

This semester all B2.2 students had to participate in a research project. As I never did research before, I did not know what to expect. Normally I decide upon my learning goals and know where to fit them in my project. But in this case, it was more the other way around: I learned the things that were necessary to run the project. Thereby I learned attitudes, skills and knowledge that surprised me, and I could not have planned on beforehand. I can divide the things I learned this semester in two directions: My development within the specific design area of the squad of smart textiles, and my development in performing research.

### Smart textiles

#### Attitude

This squad has a clear hands-on thinking approach. In the beginning of the semester, we were constantly encouraged to make garments, and thereby experience the materials and production techniques ourselves. In this way we were learned to think with the material, instead of think for the material, which is a highly valuable approach when designing innovative and aesthetically pleasing garments. This approach is not only applicable to designing wearable technology, but also to designing physical objects in general. Understanding the material is key while designing, therefore I am grateful to have learned this design approach.

#### Skills

This approach also helped me to overcome my fear of using rapid prototyping techniques as laser cutting and 3D printing. I now see these digital fabrication techniques as tools for prototyping, instead of machines to manufacture a finished design. These quick prototyping skills will allow me to create prototypes easier and faster, so I can iterate in future projects on a higher pace. With these skills, I expect to explore my design project on a deeper level, or in more directions than I was able to do before.

#### Knowledge

This project broadened my knowledge not only on the topics of fashion design (like pattern making and knowledge of different fabrics) but also on the influence clothing has on the way people present themselves. Clothing is more than just a garment, it reflects your personality, and can have much impact on the way you feel when wearing it. Now I am more sensitive to the importance and impact of clothing on persons, I am much more aware of the way I dress myself.

### Doing research

#### Attitude

By reading papers on different topics that all relate to our research (such as smart textiles, the hand of textile, subjective user research methodologies, design research, etc.) I understood the context of our project. Through this I developed the attitude of wanting to understand it all and dig deeper to get to a point where I could explain all aspects of our research in depth. I experienced that this is an attitude I always have had, but became really clear to me within this research project. I always need to understand things first, before I can use them to design with. This project made me more confident in this ability to understand, link and use all information that comes by.

#### Skills

The skill I developed most was reading. As I was diagnosed with dyslexia from an early age, I never practiced reading properly. Last semester I ran into the problem that I avoid reading at all times, which is simply stupid when studying. This semester I focussed on reading papers over and over, and I experienced that all this information makes a project much richer. I also see now that reading and processing information helps me to develop myself in a broader way.

#### Knowledge

The specific knowledge I gained mostly focuses on understanding the user experience, interviewing techniques, and analyse methods. But more importantly, I now know how to use academic papers in a project. Academic papers do not only contain the information on the topic of the paper, which can always be used as inspiration, but it is also possible to use them as a template; withdraw the research methodology and learn the vocabulary of the topic.

#### Conclusion

I believe that doing research in a design related area is creating information to design with. I now have the knowledge that I am able to create this information myself, and together with the attitude of thinking with the material, I see that designing can be much more experimental than I am used to.