Conclusion

The results of this research provide evidence of the ability of actions to enhance the communication value of talk in designing. Participants of a seating clinic incorporate artefacts into their conversations and act on the artefacts as part of the idea generation process, and apply this action to aid the communication process. Action with artefacts can be inspiring to designers by providing opportunities for serendipitous play as well as purposeful investigative activity within the design space. Speakers place reliance on actions to support and make lucid their talk. The over-arching significance of artefacts is that they aid communication between participants by providing props for a visual channel that supports oral communication. Cooperation based on sharing artefacts is a major strength of face-to-face interaction. Participants can experience artefacts and observe others using artefacts. A simple model is proposed depicting the interaction with artefacts that enhance talk and promulgate further talk based on experience of the artefact or observation of it. The expansion of this simple model with a concatenation of multiple, sequential observations and experiences producing an outcome – an accumulation of information, knowledge, answers, understanding, ideas, and potentially a design – is also proposed.

Notes

1. US Public Law 99–506 defines rehabilitation engineering as the systematic application of technologies, engineering methodologies, or scientific principles to meet the needs of and address the barriers confronted by individuals with handicaps in areas which include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living and recreation.
2. Talk transcription was restricted to oral output that conveyed information about the client, equipment, etc. Talking of a social nature, humour, etc. was not transcribed and was not included in analysis.
3. Action is defined as purposeful hand and body movements performed with or without artefacts.
4. An event is defined as the occurrence of action performed in silence, or talk, or talk combined with action by a participant. An event continued for the time a participant was speaking and/or acting.

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