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Module 7 - Co-design learning through User Testing

Unit 7.1 - Introduction

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Introduction

Define Methodology

User testing is a method where learners (students) engage in testing products, services, or learning materials to provide feedback based on their experiences. In a co-design context, user testing allows students to take an active role in evaluating and improving the educational content or processes. This methodology emphasizes experiential learning, iterative feedback, and the refinement of learning resources based on real user experiences.

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Rationale and Connection to Co-Design Pedagogy

User testing serves as a foundational component of co-design pedagogy because it operationalises key principles of participatory learning. It enhances learner agency, supports inquiry-based exploration, and strengthens ownership by granting learners the opportunity to shape the development of learning resources and environments.

This aligns with contemporary educational frameworks encouraging active participation, reflective learning, and creativity, including the **European Commission's Key Competences for Lifelong Learning** (2019), which emphasise collaboration, problem-solving, and digital competence.

In this perspective, user testing becomes a practical bridge between theory and practice, enabling learners to experience real decision-making processes while contributing to improved educational outcomes.

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Key Components of the Methodology

In co-design, user testing typically involves multiple stages:

1. **Prototype Testing**: Learners engage with prototypes (from sketches to high-fidelity mockups) and provide feedback on usability, aesthetics, and clarity.

2. **Feedback Sessions**: Teachers collect insights through interviews, surveys, or observation. Learners articulate needs and difficulties.

3. **Iterative Refinement**: The feedback is integrated into revised versions, tested again, and improved.

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The "WE DID IT" Approach in User Testing



Early and Continuous Involvement

Users are engaged in testing from the early stages, giving feedback on basic prototypes, which may even be sketches or basic models. The involvement is continuous, with iterative rounds of testing as the solution evolves, promoting transparency and shared progress.

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The "WE DID IT" Approach in User Testing



Interactive Feedback Sessions

Rather than passive observation, users engage in dynamic feedback sessions where they are encouraged to express their thoughts, share their ideas, and even suggest alternative solutions. This interaction builds a sense of community and partnership.

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The "WE DID IT" Approach in User Testing



Collaborative Adjustments

The feedback gathered from user testing is directly incorporated into the development. Users are updated on how their input influenced the design, and adjustments are made collectively. This real-time collaboration reinforces the idea that the users are co-creators, not just end consumers.

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In summary, user testing in the "WE DID IT" approach of co-design is a collaborative and iterative process that deeply involves users as co-creators. It not only aims to test functionality and usability but also fosters a sense of shared achievement, ensuring the final product aligns with real-world user needs.

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Benefits of Co-Design Learning through User Testing

1. Shared ownership and commitment

By actively involving users in testing and refining the design, the "WE DID IT" approach fosters a shared sense of ownership. Users feel personally invested in the outcome, which can increase loyalty and adoption.

2. Inclusive and diverse perspectives

This approach values diverse perspectives, ensuring the final product is relevant and accessible to a wide range of users. Inclusivity is a core goal, aiming to create solutions that genuinely resonate across different demographics and user types.

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3. Building Trust and Transparency

Collaborative testing helps demystify the design process for users, building trust and transparency. Users see that their feedback is taken seriously, which strengthens the relationship between the design team and the user community.

4. Empathy between learners and teachers

In the "WE DID IT" approach, designers and users learn from each other. Designers gain insights into users' experiences, while users better understand the complexity and constraints of the design process, fostering empathy and mutual respect.

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5. Generating Tailored, User-Centric Solutions

Collaborative testing helps demystify the design process for users, building trust and transparency. Users see that their feedback is taken seriously, which strengthens the relationship between the design team and the user community.

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You have completed Unit 7.1

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