DCM110 reflection - Anika Kok

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This course has surprised me in the positive sense of the word. As a designer, my focus is not necessarily on the smart home or IoT. That being said, I am very interested in Calm Technology or rather: designing for varied levels of attention to limit the burden on our mental capacity to increase focus on important things in life. Previously, I have mostly focussed on screen based design which I now realise limited me greatly. I thought of design as: 'Design should (help) get the job done'. Through this course, I realised that design can be much more. My mindset has gone from: 'How can we solve the problem fast and efficiently?' to a higher level way of thinking that pushes the standards and puts the user even more at the center of attention when designing (the interaction with) products.

A lot of the topics, approaches and ways of thinking as discussed in the course were fairly new to me which made me wonder: what does this mean for me as a designer? At university, we are innovating. We are often many steps ahead in comparison to the time and budget constrained commercial world. Let alone the openness with which society is welcoming or more often neglecting innovations as they are new and unfamiliar. Especially when looking at the work field ahead of me, a critical question that raises in my head is: How would this look in business and commercial life?

By following this course, I have found a new interest that I am now attempting to fit into my FMP. I am wondering how natural interaction can play a role besides Calm Technology. Could natural interaction lower the amount of attention that is needed as the interaction is more intuïtive and straight forward? Could natural interaction in the form of for example gestures improve multi-user interaction as it potentially increases awareness of others' actions and intentions? How to design for openness so that the system can grow and improve? I know these questions do not necessarily address rich interaction, but the train of thought has certainly been set in motion.

Lastly, I would like to discuss more of a process related learning point: I think our group really represented my individual design process. By 'being able to see it outside myself' I gained insights that I will use to improve my own work. For example: I love that our group was discussing extensively. I believe it helped us to be critical and come to new realisations. However, I do think it has been important to learn how to limit this somewhat to steer away from abstractness at some point. Sometimes we were running in circles which prohibited us from actually exploring how the design and interaction could look concretely when put to paper. Progressive insight that we used to improve immediately, and that I will continue to use in my future as a designer!