REPORT AL RIENTRO DELL'ESPERIENZA DI SCAMBIO - A.A. 2016/2017

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_Semestre svolto all'estero	2°

Testo

The Erasmus programme at TU Delft was an amazing experience for me as a student. I participate of the master course Design & Engineering in Politecnico di Milano and I have done my Erasmus during the second semester of the second year of my masters in the master course Design for Interaction in the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering.

The programme I have followed in Delft was very different from the programme at Politecnico di Milano and I think this is one of the most amazing things of the Erasmus, I really had the possibility of learning many things I did not know before.

At the beginning the hosting university prepares an Introduction Programme that happens the week before the beginning of the classes The programm is very organised and many activities are available, mainly to intruduce students to each other. This first week is just for the international students and no dutch student was there. They also tried to explain how the dutch people are and gave some tips about the culture and language. I have met many students during the Introduction Programme that became friends even months after that week.

The first week of classes in TU Delft was light, there where a few workshops related to the course Manage your Masters, about getting to know yourself and planning the next years of education already with a focus in what specifically one student wants to work with. The concept of the workshops were nice but the course Manage your Masters from a point of view of someone in Erasmus after completing all courses in Politecnico di Milano was not that interesting, just because the TU Delft students were also planning their courses for the next years of masters and I already finished every course.

It was during the second week of classes that the introduction of the courses were made and the groupwork was presented. TU Delft does not work with semesters but with quarters, the first quarter starting at beginning of february and finishing at the half of april. During the first quarter I have followed 4 courses: UXAD (User Experience Assessement Design); ITD (Interactive Technology Design); VCD (Visual Communication Design) and IDE Academy (Industrial Design Engineering Academy). UXAD was the main course of the semester, we were grouped by the professors in groups of six people (in my case three dutch students and three internationals), we were given an existing product in the market and asked to do the redesign aiming to improve the user experience while the user is in contact with the product. We were given a thermostat from a company called Priva and during the first quarter the whole part of research and conceptualization

was performed by the group. This course also continued in the second quarter, with furhter development of the product and the final redesign. The results were prensented to the company, to the main professors of the course and also to the professors who have helped us during the whole semester with weekly reviews of about an hour. The professors were always available and the students were always punctual and the work was taken very professionally. We had weekly planning of the tasks each person had to do and role's distribution (such as Team Leader, Chair of the review meetings and note taker of the review meetings). The planning was the most different aspect I have encountered in the Erasmus, it was different to take time to plan the next weeks and to seriously divide the tasks in between the group members and it was actually helping a lot in the process of redesign. I hope to take these strategies of time management with the in the next projects. Another thing worth mentioning is that all this professionalism did not meant we were not friends with the group mates. By the end of the semester our group was really connected and we were also going out together, what made me rethink that well known problem that Erasmus students do not integrate with the dutch students, because in my case I had many dutch friends (including the three students that were my colleagues in the UXAD class) and all of them were open and very friendly.

ITD (Interactive Technology Design) was another course that was also continuing in the second quarter. This course had a very interesting approach because it was not aimed at a comercial product like everything I have previously designed, this course was aimed at the invention of future scenarios (utopian or distopian) and the creation of an interactive prototype that could explain people the scenario we created and make them imerse in the experience we have previously stablished. The group project was of 4 students, also in this course the professors were choosing the groups and also in this project the group was 2 dutch students and 2 foreigners. The only difference from the other project is that the group from the first quarter was not the group from the second quarter. Each person in the group has a specific role (design research, form giver, software design and hardware design). In the first quarter I was in the "design research" position, working on the development of the scenario and the story behind the interaction we designed. In the second quarter I was working as "hardware", meaning I was the responsable for the construction of the prototypes. I have passed a lot of time in the workshop and I had access to the 3D printers and laser cut files. In this project I have learned a lot about interactive products and environments and also a lot about prototying and user tests. Everyweek the prototypes had to be tested by a different person in order to understand if our interaction was passing the notion about our scenarios. It was very intesting and the final results were presented in an exhibition inside the Industrial Design Engineering building and also in a festival in Rotterdam called Future Flux Festival.

The VCD course was not as I expected. I tought I would be given some graphic design teoretical notions but it was mote about visual tricks that people use related to the perseption of people. It was relatively intense because every week we had to submit a small assignement and even if the work did not look like it was a lot it was sometimes very time consuming because it involved some skills that I did not have for example some notion about coding and photography. Overall, the course was interesting and some visual aspects were very useful to learn but the theoretical classes were not that exciting.

The IDE Academy is not a course by itselft, it is just the requirement of participating of at least seven daily workshops that belong to the Industrial Design Engineering faculty. The workshops were available every wednesday and the application for the workshops was happening online a week before the date. Sometimes it was complicated to find available spots because some workshops were very nice and people were fully booking within minutes of the the application

opening. Some workshops I have done are: Coding for Designers, 360 Degree Virtual Reality and Arduino for beginners.

In the second quarter, the new course I had was Reflection on Designing, a course that had very few theorical classes that consisted in people speaking about what defined than as designers and the free time to do activities that we thought would help us to define ourselves as a designer. The final submition was an assey about ourselves as a professional. What in the beginning seemed silly or very easy to do turned out to be one of the most difficult assignments I have done in my student career. It was not easy to write about myself and I think that TU Delft as an university aims a lot in many different courses in the importance of undertanding our main aims as students and professionals. They really want you to be able to describe yourself and to have clear goals towards your master and future job.

Another course that also focused in writting about yourself was Manage your Masters, that consisted just in that workshops in the beginning of the semester and the final assignment. I have never paid so much attention into planning the future of my carreer as I have done it in TU Delft.

The course in general, Design for Interaction, is a very nice master course, very well structured and really ahead in mindset considering what we learned in class. The environment was always pleasant, many exhibitions and events were always going on in the Industrial Design Engineering building. The faculty had these amazing events that you could participate all the time. Lunch lectures were definitly my favorites, during the lunch time (aroung 12:45 to 13:45) there were short lectures mainly about people who works with design in the main auditorium and if you were to participate of the talk you could just grab free sandwishes and pass one hour listening to very interesting things in a normal day. There was also Alumi talks that I really appreciated to listen to, once I'm about to graduate.

Other than studies, the university also offered a lot of fun. When I first decided to go to Delft, I thought it would be boring, a small city with not much to do but it was definitly not like that. There is a bar inside the Industrial Design Engineering building that is open every wednesday (and also other days within certain schedule), and this bar gives you the possibility of being together with your colleagues in another context rather than just working for the projects. TU Delft also hosts technological and music festivals.

Overall my experience abroad was much more than I expected. I went mainly because the university is very well positioned in rankings and known for the quality of education but I was suprised by a really friendly environment and amazing people that turned out to be my professors, colleagues and many times my friends. I highly reccommend to the people studying design at Politecnico di Milano to participate of the Erasmus programme in TU Delft.

Autorizzo al trattamento dei miei dati personali ai sensi del Decreto Legislativo n. 196/03 da parte del Politecnico di Milano.

Firma