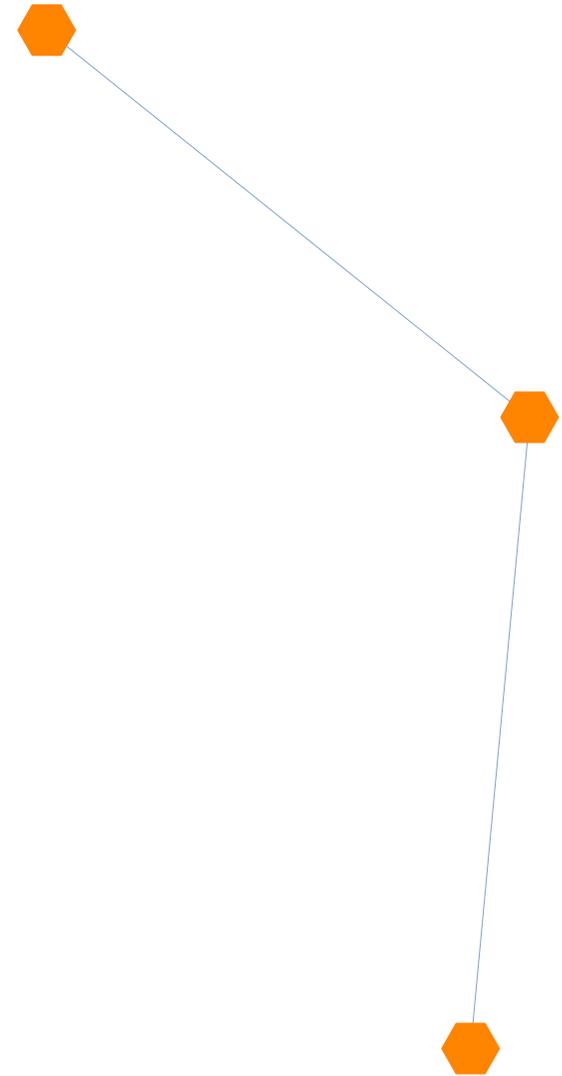


Personal Development Plan

Dylan Mighell

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# Past

Having finished high school in 2007, I left for England for 6 months to volunteer at a secondary college near Brighton, UK. I was a swimming instructor for 18 months at a swimming centre in Sydney. These two experiences that were unique to my development taught me that patience above all is a very useful skill to have and that if you take the time to talk to someone then you find out where they have been. During this time I also started to realise that I immensely enjoyed teaching all ages, but also that I was able to get along with children very easily.

My undergraduate degree was a Bachelor of Interactive Entertainment majoring in Animation at Qantm College of Design. This course was both demanding and very challenging, having done no writing since high school. I was forced to learn and write a lot, all the time. The thing with Qantm is that it is one-quarter academic work to three-quarters practical studies, which I excelled at. I gained more than I could ever know in those two years at Qantm. My studies at Qantm helped pave the way in what direction I would take as a designer. I graduated with an interest in game design, 3D animation, graphic design, video editing and teaching. I made sure that while I was at Qantm, I involved myself in as many different activities as possible primarily being part of the student council. This helped me with my social skills and organization of events which I like doing and fulfill me with a sense of responsibility. All of these things influenced me into what direction I want to take with me now.

Something I started to realise after my undergraduate, was that its not what you know but whom you know. This helped me get a job at MCA working as a full time freelancer. While in this position I built 3d models for augmented reality apps, video editing, graphic design and content creation for both websites and smartphone apps. This job gave me great insight into how a corporation was run, how to act accordingly, how to follow the organizational tree, how to react to unforeseen circumstances in an environment and a sense of self worth that I was good at something as well. After this I decided that I did not like animation, but that digital design and content creation of all kinds was more my strength. This job heavily influenced focus into interaction design and how people interact with technology.

After a year of working in and around graphic design, 3d and freelance jobs, I decided to pursue a Masters of Design major in Interactivation at the University of Technology Sydney. In this studio, I was under the direction of Dr Bert Bongers, who had taught at TU/e ten years ago and was one of my main influences for coming on exchange here. The way he runs his course is self-directed and runs through a set of competencies that also ties in with the UTS design course. Since then I have been doing most of my work with phidgets and Max/MSP visual programming language.



During the first year of my masters I was part of a course called the ulab, this was a human centered design thinking innovation and entrepreneurship. A partnership with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance (CPA) was founded. The ulab is a collaboration of Engineering, Design, IT and Business masters students, through co-design with industry partners look to solving challenge areas through empathy, ideation and prototyping. The project with CPA was combating the challenge of social isolation with children. This has been my main body of work in my masters' course in both theory and practice.

This eventually turned into my thesis where I attempted to answer the following research question:

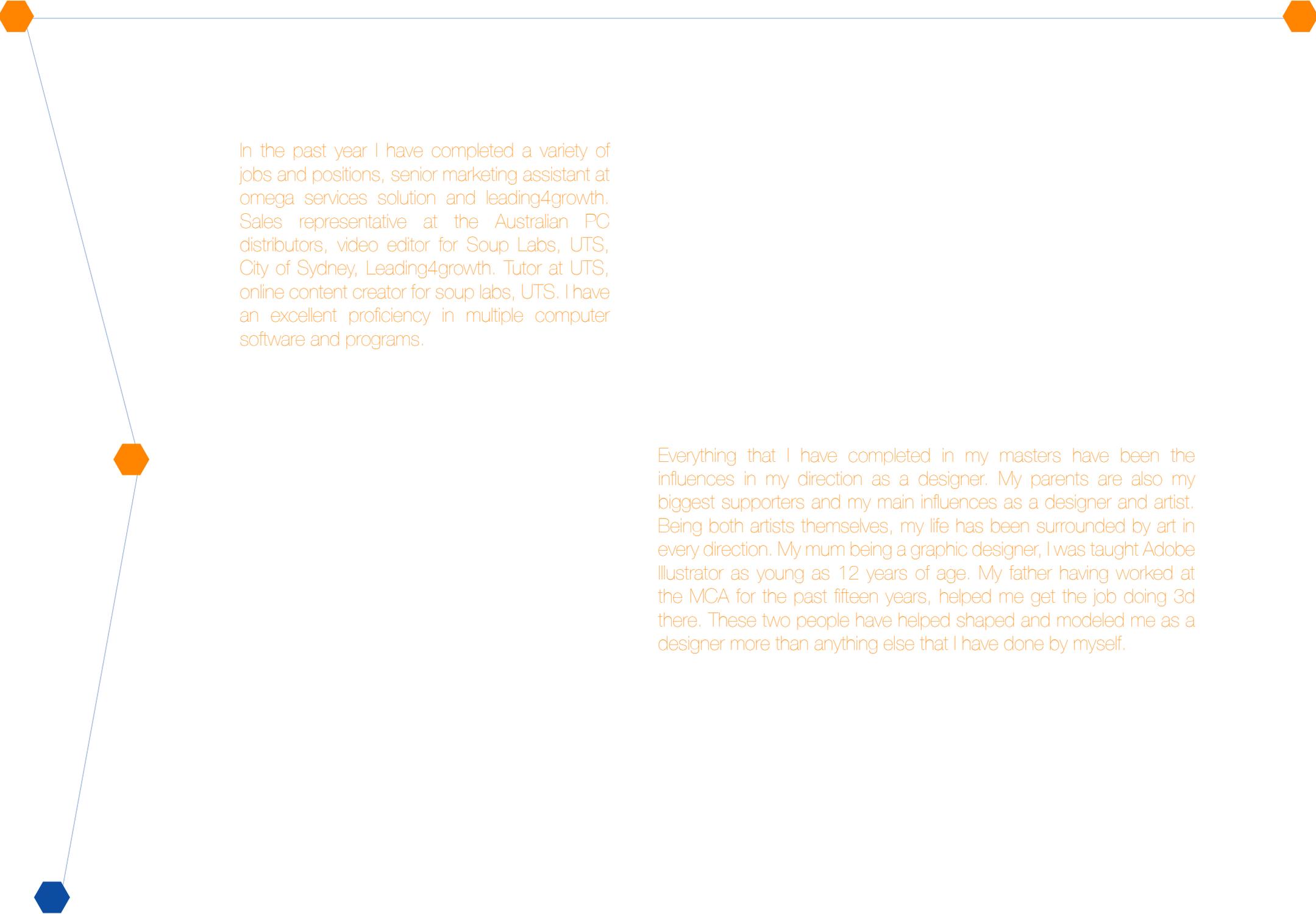
Can an interactive environment foster the necessary social interactions required for children with cerebral palsy specifically with spastic hemiplegia and give them an opportunity for the functional training of their fine and general motor skills?



I have been working in Innovation and new work environments as part of this extension of my course. Last year, I travelled to China and Indonesia on two separate trips with the ulab to combat different social issues in the cities. China was combating recycling and recycling stations in the city of Dalian to which I was awarded a scholarship and Indonesia was helping the people of Banda Aceh become Entrepreneurs in their own right and expand the coffee culture of the Aceh people. This year I am working with Soup Labs to combat the issue of renting and living in Sydney for young Australians and how we might be able to make living affordable for all.

Through my collaboration with ulab this has opened up many opportunities for work, last year I was a volunteer teacher with Dr Jochen Schweitzer in an undergraduate business class, teaching and helping out with the Stanford design school methodologies, which is what we learnt in the ulab: empathy, define, ideate, prototype and test. This year I was offered to be a tutor in an e-commerce: innovation and entrepreneurship class with Dr Wayne Brookes. In my current role, I was managing all 26 groups of students. Helping with their class work, group work and consultation times. I was also teaching them human design thinking practices in the class and also lecturer on occasion under the supervision of Dr Wayne Brooks. I would also help with the management of the UTS blackboard management system.





In the past year I have completed a variety of jobs and positions, senior marketing assistant at omega services solution and leading4growth. Sales representative at the Australian PC distributors, video editor for Soup Labs, UTS, City of Sydney, Leading4growth. Tutor at UTS, online content creator for soup labs, UTS. I have an excellent proficiency in multiple computer software and programs.

Everything that I have completed in my masters have been the influences in my direction as a designer. My parents are also my biggest supporters and my main influences as a designer and artist. Being both artists themselves, my life has been surrounded by art in every direction. My mum being a graphic designer, I was taught Adobe Illustrator as young as 12 years of age. My father having worked at the MCA for the past fifteen years, helped me get the job doing 3d there. These two people have helped shaped and modeled me as a designer more than anything else that I have done by myself.

# Identity

My role as a designer is someone who has many skills, can adapt to any situation and I can motivate and be motivated by those around me. I have been described as being discerning, perceptive, considerate, expressive, intuitive, engaging and observant. I am motivated towards my goals and it takes me a while to choose a project but once I have chosen something I put all of my efforts towards that project. I am a very guarded person who does not show

his true emotions that easily, I have thought a lot about my character, who my friends are and it takes time to get to know me well. This comes from me being an only child, who is comfortable with my own thoughts and does not share as often as some other people. I am not the best public speaker but I find that I excel in group projects because I deliver perceptive insights into the group.

I find myself studying and observing the world around me, not just the environment but also how people interact with each other around me. I have got a keen sense of how people think and the psychology of social, behavioral and cognitive ways that make up human nature. Curiosity killed the cat, people are curious in all aspects of their lives and I like to think of myself as a curious person and explore everything around me.

I have done a lot in a short amount of time but with that I have experiences with many different things but I lack the experience that a full-time job for an extended amount of time would bring. I thoroughly enjoy teaching in all aspects whether it is with children or with students in both high school and university. This is something that I would like to continue to focus on in my future, and also maybe go back to study so that I can work in a school.



My undergraduate degree influenced my decision to continue studying because it was a very specific area of study, what it did teach me was a wide range of skills that I am now applying and adapting as a designer. The one thing I regret not learning through this is programming and the ability to prototype via code.

My masters ended up being one of the most enjoyable things I have studied and the knowledge that I have gained interpreted and understood is paramount to who I am growing into. Every subject I undertook was intuitive and diverse but the subject I took to the most was uLab innovation and entrepreneurship. It takes from Stanford University and IDEO's design thinking methodologies and a human centered design thinking point of view. Where we take into consideration empathetic research and we follow a guideline of empathy, define the problem, ideate, prototype and test.

My projects with Bert Bongers in the Interactivation studio have opened my eyes to the world of HCI and HTI. The study of interactions in the world not just with technology but also with people is what I have been trying to focus on. I see these two classes as my two main influences as to where I want to go as a designer.

Why I want to be a designer is something that is considered cliché, but I would like to have an impact on the world somehow. Change people's perceptions of a subject or a group of people, discover something or create a product that then generates new ideas and designs. As the world is changing quickly in terms of technology, innovation and new ways of thinking so too, as designers, we need to keep up and stay in front of all of these.

*"But I find that for myself, without exception, the more I deal with the work as something that is my own, as something that is personal, the more successful it is."* - **Marian Bantjes**

# This Semester

The two things that I want to focus on this coming semester while in the Netherlands are my two influences from my masters at UTS, design thinking methodologies and Interactions in the world.

I have been accepted into the Kolding Design 2014 Masters Camp held annually at the Kolding Design School. For two weeks the camp joins Danish and international students, companies, designers and researchers in design in addressing a current challenge that relates to society. It starts on the 27th of September and runs through to the 10th of October. This is looking at the idea of sidestepping large businesses into the welfare industry.

This design camp with other master's students will help me with my direction of design think methodologies. I recognise that this is outside the scope of the SDLW, what I propose to do is that I will continue to research my project while I am attending the camp. Following this when Dutch design and SDL weeks are happening I use this time to continue on my projects. For me this just seems like a simple swap of weeks during the semester.

# Self-Directed Learning Weeks

Have a finished project that is justified through research and testing

**S:** A project with a functional prototype that is a standalone application.

**M:** Can be completed in one semester at TU/e

**A:** A project that I can work on my skills as a programmer and also a designer

**R:** Would like something that is justified as to why I am completing it through a small body of research and work

**T:** I have just 10 weeks of Projects and I am confident that I can complete it in this time frame

How does design thinking methodologies differ from country to country, how does a group situation change what method they use/should use

**S:** Design thinking methodologies change from country to country and I would like to be involved in as many group situations and challenges as possible to extend my knowledge in this regard

**M:** Continue to look for design challenges, hack-a-thons, group work to involve myself with

**A:** This research is going towards my other goal, so my time will be assigned accordingly

**RT:** Realistically I would like to have simultaneous projects but as my time here is limited, most of my work will go into my project and this will be something that I focus on whenever I get a chance

# Goals

# Competencies

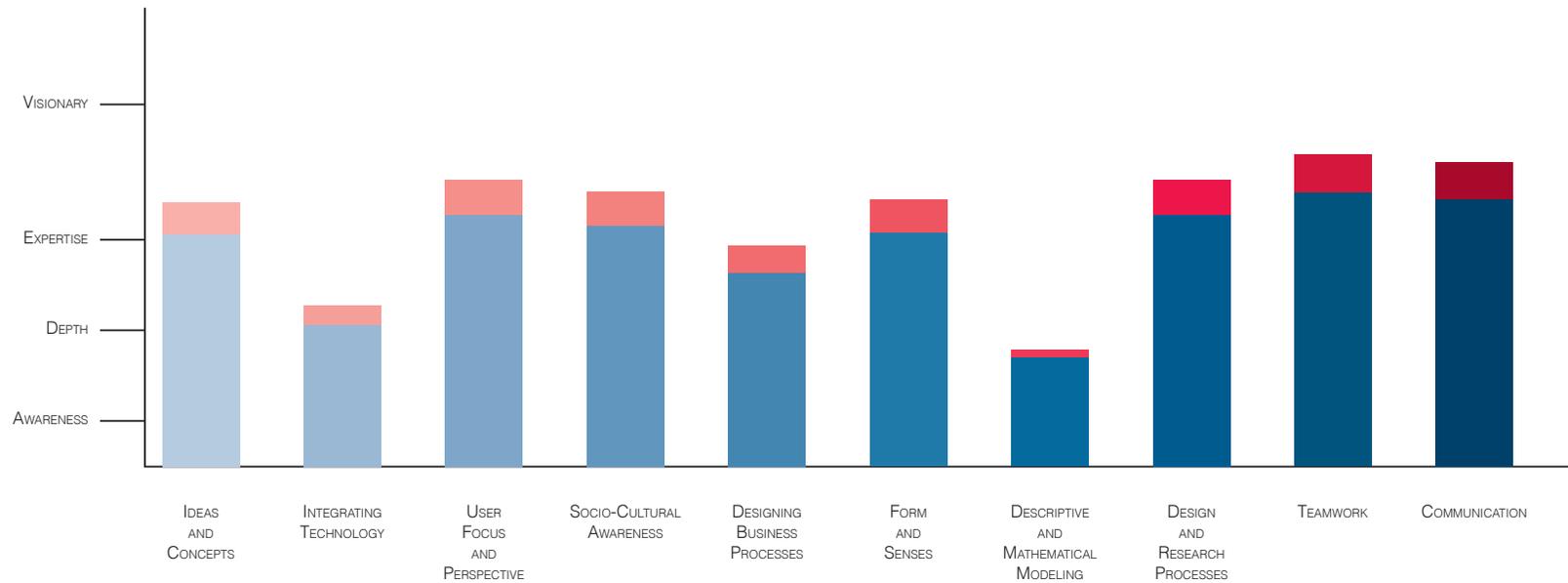
Out of the seven competencies here at TU/e there are only two that are major challenge areas for me. From my past experiences, jobs and education, I find that integrating technology and descriptive and mathematical modelling are the two areas that are the most challenging to me. I don't think that descriptive and mathematical modelling would be something that I will be good at, so I have decided not to pursue it and rather work on areas that I can improve on.

Ideas and concepts, integrating technology, and user focus and perspective are three areas that I want to focus on in my modules this coming semester. Interaction design for children is something that I want to continue to work on with my design thinking focus where the attention and emphasis is with the user.

My understanding of socio-cultural awareness is unique and extensive in my opinion, having travelled and worked in multiple countries this is one area where I exceed. Especially in multinational teams of varying language and skill levels. Everyone always has something to learn and I hope by applying myself to different group projects and new ways of learning this year I can continue to improve my social and cultural awareness.

From being in the Interactivation studio in Sydney under the direction of Bert Bongers has helped my understanding of forms and senses. This understanding extends to my thesis and research into the interactions of children with cerebral palsy. My craftsmanship skills have a lot of work because I have had not much skill with prototyping past the low fidelity stage. This is something that through working with other industrial designers I hope to learn from them and continue to work on my skills in this area.

# Level of Competency



The blue levels on the graph represent my current level of competency to the TU/e competencies. It is evident that Integrating technology and maths are my two challenge areas. As this semester is technically the final semester of my degree as exchange, I have already completed a thesis and final major project. This is why the visionary level is so high because it is something for me to continue to strive for and keep working towards.

The highlighted red sections are what I hope to improve in my exchange semester while studying here.



# Vision

Where I want to go in the future, as a designer is to motivate people to get the best out of themselves as well as get the best out of myself. I want to express myself creatively and engage the user and audience with everything that I do. While observing the world around me, I would like to take this a step forward and create a way to record all of it. Consider the world around us, if there were ever a way to record everything that we see, smell, hear, taste, feel; it would change people's perceptions about what they do and where they go. How people interact with the world around them is something that I would like to continue to be involved in and change some of these interactions to be more for the user rather than for a company.



When it comes to my design work, I would like to continue to develop my motivation for continuing and finishing projects, which is something that I lack the skill to do. The interactions of this world, people to people, people to technology and people to the environment is something that is often overlooked, and it is in my vision to continue to observe these interactions and ask why and how to develop them. I am my own biggest critic when it comes to my own personal design work and when I have invested a lot of time to something it is never quite finished. What I end up doing is taking on more work than I can handle, not finishing it and then being disappointed in myself. What I hope to complete this coming semester is a project that is finished.

I hope within the next five to seven years to complete my PHD that is an extended version of my thesis on the social skill development of children with cerebral palsy. Finding funding so I can complete a study and come up with my own theories instead of adapting some from previous studies completed on children without a disability. This is something that I am passionate about and continuing to develop this into a tangible, personalized product in the future.



*The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. — Aristotle*