Personal Development Plan

Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

An important way to learn and develop yourself as a future designer is to think over and reflect on your learning experiences. The Personal Development Plan (PDP) is a relevant tool to support your development. It is a document for planning and directing your competence development on a continuous base by formulating goals based on your reflection on learning experiences. Formulating goals provides your learning with a direction and makes it possible to evaluate and monitor your progress. But, how do you decide which goals you want to attain? In this document you are provided with some guidelines for formulating goals. First, the importance and function of the design vision is addressed. Next, the content of the PDP is outlined. Then, the activities undertaken when using a PDP are described. Finally, the SMART method for formulating goals is presented and tips for relevant literature and sites are provided.

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1.0 DESIGN VISION AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

vision on designing

Your vision on designing is an important element in the educational model of Industrial Design. A vision is a coherent set of ideas and beliefs about (1) the future of society and/or (2) the future role of academic designers (who can also be researchers) in society. A good vision is based on what drives you and what your needs are and therefore is personal.

A vision serves to direct your development and influences your actions and decision-making as a (future) designer. That's why a vision needs to have a clear focus. A good vision though, is personal and is connected to your professional identity.

professional identity

The professional identity encompasses "I" statements about who you are as a designer and as a person - the latter as far as relevant to your SDCL and OCD - (for more information see the competence framework). It is deduced from reflections on your personality traits, your personal history what drives you and what inspires you, your interests and your beliefs. Also, the professional identity is deduced from the role you typically take in a design process, your strengths and weaknesses as a designer: your OCD. Your professional identity is constantly developing. To help you self direct this development, you need to reflect and think over who you want to become as a designer (your 'desired ' professional identity). The desired professional identity describes who you want to be as a designer and as a person – again as far as relevant to your SDCL and OCD -. It is constructed by placing your current professional identity in the context of your vision on the future role of the designer. Thus, the professional identity is build on your past experiences, expresses how you view yourself right now and states who you want to become.

We consider it of utmost importance that you develop and shape your vision on designing and your own professional identity as a designer right from the start. It provides you with a point of reference for your design decisions, competency development, selection of learning activities and focus of reflections. And last but not least it provides you with a measure for your development: have I achieved what I set out to achieve? It provides you with a drive to go in a particular direction, to choose particular learning activities and to use a particular approach. Developing and shaping your vision is the pivotal action for your Personal Development Plan. It becomes your point of reference and may give you a specific focus when you are performing learning activities during the semester. The PDP is also your point of reference for monitoring your progress, evaluating the accomplishment of your goals, and for creating and updating your portfolio. So you need to include it in your portfolio.

2.0 CONTENT

Typical questions you address in your PDP are:

- What is my vision on designing? And how / where does this show in my design output and approach?
- What is my vision on my professional identity as a designer / what are my ambitions as a designer? / How do I distinguish myself from other designers, or with what kind of designers do I show similarities (where do I want to be, what do I want to have achieved at the end of the Bachelor's / Master's)
- What have I achieved so far?
    - With respect to professional identity as a designer, design thinking, design process, overall quality of deliverables, expertise areas and attitude.
    - With respect to development of the overall competence of designing (see the online education guide 2020-2021).
- How can I achieve progress with respect to the aforementioned aspects? What do I need to achieve for this in terms of professional identity as a designer, design thinking, design process, overall quality of deliverables, competency development and attitude? And what learning activities do I need for this, or can contribute to this?

3.0 PDP ACTIVITIES

tool for development

The idea is that you use the PDP as a tool to direct your long-term (vision on designing, what kind of designer you want to become) and short-term development (what do you want to achieve per learning activity). Therefore you write / adjust your PDP before each teacher-coach and/or mentor meeting in which your study planning and future career is addressed.

It is important to discuss the content of your PDP with your teacher coach/mentor. Writing and using your PDP involves various activities. There is not a fixed starting point or fixed order for these activities: this partly depends on your personal preference and partly on your learning style. This also determines how you go about writing your PDP. It is worthwhile, though, to explore and experiment with various approaches and media. The various activities within the PDP process are briefly explained below.

4.0 SELF-APPRAISAL/ ANALYSIS

where am I now?

One of the activities in the process of making a PDP is to arrive at the status quo of your development: overall competence of designing, professional identity as a designer, design process, quality of your deliverables, and the expertise areas. What have you achieved so far when it comes to your design process, quality of your deliverables, competency development and attitude, and how have you achieved this (projects, courses and other learning activities)?

5.0 SETTING YOUR DIRECTION

Where do I want to go?

Your vision on designing and on your professional identity as a designer gives direction to your design process and learning process. So it is crucial to develop and shape this vision, and to perform a variety of activities for this, inside and outside our, scheduled and independent. There are various ways of initiating this vision, for example making a mood board, collecting quotes from (famous) designers, visiting design exhibitions, pinpointing what it is that makes a particular designer or design famous, reading books, or just starting to design. Gaining experience with the design process also develops and shapes your design vision. And the self-appraisal / analysis should also help you in pinpointing where your challenges or needs are for your development as a designer.

In your PDP you can use your design vision to generate goals for what you want to achieve in during the learning activities concerned. These goals may prove useful for the selection of learning activities. Of course there may still be opportunities to learn on the fly (learn by surprise) once you are engaged in your selected learning activities. Your reflections on this may help you to determine where you are going.

6.0 FORMULATING GOALS

SMART goals

In general, goals need to be meaningful and relevant for your competence development. Also, goals need to be formulated as concrete as possible. A tool to formulate goals effectively is to formulate them SMART. A goal is SMART if it is Specific, Measurable, Apparent, Realistic and Time-related. When possible we expect you to formulate your goals SMART.

Specific means that the goal is not vague, but reasonably concrete. For instance if a student says, "I will work harder" he or she is not specific. He or she is specific when stating, "I will attend the meetings of course xxx and I will reflect on each expertise area in writing, on the course day concerned".

Measurable means you can check whether the specific goal actually is converted into activities, which one can measure. For instance it is measurable how many lectures someone attends and how many exercises will be made.

Apparent[1] means that it is clear who is supposed to do what to achieve a goal. This is especially applicable for group or organizational goals. For instance, a company wants to go digital to sell their products. To achieve this goal a web designer needs to design a website, the manager needs to make sure there is a budget available and another person needs to choose the products which can be sold online. Various people are assigned to different tasks.

Realistic[2] is referring to how practical or feasible goals are. Sometimes goals have such high standard, which makes it almost impossible to achieve them. Not achieving goals is demotivating. On the other hand, if goals have standards that are too low, you can easily achieve them but this is hardly satisfying. Goals that are just above your level (or that of the group) are the most motivating ones. You have to do just a little bit more to achieve it. And if you succeed it is more rewarding. To know what is achievable or not you have to know yourself (or the group) quite well. Reflecting on the past or collecting information about the past can be helpful. For instance, a student knows that he can produce five concepts for a design in two weeks. He wants to produce ten concepts in only five days. Is that realistic? Probably not, unless the student knows that, when under pressure, he can produce massively. It seems more realistic to assume that this student will produce seven concepts instead of five with a bit more effort in two weeks' time.

Time-related means that there is a clear beginning and ending. When do you start with activities to achieve your goal and when can you say that it is achieved? For instance when does the student (previous example) start with working harder? Beginning on the first day of these two weeks or after finishing five concepts? And does he start with this goal the first opportunity he has or later on?

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[1] The meaning of A differs. Next to the meaning Apparent, the A in SMART is explained as 1. Acceptable or 2. Attainable/achievable. Acceptable means that you should have the commitment and will to realize the goal. Attainable/achievable means that a goal should be realistic. In Canvas modules for first and second year students the A is defined as Apparent.

[2] The meaning of R differs as well. Next to Realistic, the R in SMART can be explained as relevant. Relevant then means valuable for your learning process. In Canvas modules for first and second year students the R of relevant is used in instructions.

Questions to check if your goals are **SMART**:

- Does the goal indicate what kind of activity you will undertake?
- Does the goal include a number or another measurable criterion to decide if the goal has been achieved?
- Does the goal specify who will do what concerning the goal?
- Is there a check for the feasibility of the goal? What reference is used to check whether it is realistic?
- Does the goal include any time indication (when will activities start/end, how long will the activities take, etc.)

7.0 USEFUL DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITES

- Hummels, C. and Frens, J. (2008). Designing for the unknown: A design process for the future generation of highly interactive systems and products. Proceedings Conference on EPDE, Barcelona, Spain, 4-5 September 2008, pp. 204-209.
- Hummels, C. and Vinke, D. (2009). Eindhoven designs volume 2: Developing the competence of designing intelligent systems. Eindhoven University of Technology.
- http://test.pagina.nl/
- http://training-persoonlijkeontwikkeling.pagina.nl/
- http://mbti.pagina.nl/ (Everything on Myers-Briggs Type indicator)
- http://www.123test.nl/
- http://home.iae.nl/users/pmast/GebruikJeType/