Course Evaluation – DM2630 – User Experience Design and Evaluation

Students' perspectives on the course were collected in two ways:

1) The class chose two student representatives in the first class of the course. These student representatives were tasked with collecting data about student experiences throughout the course and feeding this back to course teachers. We requested feedback within P1 and P2. The teaching team received feedback at the beginning of P2 via a face-to-face meeting with one of the representatives, and at the end of P2 in a face-to-face meeting with one of the representatives.
2) During the last class of the course we asked the students to provide feedback on the course on a white board in a classroom. This white board asked students to reflect on what they had learnt in the course; what they thought went well; what could be improved for future years.

We did not run a standard questionnaire this year since historically completion rates are low and we felt we had collected ample qualitative data for the purposes of course evaluation and revision.

Teachers' perspective on how the course went
The course ran in much the same manner as previous years, but with a substantive change to the format of reading seminars in a way that we had hoped we encourage participation. However, in reality this did not play out, and we found that across the course attendance to reading seminars and practical skills session was lower than ideal, with at times only 10 or so students arriving. This was especially the case in P2. On the whole, students' work was passable, but a number of students struggled to articulate verbally at the final exhibition which concepts or theories of experience related to the designs they were presenting. In this sense, the teaching team were a little disappointed that while students had made a piece of interaction design, they had not understood through the course how to make a user experience. In the past we have not made attendance to classes compulsory, but this will likely change in the coming year.

Overall thoughts on feedback
Based on the feedback collected at the end of the course and across period 2 we found that the course continued to be well received by students. Students appreciated the overall structure of the course, the guest lectures, the mixture of topics covered and the design challenges utilized throughout the course. Students appreciated the written feedback provided to student assignments and felt that teaching staff had deeply engaged with their work in order to provide useful comments that would improve their skills over time. However, there were elements of the course that the students felt could be improved, which we will now discuss.

Reading seminars
Qualitative feedback in the survey and from the whiteboard suggest that students still struggle with finding the format engaging and useful. It was also clear from attendance at reading seminars that students were not finding the time to read the papers and therefore not attending the seminars. Students noted that the papers did not always clearly connect

to their design work, and they were unable to see clear guidance in the papers that would then help them make decisions about how to progress their designs.

We have tried many configurations of reading seminars to see if we can find approaches that work well for students, but none of the approaches we have taken seem to be successful in helping students to read or participate in classes. The teaching team will discuss this in the coming months to see how these activities should be re-framed. It is possible that the teaching team will make attendance compulsory.

Volume of project work
Students clearly feel they are still being asked to do too much for this 9 credit course. Many feel they do not know how to spread their time across tasks, and feel that in particular they are unable to perform at their best levels because they are spreading themselves too thinly across too many assignments. The teaching team discussed this in depth and we have decided to remove the personal project element of the coursework. We do this for a couple of reasons, first because the students this year did not effectively use this opporutnity to create a user experience – as such it feels like there is a disconnect between the course content and what the students create. In other words, the assignment is not the most effective manner to test the learning objectives. Second, the personal project uses substantial teaching time – via supervision – that could be better spent in delivering content and facilitating discussions.