

Final reflection: Based on the DIEP framework

Introduction

In the first semester, we learned a lot about visual communication design, application design, and user related knowledge. These knowledge also let me have a lot of understanding of users and research. When we design we need to understand the user's needs, pain points and have empathy. In the first semester, I did a lot of practice and learned more related theories, so that my level has improved to a certain extent. Includes the ability to understand the user. Reflection is a crucial practice in graduate study, combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience. Based on the DIEP framework (Description, Interpretation, Evaluation and Planning) (Rolf, L. and Szentivanyi, M.2017), this paper will summarize and analyze the learning experience of this semester. Reflecting on various assignments and projects, this article will illustrate the profound impact of design thinking, empathy, prototyping, and innovation on my learning and growth. It also let me know what I still need to improve in the future study.

Description: Summarize key experiences

In this semester, I participated in a number of projects and assignments, including group work and solo projects. Many of the initially rough ideas are constantly iterated and updated. And through different user feedback to make repeated changes. Each project presents unique challenges and learning opportunities. Notable examples include the "Crowd Watch" project, the design and development of the "Thwice" and "FoodSentry" apps, and the importance of user experience and empathy through digital prototyping and teamwork. In addition, reading and analyzing case studies (such as the practice of Avatar Robot Cafe and Google design team) provided a theoretical background for my practical learning.

For example, in the "Observing the Crowd" project, observational research reveals how user behavior is influenced by environmental factors, highlighting the emphasis on situational awareness in design. Similarly, the "Thwice" and "FoodSentry" app projects emphasize the importance of iterative prototyping and user-centered design, and we incorporate user feedback at every stage. In addition, the discussion on the role of empathy in user experience in the course also made me further understand the practical significance of user research and teamwork. In the course of study, I also learned a lot of different aspects of knowledge, in addition to the most basic layout and color, I also understand the whole process from analysis requirements to user research.

Interpretation: Analyzing the meaning of experience

The significance of these experiences is that they have helped me to understand design principles and methods more deeply. Each project provides valuable insights into a different aspect of design practice. The "Observing the

Crowd" project reveals the importance of observational research as the basis for empathy design. Observing human interaction in a public space has given me a more nuanced understanding of user needs and preferences, allowing me to develop more intuitive design solutions. This reinforces the emphasis on contextual integration in design, emphasizing the need for designers to immerse themselves in the user's environment. Observational studies are very important in design.

In the "Thwice" application project, iterative prototyping was a key learning experience. Starting with sketches and paper prototypes, we were able to quickly test and refine ideas, and then gradually transition to digital and localized prototypes. This process is consistent with the efficiency and flexibility of prototyping mentioned in Google's design practices. In addition, teamwork further highlights the importance of clear communication and collective problem-solving. This also allowed me to master the ability of iterative prototyping and teamwork.

Exploring the role of empathy in user experience has provided me with a perspective to understand user needs and behaviors. Techniques mentioned in the course, such as user journey mapping and storytelling, are particularly effective in facilitating a user-centric approach. These tools allow me to identify user pain points and design interventions that address real-world problems.

Evaluation: Evaluating the effectiveness and significance of the experience

The effect of these experiences can be assessed by their impact on my personal and academic growth. The combination of theory and practice not only improves my technical ability, but also enables me to form a more comprehensive design concept. By participating in prototyping and iterative design processes, I have improved my proficiency with tools such as Figma, Adobe XD, and coding platforms for native prototyping. These skills are directly applicable in future projects and professional roles, ensuring that I can contribute effectively to multidisciplinary teams.

The emphasis on empathy and observational research has changed the way I think about design and fostered my user-centric mindset. It makes me pay more attention to user needs and experience. By prioritizing the user, I was able to design solutions that were not only powerful but also meaningful. This is consistent with the principles of inclusive design, such as the Avatar Robot Cafe's approach to solving social problems through innovation.

Team projects like weathercat reinforce the importance of collaboration and communication in design. By leveraging diverse perspectives and fostering an open exchange of ideas, our team overcame challenges and delivered a coherent product. These experiences have strengthened my ability to work effectively in a collaborative environment, which is especially important in professional practice.

Over multiple projects, I've learned how to balance creativity with realistic constraints in the design process. This kind of critical thinking allows me to evaluate the feasibility and impact of design solutions. It also improved my ability of creative and critical thinking. For example, in the "People-watching" project, I needed to quickly adapt my initial observation strategy to different environmental constraints. This flexibility and adaptability laid a solid foundation for my future design practice. Through these projects, not only knowledge is gained, but practical results are achieved, such as high-quality prototypes and design proposals. These achievements not only prove my learning ability, but also provide practical cases for my future career development. The experience of these projects has made me more confident in facing complex design challenges.

Plan: Apply the experience to the future

Looking ahead, what I have learned this semester will serve as the foundation for my future academic and professional development. In order to ensure the continued application and growth of these lessons, I have developed several strategies that I will implement in the future. I hope to integrate empathy into design practice, and based on this semester's experience, I plan to make empathy a core principle of all future design projects. This includes conducting user research to mine deeper insights, using tools such as role models and empathy maps, and advocating for user-centered solutions in collaborative environments. To stay ahead of the game in a rapidly evolving field, I will continue to refine my technical skills by exploring advanced prototyping tools and techniques. This includes delving into the code of local prototypes and experimenting with emerging technologies such as augmented reality and artificial intelligence. Inspired by the Avatar Robot Cafe approach, I plan to prioritize inclusive and sustainable design in my work. By addressing social and environmental issues, I am able to contribute to creating solutions that have a positive impact on society. This includes considering the needs of marginalized communities and incorporating sustainable practices into the design process. Finally, I recognize the importance of reflection as a tool for lifelong learning. By recording and analyzing my experiences on a regular basis, I was able to identify areas for improvement and set meaningful goals for personal and professional growth. In addition to working on my personal skills, I also plan to expand my professional network by attending design conferences, workshops, and online courses. This not only keeps me up to date on the latest industry trends, but also provides opportunities to collaborate with other designers and share experiences. In order to improve my design skills, I hope to get involved in more interdisciplinary collaborative projects, such as working with psychologists, engineers or sociologists. This will help me gain new perspectives and develop more comprehensive design solutions.

Conclusion

Reflections on the experience of this semester through the DIEP framework provide valuable insights into the integration of design theory and practice. From observational research to iterative prototyping to empathy-driven user experiences, each experience has deepened my understanding of design principles and their real-world applications. By applying these experiences to my future work, I am confident that I can navigate the complexities of design and make meaningful contributions to the field. At the same time, through continuous learning and reflection, I can continue to grow in my future design practice and create more positive values for society.

Bibliography

Rolf, L. and Szentivanyi, M. (2017) *DIEP Model for Reflective Practice: A Framework for Professional Development*. University of Bedfordshire. Available at: <http://www.beds.ac.uk> (Accessed: 13 January 2025).