of WDKA LTD, we contacted local people through the social-project hub of the Afrikaanderwijkcoöperatie in the area. This local cooperation already had sustainable connection with committed users.

Education project DOUBLE DIARY: Relating in practice

[SEE: APPENDIX DOUBLE DIARY]

On the fine line between public, power of initiative, owning power and getting power, I design a workshop to experience the theory of relating. A combination of Trojan Horse (to elope the interview) and Photo Talk (relating to background information) as a whole should evoke empathy and commitment between students of WDKA LTD, and representatives of the residents of the neighbourhood Afrikaanderwijk Rotterdam.

I consider the following things: the public, the student, the context and the common ground they share. The objective is for both parties to find a shared commitment. The means (or tools), should support relating across cultures, and are designed for this generation of students. To design these tools for this specific target group I have taken into account their preferred learning strategies of gathering info through nodes and collecting and sorting results (like ‘the cloud’) to inform them. But if the students feel at any time they want to adjust the tools in benefit of the goal or ‘the other’, I am fine with

that. The tools are based upon the theory of transformative learning. The workshop is part of a collaborative project in the neighbourhood of Afrikaanderwijk. The students use this workshop as a research-tool for a pop-up project in the neighbourhood benefiting the local inhabitants. The set-up for DOUBLE DIARY is inspired on ‘Against Interpretation’ by Susan Sontag, “If excessive stress on content provokes the arrogance of interpretation, more extended and more thorough descriptions of form would silence. What is needed is a vocabulary—a descriptive, rather than prescriptive, vocabulary—for forms.” (Sontag, 1966, p.8). The form as such is conducted by the scenes from someone’s day, they are isolated by photography and brought to an informal place where both parties meet. Described in a different order and similarity during the Photo Talk, serves reflection out of context and evokes a descriptive vocabulary. This contributes to objective relating.

PEDAGOGICAL UNDERPINNING

Constructing the workshop from multiple parts (three days, Trojan Horse, Photo Talk) allows for two ways of learning. The theory behind this is; the Photo Talk is promoting inclusion (e.g., giving voice to the historically silenced); the photo practical part is promoting empowerment (e.g., not self-actualization but a belongingness and equity as a cultural member); and both together, the parts learn to negotiate effectively between and across cultures. These three points are strong pillars of the theory of transformative learning⁵, which is part of the main pedagogical underpinning of this workshop. The ‘perspective transformation’ (Mezirow, 1981), has three dimensions: psychological (changes in understanding of the self), convictional (revision of belief systems), the both apparent

5 Transformative learning is the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic world view and specific capacities of the self; transformative learning is facilitated through consciously directed processes such as appreciatively accessing and receiving the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analysing underlying premises. Jack Mezirow developed transformative learning theory starting in 1978. I also use alterations to the theory by Patricia Cranton.

in this exercise, the third 'behavioural' (changes in lifestyle) is an experience the student (and perhaps the user) benefits from in life. Transformative learners question their perspectives, open up new ways of looking at their position, revise their views, and possibly act on new perspectives. The use of empirical segments in this project, is primarily to introduce transformative learning. Secondly the pedagogical qualities of experiential learning and the theory of transformative learning, imparts fluently in the interpretation of complex relationships. This method is chosen in reflection of the characteristics of this digital native generation of goal driven learners.

CONSIDERING THE OTHER IN ADVANCE

The set up of this workshop appeals to the humility of the designer by acknowledging his skills but gives the residents an opportunity to have a voice by the playful translation of expert research. There is room to develop follow-up meetings of the kind during the design process. In many ways, user-centered-design has established empathy as a baseline in design education and gives credence to having enough humility that the designer might not have all the answers. But being empathetic can sometimes fall short when a project gets more and more complex.

The group of designers are from a mixed national background, but students at the art academy are known to have a westernised social background. The dwellers of the Afrikaanderwijk, have obviously not asked for a cultural project or any pop-up design likings (the results are indefinite), in their neighbourhood. I feel obliged to discuss beforehand with the students, why and how their project wants to cohort with the public of the neighbourhood. When are the residents the public? Can one be public unwillingly? I consult renowned researcher on publics and counter-publics Michael Warner, a literary critic, social theorist, and Seymour H. Knox Professor of English Literature and American Studies at Yale University. He generally describes the role of public as follows: as soon as you are

addressed as a group, it makes you the public. If the public feels in power with the situation, they can choose to emancipate from this role. (Warner, 2002) The public could choose to ignore, show ownership, relate, get involved, or share responsibility. Starting this education project with this discussion, offers students the opportunity to address the power-issues that come with entering the public sphere, together with the public.

TO TROJAN HORSE THE INTERVIEW

This part of the workshop is written to be a diary of 2x50 photos of the daily life of a resident: objects, food, people in action, etc., no selfies. One day the resident takes the photos, a second day the student. The two separate parts show have different vantage points: on day one the resident, who is getting used to interacting with the project at his own pace (ownership), on the second day the students, stepping out of their own familiarity, shooting 50 diary photo's of the residents'; they encounter new paradigms. They now have accumulated a common ground, as to they both share interest in the neighbourhood, the street, and the habits. What the participants don't know is that the interaction on day 2 really is about the informal talks that will take place. The dreaded interviewing-the-other has now been Trojan horsed! Relating basics (place, time, momentum) are scripted by the assignment, including meeting spouse, context, smell and sound. The hierarchy of interviewer and interviewee is eloped.

Some impressions of the activity:

- Students: "First it was a bit awkward to follow someone. But the resident pointed at things he had already photographed, and it sort of felt o.k. It was an easy way to get to know about things I would have never thought of to ask."
"By just following the resident with a camera it feels like making a documentary of 'a day in the life of...'. It was fun to do."
"I found out the entire day was about the family, the curtains were always closed. I mentioned the safe feeling of the public



Education project DOUBLE DIARY: “The cooperation with the residents has been of great importance for our project. We talked a lot with Mo Khaton, the owner of the local thrift store Schroeder.” Using the tool Trojan Horse the group of ‘Groetjes-uit-Afrikaanderwijk’ finds: “Prakasch Sahe, the owner of Makandra supermarket, is the photographer of our diary. Visiting his store several times, has led to spontaneous and honest information.”
 Photography: Prakasch Sahe (2018), Desiree Kerklaan (2018).

space in her street with most houses covered up. The idea of feeling responsible for what happens out there right in front of her door, was not on her mind at all, she said.”

Next I ask the students to print out all photos from both days to bring to ‘Photo talk’. While I observe the students in the print room some conclusions arise:

- During printing the separate photos, playful categorising and comparing begins to form a story about the life of the other.
- At times Trojan Horse seemed very free, with no focus to a certain topic other than a daily routine. I was curious as to when a topic or commitment would arise. This differed from student to student. Some immediately pin pointed a common ground. Others’ I thought, could use a bit of encouragement into categorising and finding leads on common ground. *As a researcher I maybe should have set parameters for this moment before we went into ‘Photo Talk’. Pedagogically it felt alright to leave it up to the students’ own pace.*
- For the student, the gaming-aspect of the other having done a comparative photo shoot, turned out to be an intrinsic incentive to do the work.
- The freedom of choice of topic, felt as a great fulfilment among the students. Likewise to the project of NL1M2 (see appendix), the ownership the assignment proclaims, enhanced adopting a commitment. The students explain they felt responsible.
- The bonus of working with the photos is how it serves directly as material for a User Story (see next chapter), with permission of the resident of course.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING BY PHOTO TALK

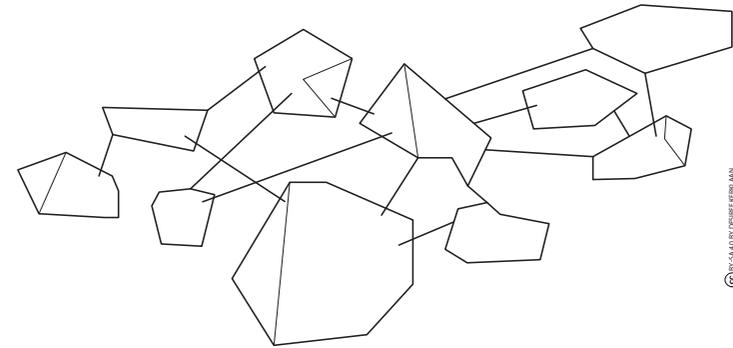
This is a ‘conversation piece’, to practise relating, now guided by the pictures and comparative means. During Photo Talk the student and the resident meet again to compare and discuss the different and corresponding moments between their photographic diaries. The tangible (printed) photos help iteration, rearranging and organising by concept.

The images of the two diaries, in combination, provide for objective information about the life of the resident. The resemblance between some of the images makes for it to be a shared moment and invites to inquire on the story behind the moment. Photo Talk invites to recognise preconceived assumptions and discover new truths. This is inspired by transformative learning addressing how in adulthood we develop a more critical world view as we seek ways to better understand our world. It involves learning how to negotiate and act upon our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others. (Mezirow, 2000). Since there are no enduring truths, and change is continuous, we cannot always be assured of what we know or believe. We use these perspectives we have acquired throughout our life, as a lens. But learning to recognise and be aware of this lens, is a very helpful tool during needfinding. Even if it is to become aware of ones’ own history and position towards ‘the other’.

- One group reviewed Photo Talk as being revealing on specific cultural aspects, not so much of presumptions. Students said they do not hold many presumptions, they feel they are open minded.
- I observed how sitting together at a table in an informal public place gave student and resident an equal starting point, or at least there were no nerves. The tangible photos served as a souvenir from a joint experience and immediately sparked up informal conversation.
- The extra questions (see appendix: DOUBLE DIARY) were much needed, for students felt the Photo Talk was almost a game to win.
- Not all students joined this second step (for unknown reasons), but those who did saw it as a valuable ‘second-layer research’.
- I observed the less calculated students (the once who did not form an topic yet) were the best at this exercise. Those students whom were willing to question their position, allowed their research object as a teacher.

Creating User Stories

Describing how an open design network is distributed I sketch a model for the students in my class (see below). We discuss how the advantages of a network at the same time prove to cause fickle communication lines.



Valuable information about the urgency of a design captured at one phase, transports uncoordinated to other phases to different (maybe unknown) viewers to comprehend. During the progress of this research, the necessity of documenting user-centred research grew. Documenting the realities and urgencies of users during Meet and Relate has grown into something I call User Stories. To complete Meet and Relate, it is necessary to add Create to the steps of user-centred research. 3. Create a User Story is to document information and pass it down the line (to other team-members, other project teams) without losing its intention.

A user-story is a tool to capture a description of a need from the perspective of a future end-user or representative. A user-story should at least describe the user and his context, what they need and why. A user-story is formed around the interaction between designer and the alleged user on common ground. A User Story in 'optima forma' should inspire (fe text, image, sound, smell, souvenir: mixed media) the next ideation phase of Design Thinking. To share this information means

you contribute to the team and the cause might gain by cross pollination.

Once User Story claimed its place in this research, the logic for it was everywhere to be found. In 'Participation is Risky' (2013) (on participation in social projects with art and design), Huijbregts connects participatory also to flexibility: "In a participatory project we can aim for handing over the project to an other group of potential participants that were not immediately involved in the project". So besides collecting for user stories, equally of importance is how to document a User Story, and pass it down the line without losing its intention. In creative business Agile is a common planning structure for a creative team to stay focussed and productive, during a project. It cuts up a process in short sprints in which user stories play a big role. A project is led by the description of a challenge of a user in action. To fetch every aspect of an action, the proclaimed user is asked to finish the sentence: "As a [type of user], I want [some goal], so that [some reason]" (Jongerius, 2012, p.85).

I doubt if filling in a sentence according to the Agile method, would cover the sentiment of a shared commitment between designer and user in my case. It makes no comparison to what the WANDERSCHAFT travellers brought back from their meetings. The registration of the 'researchers' generally consisted of a visual report; the 'adventurers' brought along souvenirs of stories. The souvenir, is a strong representative of an experience. It will spark off a story from the mind of its keeper. Susan Steward (in her book on relations of language to experience) describes the souvenir as being intrinsically involved in the displacement of attention into the past. Its function is to envelop the present with the past. Souvenirs are magical objects because of this transformation. But if we would use it solely for a story, we would find its instrumentality replaces essence, but this instrumentality always works on only partial (Steward, 1992). For an outsider, a souvenir or object needs an additional explanation (text, image, sound,..) and context in order to form a stand alone story to comprehend. A user story should be described in all

the colours between the spectrum of these two poles. But what media are best for capturing elusive needs, commitment and context?

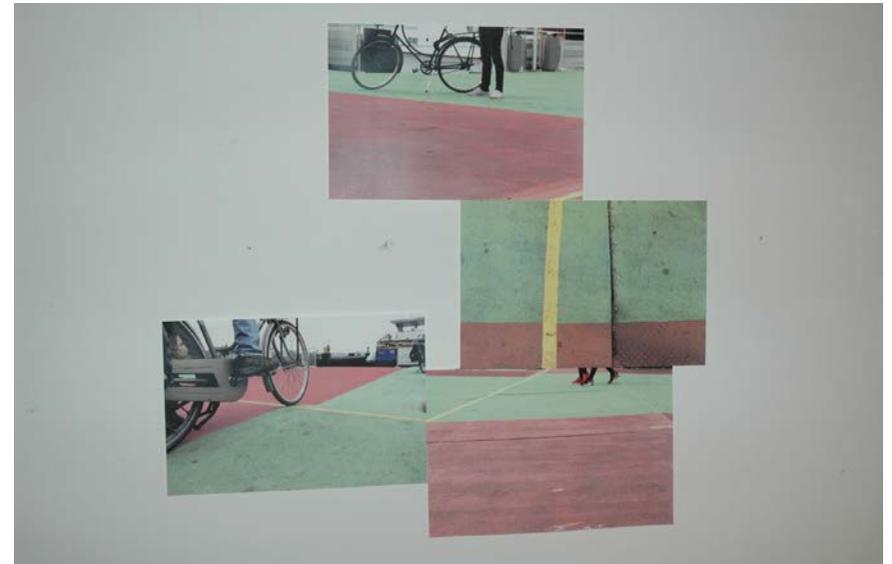
Education project NL1M2: How to transmit value

[SEE APPENDIX: NL1M2]

I design a workshop for students to experience capturing and transmitting subjective essence like 'the value of a place' by using one or more mediums. Each student gets appointed a place somewhere in The Netherlands as the subject for a small exhibition. (Traveling and stepping out of familiarity, helps adopting new paradigms.) I select abrasive sites, either historically, socially or cultural. So each site (in the form of 1m2 on Dutch soil), is poetically strong. The students loved going out of the academy and favoured the adventurous side of this assignment. It sparked of a boost of energy to have ownership and responsibility over their own search of essence.

Analysing if the value of the place was transmitted amongst the visitors of the exhibition, I have come to several conclusions about looking, seeing and transmitting value.

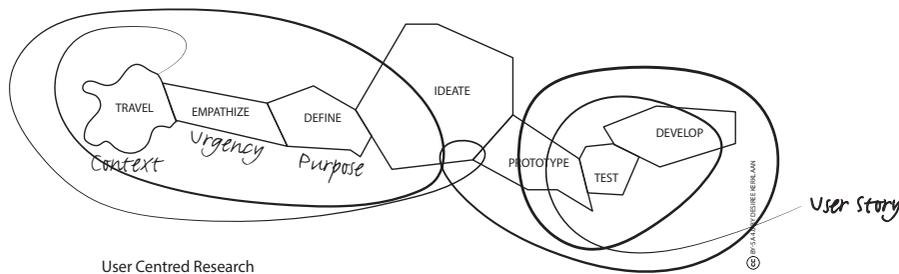
- To capture a story, it needs to imagine the subjective value in combination with the objective context. Project 1m2 shows how finding value needs time and tools. And how documenting this without losing its original intention, needs mixed mediums.
- It is essential to use mixed mediums to communicate the different senses a story is made of. Text, photo, sketching, film, sound, all have their own characteristics to translate senses. Some communicate value, some the context of a subject, combined it translates to the different receivers. This workshop gave students an insight as to which elements describe the value of a place; the place itself, the action that makes the place and the choice of medium to document it. Important knowledge is that mixed media has the strongest



Successful transmission of the value of a place to an audience at final exposition of education project NL1M2 at Willem de Kooning Academy (2017). Installation with use of photo, sound and film.
Installation: Mathilde Barthoux(2017)
Photography: Desiree Kerklaan (2017)

impact or perhaps the most diverse chance to hook on to the brain of the viewer. Once knowing how to acquire, generate and interpret a User Story, it could help 'looking' during research. The book of Keri Smith 'The Wanderer society', has inspiring reference on how collecting helps recording different layers of an experience. It is advisable (to creators) to look into filmography, colour tracking, sound tracking, time, perception hacking, psychogeography. The Wanderer society proclaims how the use of deep looking and regular documentation of everyday life, makes it possible to have a much deeper experience of the world. They even claim through these practices, we may be able to create new narrative for a story of ourselves.

At the introduction of this thesis, I mention how a User Story is likely to describe the user, the context and the needs of the urgency of a design. At the end of my research I realise how the maker is reflected in every observation. His or her choice of using text, image, sound, smell, souvenir (etc.) reflects how she looks and sees. I should add for later references (once we have more experience with using user stories), we will need to learn how to interpret the creators role. For now, I can imagine how a User Story can inspire the ideation phase of a design trajectory.



User-centred research adds a step to design thinking and freely suggests when information is collected for User Stories.

Sharing User Stories

The tangibility of User Stories, particularly lent themselves for sharing the motive of a project across transdisciplinary teams. A User Story even has the ability to grow along with a project, as a passport for a meaningful design outcome.

This idea has struck root when the group of students from education project DOUBLE DIARY, took the opportunity to discuss their end projects with professional stakeholders in the field of social innovation. At 'Werkplaats Zuid', a seminar organised by EMI (centre of expertise for social innovation in Rotterdam-Zuid), focal groups discussed just under 100 projects designed especially for Rotterdam-Zuid by local students. The public of our focal group 'Social and creative entrepreneurship', consisted mainly of local politicians, social organisations and investors in social entrepreneurship. The main attention of this crowd focussed on how the students went about fulfilling needs. They showed links between similar projects for pooling resources. Summarising the discussion draws attention to the wish for more sustainability for local social projects. Sharing information from one team to the next without losing its intent.

This is something User Stories can provide. The results of the discussion after DOUBLE DIARY at Werkplaats Zuid all point towards that:

- Projects need a longer duration for sustainable development.
- Why not join, prolong or diverse an existing project with potential?
- Students are all for, and recognize the benefit of extending an existing project, to do more in depth research.
- The local librarian is open to supervise such a database of projects.
- Another option is to merge similar iterations from an array of projects, to actually develop one useful project. The groups could perhaps collaborate for a next assignment.

This certainly shows how design is no longer about an end product, as emerging design philosophies already suggested. Well rooted elements, when presented in an inspiring way,

can invite collaboration. User Stories can grow into an open database, where designers can share their knowledge on user-needs and context to fuel the serendipity of ideation. But more so it can contribute to mediated public debates, policy makers, etc.



The project-ideas, incited by education project DOUBLE DIARY, are presented at 'Werkplaats Zuid' by the students. Werkplaats Zuid was a seminar organised by EMI (centre of expertise for social innovation in Rotterdam-Zuid). In a discussion with stakeholders it became clear how sharing the research-information to the community can serve as a motor to stimulate the duration of a project.
Photography: Desiree Kerklaan (2018)



Conclusion

In 2016 the International Journal of Design, dedicated a special issue to the roots of the popularity of open access platforms in the last 10 years. They point (besides the world wide platform evolving) at several changes, which have pushed designers to seek more customers from the public sector. “Simultaneously, the growth of design education has pushed many young designers to seek new markets, which are being created by a substantial number of complex societal challenges” (Chen et al, 2016, p1). In that same year, Rotterdam’s university of applied science in their ‘Vision on Education’, calls for educators and design students to organise their design projects in collaborative teams.

Studying Design is no longer just a problem solving matter on function and form. Students are expected to organise collaborations with professionals as well as producers and users (novice to the process of design) without losing their own voice. Students want to connect to their (future-)users, as they represent valuable information on the urgency of their designs, but by doing so find themselves in sometimes complex social settings. As a design researcher they need to build a dialogue and practice empathy on unknown territory, this asks for cognitive, rational, objective thinking. The students are expected to shift between such mind-sets to answer: How do I inform myself about things I do not know? How do I recognise the urgency for a design? At the same time designers need to communicate back to the team, and share information on these elusive matters.

The most relevant finding to emerge from this study is a new way of researching with notes called User Stories: a multi media report of user-centred research in the form of a story, because a story puts people in brain-to-brain synchrony. Students experience how collecting for these stories proves to be a dynamic way to open up to, and invite to interpret new grounds. The method provides students to teach themselves to build dialogue and practice empathy on the urgency of their

work as a designer, as they go out into an ever-changing society. Congruently this method can inspire educators in higher art & design on developing awareness and skills needed for user related trajectories.

The trajectory that led up to this conclusion is summarized by the following parts. In doing observations during project MARKT010, I measured most students need more scripting to execute complicated user-centred research. As an educator I learned to introduce complex social meetings (e.g.. due to social diversity) by reflecting on the authoritarian position of the designer, also in consideration with the position of ‘the other’ (the user). On the topic of the different mind-sets during such meetings, I found the method of Transformative Learning supportive to design some practical pedagogical tools. Part of it describes the importance of traveling out of the comforts of the educational institute. “We do not make transformative changes in the way we learn as long as what we learn, fits comfortably in our existing frames of reference.” (Mezirow, 1997, p.3) The effect this had on the students was revealing and most certainly supported the design-principles of change and ideation (see NL1M2, WANDERSCHAFT). Those preconditions contribute to opening up, when relating across cultures.

The above mentioned projects (in capitals) made it possible for me to describe the journey of user-centred research: traveling and spotting, meeting common ground, relating to urgency. To map out these different stages can help the students to articulate their role and adjust the mindset. Consequently it helped me as a researcher to categorize criteria for tangible tools for the students to collect notes during those stages. Education project DOUBLE DIARY contributed to the refinement of some of those tools by the name of Trojan Horse and Photo Talk. For the design of the tools, the structure was dictated by the learning preferences of this generation of digital natives.

Collecting notes for a User Story allows for students to build dialogue and practice empathy on the urgency of their work as a designer. Generating the result in a multi media

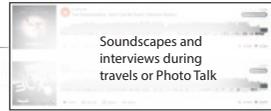
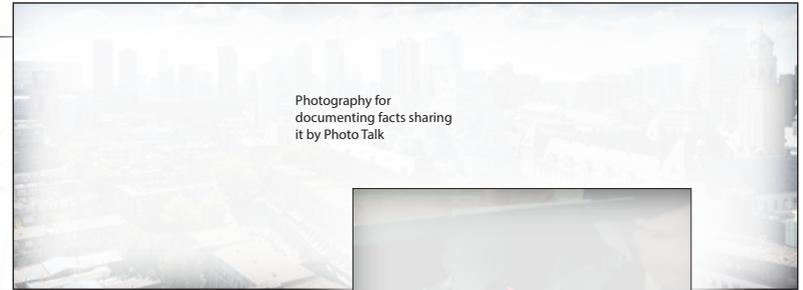
story is useful to a whole team. To express the complex layers of commitment or values to a subject, both WANDERSCHAFT and NL1M2 showed how using comparative mediums such as souvenirs, maps, soundscapes, video, photo, draw, write, etc. is most communicative when mixed. This way, when sharing research information through User Stories (rather than just facts) collaborators can make their own interpretations and inspiring iterations. Hence, through knowing how to acquire, generate and interpret User Stories, students will be inspired to design in responsive and dynamic ways.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It became clear that educational project DOUBLE DIARY has the qualities to start a ‘collection of knowledge’ about local needs. Looking at User Stories as an growing collection, I see how it can be inspiring to perform additions or how it cross pollinates between projects. In discussions, the idea spoke out to both creatives, local politics as well as the users involved in local projects. Sharing a collection of User Stories with a community can serve as a motor to stimulate the duration of a project.

Opportunities for future research lays in formulating the form of such a collection of User Stories: What are the consequences of the mixed media in User Stories to the form of such a collection? How can we resist categorisation? How can we allow for it to be a living database? How can we make a (plat-) form that allows for User Stories to interact or overlap? This way a collection of User Stories could support endurance of local initiatives, and imagine the value to (open) design projects. On a more personal base, a designer can use such a continuously updated collection of User Stories, as a growing backlog for inspiration to the purpose of his work.

Researching with notes reveals the knowledge on user-needs and context. To inspire the serendipity of ideation this information is captured in a multi media User Story. Through knowing how to acquire, generate and interpret User Stories, students will be inspired to design in responsive and dynamic ways. (For copyright reasons the images are blurred)

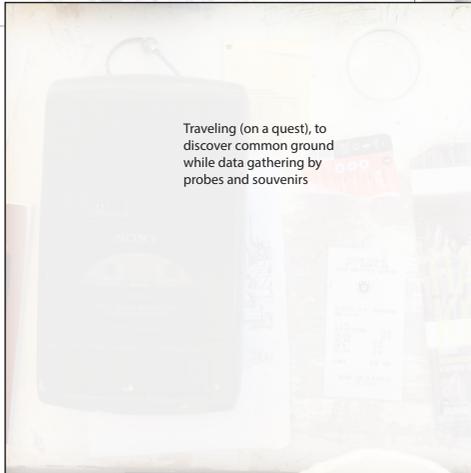


writings on travels to collect narratives on similar commitments

Al mijn zinnen worden getrokken in de bergen
voel ik een callus. De velden zijn
lommerd en worden in de lengte van mijn
grond zet
Ik schijn, de
grond, het zand, ik voel het zand loeren in een
voort droom. Kennedij mij geen moeder, een berg
Ik geked, iedere keer trek ik even mijn aandacht. De
hete dag heb ik een vliegende concentratie. De
wereld lijkt stil te staan, maar ook te bewegen. Mijn
gedachten lijken stil te staan, maar gaan beter en
meerder dan ooit. De hele dag denken in gedachten,
dromen en de realiteit, ik kijk niet met mijn ogen,
maar met mijn hart en ziel. Alles komt samen, de
inhoud, de fantasie. Het klopt, ik voel me opgeladen,
leuk, ik weet dat ik hier nu wil zijn, ik voel dat ik hier
te wil zijn, ik kan niet kijken naar de grote rozen
die lijken te dromen met de wolken, 'vergeen uit het
leste dekdad. Mysterieus.

De berg, een behoudende inderframe plek. Ik ben
steens, maar voel mij niet enzaam. De ontmoeting
met de natuur, de herinneringen, met de mensen
Zodra ik naar boven gaat veranderd het samen zijn
gesprekken hebben met onbekende heeft hier een
vrijheid. Goud. Goud klinkt het met andere
voorzettingen. 'volkomen is gelijk. Vriendelijk is iedere
ontmoeting. Ik maak aan mijzelf dat de eerste keer
erover, het begint beter te voelen. Het voelt goed
goed. Mijn gevoel wordt lader en oprecht. Er zijn veel
worte gesprekken, gemeenschap. Ik kom in het
dorp, niemand ziet mij en ik heb ook niet. De
aanhangigheid is verdwenen. Er klinkt geen Goud
Guit, ook niet van mij.

Ik ben in een schilddij. Maar dan echt, ik ervaar, en
ik dat andere. Dit gevoel ook mogen ervaren. Het is
in een lichte en minnaal staat tussen ons in, ik
ben zo dichtbij. Proef, nu hoor, veel het landschap.
De het mooie gevoel waarmee de bergen zijn
staan. De vorm is natuurlijk, zand.



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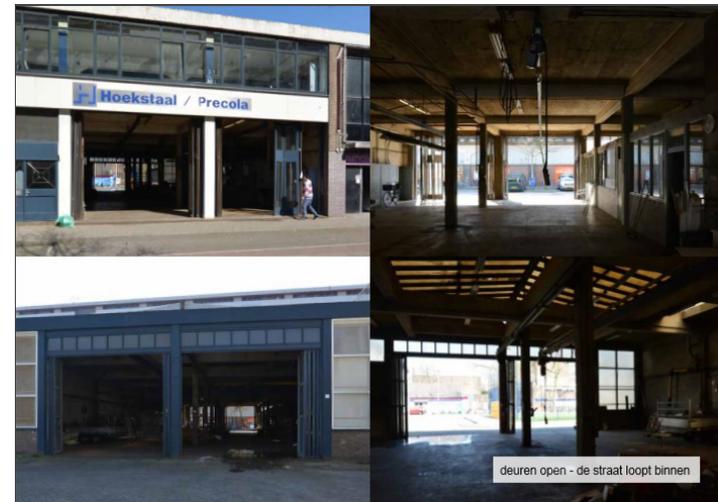
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Appendix

Education project MARKT010: Allowing for voice in a design

This project is used by this research to articulate current gaps in how design students allow for a users' voice during the research phase of a design project. And for education to learn how to address meeting and relating between designer and user. For eight weeks I have observed design students on their progress in this social design project on a market/food-hall in a disadvantaged district of Rotterdam. The project assignment was to design a start-up for MARKT010 completely ran by locals. The students were asked to involve the locals from the start, since they are going to be the ones to make a living out of the food hall concept.



Location for project MARKT010 are the premises of a former factory in the Agniese quarter in Rotterdam-Noord.

Participants:

The locals of Agniese quarter, 30 Students 3rd year Lifestyle Transformation Design at WDKA.

Method:

Observe, survey and interview students on user centeredness; concerning momentum, duration and intensity.

In order to chart the quality in correlation to the quantitative nature of the contact moments, I made a survey and matrix which visualises the correlation. The questionnaire served as an even starting point (and mind set of the interviewed students) for the open questions I closed of with.

The survey and additional contextual ladder interview (Gutman, 1982) were based on hypothesized measurements from former observations and pre-set standards for this assignment.

- Survey amongst students about user contact:

Quantitative questions: Number of people contacted and the length of time.

Qualitative questions: Questions about the setting, about prejudice and questions about effectiveness for the design process.

The data were analysed using confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis.

- A reflective interview with part of the group of students by me, filled me in on routes not taken by the students but which were obviously hinted in the assignment description, and finding the origins of these gaps.

Objective:

Find a correlation between momentum (within the design phase) plus duration (intensity) of interaction between designer and user, and the impact it has on the design process.

Results:

17 students out of 30, participated in the survey.

90% of these students inquire users in the first 2 weeks.

User contact is average 15 minutes.

90% Adapts or forms concept after first users contact.

34% of students revisits a user for a second or third time within first 4 weeks.

12% consult with users within the last weeks of the project.

8% adapts their concept at that stage (that's 1 person).

-The time spent at interviewing the user was too short to receive the history of a need and perceive the relation to the context of the need.

-The questions asked during the research phases were not open.

-The interviews were not documented.

-After ideation phase, no time was scheduled for reflecting or testing with the users.

The survey form is divided into two main sections. The left section is a grid for tracking contact over 9 weeks. The grid has 9 columns labeled 'week 1' through 'week 9' and 40 rows labeled 'minutes per person' from 1 to 40. Above the grid, it says 'How many people from the target group did you contact?' and 'Fill in the form for each contact.' Below the grid, it asks 'When in the process did you have contact (repeatedly)? [timetable]' and 'What was the duration of your contact? [timetable]'. There is a small bar chart icon to the right of the grid. Below the grid, there are three questions: 'Was it on the fly or sitting down?', 'Did it change your perception of the person, culture, location, other?' (with checkboxes), and 'Can you post this? [250 characters]'. The right section has three questions: 'What came out of the contact that effected your concept? mark 1 in your [timetable]', 'Thanks to the contact, you changed this in your design: mark 2 in your [timetable]', and 'What contact in a later stage made you adapt your concept or design? mark 3 in your [timetable]'. There is a small bar chart icon to the right of the grid. The form has a footer that says 'Thank you so much for your participation! @simeonstang@tud.com'.

The survey-form handed out to the students after the project was finished.

Analysis:

- This survey implies, users-contact almost always results in concept changes. The average 15-minute contact is on the fly, through street interviews. This is one of the reasons the history and context of a need is not met. After extra inquiring, I learnt the students' interview questions were mainly in the field of 'what do you miss in your neighbourhood' and 'what are your roots in cuisine'. Closed questions. The answers result

in a variety of tastes, colours and so boxed off the inspiration for the students.

- The students failed to make a mapping of the work skills, economical position or nutritious needs of the participants. The prospects were not involved in deciding what will be made (as would be the case in fully fledged participatory design).
- The students were reluctant to set up a meeting with a group of habitants. They felt unsafe to invite people. Obviously in street interviews they didn't feel comfortable to brainstorm and inquire about personal and financial dreams, and blamed the lack of a suitable space to make a co-creation effort.
- The students partially neglected the chance of users informing their designs, providing ideas for solutions, or evaluating proposed concepts.

Reflection on relating between designer and user:

Educators need to initiate or support design students to set up an informal public space to relate to the user. This space can serve momentum and duration of relating between designer and user. Education should guide or offer tools to enhance the interview form and content of design students.

Education should make students aware of the responsibility to lead the interaction between designer and user.

Education should create awareness amongst the students on the authoritative history of the design profession.

Education should practicable have students experience the prerogative of users voice in design.

Education project NL1M2: How to transmit value

This project is used by this research to collect knowledge on the choice of media for a User Story. As a researcher I designed a 3-day project for students to experience how to translate the value of a location (1m2) somewhere in the Netherlands, to the visitor of an exhibition.

Participants:

18 Students in higher art education at WDKA.

Designer role:

Observe the value of the location and context, translate this through any choice of medium. Use direct observation, implication of method of transfer and storytelling.

Research role:

Guide the workshop, observe methods, reflect on storytelling skills.

Interview (unstructured) the users, in order to obtain information about story and emotion.

Objective:

Find the characteristics of a medium to capture and transfer the essence/the value (of a given place). Have the students discover how the medium influences the message and selects the public. Create awareness of context among the students.

Programme:

I sent each student by mail the coordinates of a place somewhere in The Netherlands. They have a day to travel and spent time at the location to experience the place. I ask them to document the characteristics of the spot through any chosen media.

The next day is open to find the right translation for the gathered information to present it to another person.

Third day is the expo where each participant gets 1m2 in our exhibition room.

I choose an art gallery presentation form, because the students are a mixed level group and this presentation method is known to all, without further explanation.

Me and an external critic are the first visitor, and will reflect out loud on the installation in respect to meaning, emotion and value. We ask other visitors to do the same. This way the students can instantly critically reflect on their work in respect to communicating subjectivity.

Email

“These are your personal coordinates to your travel destination: 00.000000, 0.000000

Enter the coordinates in google maps and travel to the exact location.

Every location can be reached by train, tram or public ferry. Use this travel time to get into a mindful state.

The journey begins when you leave the door.

You may have a long journey ahead of you.

Prepare consciously for it:

- Take clever and multiple equipment along, to observe and document your place with curiosity.
- Handle any message by me with absolute focus and execute.
- Take your time (spent at least 3 hours at your spot observing, time will change your perception, your view, the value of the place, the things that happen during this time, the sound, smell,...etc)”

Mobile message

Once they arrive at their location I each sent them mobile messages to help them unravel the meaning or the value of a place. As an educator I find it is necessary to help students to switch to the subjective state.

Messages are for example: “You are at your site! Take your time to get to know this spot. Sit down and look around for 10 consecutive minutes/ do the same laying down/ and one time with closed eyes. “

“Be a naive person. Look at where you are now through the eyes of a total naive person. Imagine you’re from another planet and dropped at this point. Or try the perspective of a child.”

“You’re a tourist for a day. Some tourists have a tendency to purchase the memory of a spot by means of an object, a souvenir. Souvenir is French for the word memory. What would be a souvenir of this place? What gift would you like to make from this site?”

Analysis:

- The students loved going out of the academy and favoured the adventurous side of this assignment. It sparked a boost of energy and a feel of ownership over their own learning path.
- Where I acted as a very explicit visitor of the exhibition (reflecting out-loud on the installations), I sometimes saw recognition in the eyes of the students, sometimes disappointment. In these cases I wished we could have had a more open discussion about the outcome. Perhaps me being a teacher or using the school as exhibit location, gave it an air of assessing. Even though I stated it was a grade-free project, I had a hard time too, refraining myself from giving feedback as an educator would do.
- My personal experience from visiting this exhibition ‘1m2 of The Netherlands’ is reflecting positively on creative content, but emotionally I experienced little. Three out of 18 stories touched me to a point that I can still recall those today. These were students that used the medium of film, art-installation and writing.

Reflection on documenting and transmitting value:

The majority of the students relied to photography to capture the essence of a place. Those projects showed the spot, but re-framed from communicating the experience, or value. To the students (non photography students) photography seems to be the first choice. The medium provokes documenting not interpreting, a good choice for accurate representation. Film,



Education project DOUBLE DAIRY: Relating in practice

The choice of ‘project-education’ at WDKA is proven to be very helpful for getting students out of the school building and into contact with a target group. Although in most cases immersive contact is shallow due to the lack of tools to emphasise and time allocated to relate. “The idea of education beyond learning a set of skills or a profession, but instead focusing on the development and interaction within the community in informal learning moments/settings: direct involvement in the building of infrastructure; strong community ties; strong collaboration practices; erasure of hierarchy.” (Montessori, Reggio Emilia)

Focus area:

Afrikaanderwijk, Rotterdam.

Location workshop:

In generous hospitality we can work locally from the building of the Cooperative, known to the locals of that same district in Rotterdam. Based on a long-standing presence in the area, the Afrikaanderwijk Cooperative knows the strength of local communities and small-scale open organizations in which learning and working combine. The Wijkcoöperatie is a local company that realizes that the effort that man produces is scarce and therefore of value for our prosperity.

Objectives:

In this workshop, students and residents both have agency over producing the images (Trojan Horse), allowing the resident to have a voice for empowerment, and the student to question their perspectives and open up new ways of looking at their role in this practice. For both parties making the images are a conversation piece into discovering a culture, position and knowledge of the residents’ life in Afrikaanderwijk.

At the start of the workshop the opportunity is seized (Considering the other in advance) to address agency and power between ‘public’ and designer. Paulo Freire (1970) articulated

a theory of transformative learning which he referred to as 'conscientization' or consciousness-raising. His ideas originated in his work with literacy education of the poor in Brazil and liberation efforts in Latin America and Africa, but they enjoy wide-spread popularity today throughout the western world.

Relating to user through transformative learning (Photo Talk). Central to this is the process of making meaning from our experiences through reflection, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection. With the right tools we come to identify, assess, and possibly reformulate key assumptions on which our perspectives are constructed.

Method:

This project is based on experiential learning (the process of learning through experience) and is more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing". I chose this because of intercultural relating between student and user. It uses design ethnography: embedded research and participatory observation in field research, immersion in the environment of research for finding out participants needs, dreams, frustrations etc.

Trojan Horse produces multiple images on cultural probes to spark of conversation and at the same time visualise the research. Research with 'things' is a technique used to inspire ideas in a design process and a means of gathering data about people's lives, values, thoughts. Probes can be any sort of artifact (map, postcard, camera, object, diary etc.) along with evocative tasks, which are given to participants to allow them to record specific events, feelings or interactions.

Using objects or prototyping as a method helps transformative learning. The pedagogical qualities of experiential learning and the theory of transformative learning, imparts fluently in the interpretation of complex relationships. Transformative learning is the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic world view and specific capacities of the self; transformative learning is facilitated through consciously directed processes such as appreciatively accessing and receiving

the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analysing underlying premises. Jack Mezirow developed transformative learning theory starting in 1978. I also use alterations to the theory by Patricia Cranton. This method is chosen in reflection of the characteristics of this digital native generation of goal driven learners. "As transformative learners, they question their perspectives, open up new ways of looking at their practice, revise their views, and act based on new perspectives" (Sokol & Cranton, 1998).

Participants:

-2 Residents from the area, familiar with the context of the neighbourhood. This person is scouted by the student as an 'area representative' for his research throughout the term. In this workshop description he or she is called the klant.
-2 Small teams formed by design students participating in a social project, in this case planning a concept for a pop-up store that interacts with its surroundings in the Afrikaanderwijk. The idea should adhere to the values of the Cooperative, where as The Cooperative increases self-reliance and strengthens infrastructures. In this way, they create opportunities to increase the self-organizing capacity of an area through the provision of labour, services and products while at the same time reducing waste of talent.

Programme:

A diary of 2x50 images a day (originated by educator André Hasan, WDKA, but alternated from here on). I chose this for I was looking for a 'conversation piece' to practise relating. One of the designers per team are teamed up with the resident, they both use a phone or camera (identical) to capture the following images.
-Day 1, resident: Take 50 photos of your daily life in your normal routine. Resulting in 50 moments, objects, food, people in action, important enough for you to capture. No selfies.

-Day 2, designer: Take 50 photos (on another day but day1) of the resident's daily life in his normal routine.

At the finish of day 2, the resident's daily life is captured in 2x50 moments, interpreted from two different perspectives.

-Day 3, designer: Download all 100 photos. Print out all images, as single files. Mark each photographer on every photo.

-Day 4, resident and student: Roundtable talk, 2hrs with coffee, tea, sweets available. Together, the student and the resident, compare and discuss the different and corresponding moments between their diaries.

Wild cards for at the roundtable to provoke discussion:

- Which images represent you feeling powerless?
- At which image did you feel powerful?
- What do you love about having power?
- When in this workshop did you feel you gave away your power?

Pedagogical underpinnings:

The different steps, tick many of the boxes and qualities of experience-education. Both in 'Philosophy of education' and 'Art as experience' John Dewey shows similar ways to experience a local culture. This is particular fit for art education at WDKA because we work with project-education; and at Lifestyle Transformation Design, because we participate in social design. By using experience as a natural way of learning, Dewey says: 'The initial desire for the activity must stem from the individual, and each step should help to raise a new question and a demand for more knowledge. [...] Experience as mentioned in Dewey's definition of education is a social process involving interaction of an individual with his environment. An 'experience' includes initial confusion, tentative hypothesis, investigation, elaboration of hypothesis, and action to bring about results.' (Sullivan, 1966 on Dewey). In Trojan Horse the student is on the turf of the resident, experiencing immersive research.

In Photo Talk, the student takes on the beginners' mindset. In turn, the resident feels heard and has influence on the common ground. Transformative learning calls for a trusting,



A final idea for the neighbourhood of Afrikaanderwijk: A social literary museum PORT. By exhibiting the history and characters of the inhabitants through stories at the portside, PORT museum shows the true character of the neighbourhood.

social context for the dialogue referred to as reflective discourse (Mezirow, 2000) or critical discourse (Grabove, 1997). With this exercise assumptions are addressed by the different interpretations spoken out.

At Photo Talk the scenes from someone's day are leading topic, the talk constructs itself by order and similarity of the two diaries. Deep reflection is dependant on time and location. Mezirow suggests that the educator serve as a facilitator or provocateur. While both parties discuss their newly discovered common ground, the user becomes the teacher. I would suggest to document the round table discussion by one of the team members.

Criteria of success:

Does the user feel empowered (did he finish his dairy)?

Does the set up diminish authoritative design?

Do the tools prolong and immerse relating?

Are the means supporting transformative learning?

Is it fun (do the students finish the workshop)?

