



Design for All: Facilitating for Cognitive Diversity in Student Design Projects

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This work centers a consultation between students and individuals experiencing cognitive access barriers, exploring how participatory approaches can inspire students to design accessible solutions with those affected by its absence.



A group photo featuring students and consultants who consented being photographed at the end of the session.

In cooperation with



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Why this matters

- Accessibility is a human right, grounded in legal frameworks [1,2] and standards [3,4]. Yet it is often addressed late in design processes, if at all [5].
- Cognitive access needs aren't solved by technical standards alone [6-7].
- A call for *Born-accessible design* means including human diversity from the start [5].
- This mindset is embedded in the DM2624 course through practice.

Students projects

Students evaluated a service for its accessibility, beginning with an exploration of legal directives, design theory, and automated testing tools. This was followed by a human-centered consultation with members of Begripsam. During this phase, students discussed real-world barriers and co-explored potential solutions with the consultants. The insights gained were analyzed and translated into accessibility requirements, forming the foundation for low-fidelity conceptual redesigns aimed at improving accessibility within each project domain.

The workshop

In a structured two-hour session, students engaged in short, rotating dialogues with members of Begripsam with cognitive accessibility needs, discussing their ongoing projects.

The form of the session was co-designed with the consultants to ensure accessible and meaningful participation, the workshop provided an opportunity to challenge assumptions, gain insights from lived experience, and demonstrate the value of participatory directly within student projects.

Results and next steps

The workshop was a highlight in course evaluations, with students asking for more participatory involvement to further evaluate design outcomes.

Stefan Johansson, founder of Begripsam, noted the strong presence of the ethical principle of **conviviality** [6], evident in the session's format, engagement, and outcomes. As a PhD researcher, I am now building on this through ongoing research, iterating the workshop annually to explore formats that enable meaningful participation, learning, and mutual value.

References

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