

## **Reflection on Experience Prototyping**

Building this experience prototype was unlike anything I have ever done before. I have never had the opportunity to create something of this scale before. I was also nervous and excited to work with people whom I haven't worked with before. After become accustomed to these aspects of the project, and experiencing a disability directly, the project became much more fun. From my disability experience, I realized I took my skills in reading and comprehension for granted, as having functional illiteracy forced me to read every word in sequential order. As I saw how hard it is for some to read and take in information, this helped me to see that our prototype would have as little text as possible. The experience we designed would become radically altered if participants stopped to read or take in massive amounts of information. This helped us to utilize image cards as a means to tell participants which pieces of space junk to shoot.

Simulating functional illiteracy also excluded me from being a productive member in our group meeting. This made me frustrated and angry that I couldn't contribute, but I saw how annoyed my team was that they had to wait for me. After much waiting, our team was eventually able to get working. From this experience, we wanted to ensure the individual was integrated fully into the experience, and not be excluded. After thinking about what had happened, this made the reward of seeing the eclipse much more rewarding, as it was the individual productivity which made it possible to see the eclipse. While working with the disability, I was given a task which I gave up on (something I normally don't do). The synergy of feeling physically sick, combined with the difficulty of the tasks, helped me to discover a "frustration wall" people have. I wanted to help make sure our design didn't make people reach this breaking point.

While simulating functional illiteracy, I found the simplest of tasks – reading – was made much harder, and much less fun, than it should be. From this experience, I wanted to make sure that participants would not have the fun of the experience taken away by worrying how to operate their laser. This was one of the reasons why we made it simple to fire and navigate through the darkness (through the use of tapping a large button). The total experience of building our space experience also helped me to see how people can suspend their disbelief and become engaged. I was worried participants would only focus on the pillows and other hanging objects, but the participants went around looking for space junk and had fun destroying the junk. This made me feel much more comfortable as a designer. Overall, from simulating what it feels like to be illiterate made me much more attuned to how the brain processes work and fun, and made me focus on trying to strike a clever balance between the two to create an experience where fun and learning would be crafted into the wonder that of being in space and helping others in need.