

# Workshop Observation Guide

Name: [anonymised]

Date: 27.07.16

## Workshop

What worked well?

- Participants seemed enthusiastic about taking part.
- They were actively involved in some design decisions – e.g. discussion about where to put the buttons on the box that [P4] was making.
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What did not work well?

The computer programmes not being flexible or adaptable enough – e.g. participant said he could not enlarge or increase resolution enough to make visible – something he does with other computer programmes. Could consider whether there is any other adaptive technology that would make these programmes more usable by this participant? E.g. speaking, tactile or magnifying somehow....?

How could the workshop be improved?

I don't know if this is a matter for improvement or not but I was unsure of the nature of the 'helper' role or relationship to participant.

For example: participant suggested placement of button on box and helper comments 'that wouldn't work because the plastic is too thick'. So in this instance the helper is more than just 'helping hands' or 'helping eyes'; they are advising on how the technology itself works. What does this mean for the participant's experience of 'trial and error'? I think there are some interesting questions here to be asked about where to strike the balance between helping/advising.

There might be some interesting literature on this dilemma in terms of special assistance in school settings (i.e. how much help is too much help?)

## Challenges and Support

Which challenges did the participants face?

As outlined above – the software looked like more of a problem than the physical making.

Was support needed? If so what for? Was it appropriate?

Yes, quite a lot of support at times. Particularly for using the software for the laser cutter. I am not sure about whether it was appropriate because, as outlined above, I am not sure what level of help or relationship the helper is supposed to have with the participant. I'd be happy to talk this through if you want to!

Did the participants come up with any work-arounds or ideas?

Yes. [P4] described to me how he is able to fit computer components together using touch rather than relying on sight alone. He worked on the box by bending over so that he was extremely close to the parts (in order to fit them together). An adaptation might therefore

be having adjustable tables or benches that would allow him to be very close to the objects without having to adopt extreme posture.  
He also made use of the stool in the workshop in order to watch the laser cutting.

### **Maker Experiences**

How did the participants respond to the introduced technology?

They seemed engaged and enthusiastic. They were telling me about their desire to come back and do more workshops if possible.

Did they come up with any ideas?

I believe they had come up with their own ideas.

I was quite struck that [P4] described wanting to make something for purely aesthetic reasons but that he felt the process of making was proving that someone with impairments could still make things and enjoy making things. So the actual thing made appeared, to me at least, to be less important to him than the process of making and what that meant to him.

How did the participants seemed to feel about the workshop and its content?

At the beginning?

In the middle?

At the end?

I came in after the beginning and before the end! They seemed engaged and enthusiastic about what they were doing.

### **Other Observations**

Did you notice any other noteworthy situations?

Yes.

1. When the laser cutting programme was not working the helper (and a further member of Open Lab) just got on with trying to 'solve the problem'. I think it would have been good if they had verbalised what they were doing as it was difficult for the participant to see what was happening and what was on the screen which I think might have been somewhat confusing and possibly alienating.
2. A couple of times I think I directed questions at participants and they were answered by the helpers (you can check this on the audio/video to see if I'm right!) There is a long history of 'carers' and 'helpers' speaking for disabled people and I think this is something worth keeping an eye on.