

# Individual Reflection

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Within my study program Industrial Design, we all write a vision on who we are as designers and argue how we aim to achieve that vision. This helps us formulate learning goals that suit that vision and reflect upon them. Therefore I'd like to start this reflection with addressing what I aimed to learn and why. I personally believe that as designers we have the skills and mindset to look beyond just a product or service developed and sold. To create an experience around the product that makes the customer perceive the product as something more than material. I see design as a tool to make companies customer centric instead of product centric. By taking a holistic point of view, gathering insights from all involved stakeholders, and researching customer needs we gain insight in how to tailor to the customer's core needs and values. While focusing on value might not be a quick win for companies, in the end it will create user loyalty, experience and trust which is something much more durable.

## II. IDENTIFY

In order to carry out this vision, I have learned a lot of skills and methodologies over the past years. Within my expertise of service design, customers are involved throughout the entire design process to collect insights. While I already know ways to collect, sort and interpret these insights, I still struggle knowing which way is the correct way to analyse the insights for different scenarios and how to prioritize between these insights. During the first weeks of this course, I have gained a better understanding of the theoretical aspects behind thematic analysis and the affinity diagram, and how to choose between them depending on the goal of the design challenge. I have also learned how to immediately apply this theoretical knowledge in practice instead of only trying out a method and reflecting on it afterwards.

Some more specific examples of what I learned are preventing bias in the analysis by first coding and then clustering. I used to have a tendency to immediately start clustering since I already noticed some themes while transcribing the data. This however blinded me

to other possible themes. I also noticed that by coding first, the themes become less superficial or grouped per question asked in the interview. A second example is what can actually be defined as a theme. Related to the previous point, clustered answers to the same question are not a proper theme and are too superficial. It rarely communicates deeper insights on the users needs and values.

## III. DESCRIBE & INTERPRET

There were two main incidents that led to the insights as described above. First was the lecture on thematic analysis and the affinity diagram. The content being discussed both theoretically and practically instead of only practically made me fully understand not only how to apply it but also why it is effective. When getting to the part in the design process when we started the analysis, this knowledge allowed me to better code and cluster since I understood the impact better rather than just applying a method I knew. As I mentioned, I used to have a tendency to immediately start clustering since I already noticed some themes during the transcription of the data. Now I knew what the impact of that could be and how to work around that urge. That was also the second incident that led to the learning insight. Actually creating the affinity diagram made me reflect on the clusters that we had created and whether they actually met the coding or that they were clusters because we saw them that way in our heads.

## IV. EVALUATE & PLAN

Due to my major, thematic analysis and creating affinity diagrams is something that I will be doing much more in the future. Although I believe that 'practice makes perfect' plays a large role when it comes to these methods, I do think that thoroughly understanding the theory and impact behind it helps in the correct execution of these methods. Specifically for this project, the analysis has helped us find the correct and most significant design opportunities for this target group. Due to how we have done the analysis, I am more confident that our design will match better with the user's needs and thus provide

value. As for future design processes, which there will be a lot of, the same will probably apply. I am currently doing thematic analysis at my internship and I already notice how I am more critical towards the data clusters being created.

Overall this insight has inspired me to look deeper into the differences between thematic analysis and affinity diagrams and how they can/should be applied in different design processes. For my internship project I will be doing a thorough analysis on this topic, for which the gained knowledge from this course will be very valuable.