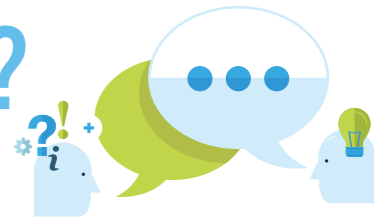


# WERE WE READY TO TEACH IN TIMES OF SOCIETAL CRISIS?

## Lessons Learned From a Practice-Based Design Engineering Course



- Equipping the students to be **critical and independent evaluators** of their and others' works, higher education prepares them for the world's changing values. The Covid-19 pandemic illustrated that higher education itself was not ready for the **unexpected changes**.
- Mid March 2020, the Dutch Government announced lockdown and suspension of education at all levels. It was only **six days** before the **in-class peer testing\*** activity of the \*Design and Meaning\* course of Industrial Design Engineering program of the University of Twente.
- While the new situation pressured academia to find creative ways of teaching and testing, students had to cope with the **uncertainty** created by this transition in education.
  - The topic course of this paper is the first course of the relevant IDE educational programme, in which **'peer-testing of prototypes'** is employed as an assessment method.
  - The **course is naturally short** (see below schedule), due to the program's requirements; with peer-assessment at the core of the **practice assessment**.
  - In 2020, peer-testing of prototypes had to be deployed via **online tools** and **asynchronously**, by taking the students' preferences into account (i.e., explaining product in 2-min pitch video)



- After the announcement of the final grades, the students were asked their opinion about the application of on-line peer-testing.
- In total,  $N=24$  students (out of 86) responded to the survey.



images from the in-class peer-testing activity of 2021

## STUDENT CHALLENGES

- Lack of proper interaction** made it difficult to understand the design process nor the product use.
- Low quality of feedback** provided to their peers.
- It was **disappointing not to touch and use** the prototypes.
- Feedback** became **shorter** and possibly **less extended** due to this lack of interaction among the peers.
- Challenging to explain their experience design concepts in a **2-minutes' video**.
- Not to ask questions to the groups could have **negatively affected** the results of their peer assessment.

## TEACHER CHALLENGES

- Facilitate engaging and effective communication among peers

\*Peer testing is a method designed by the author to teach students user-testing of real products in classroom.