

WILLIAM LI:

So I think our reason for really giving a public face to the class in the course itself but also on Open CourseWare, I think there's a number of different dimensions associated with that. First I think it's sort of personal, I think, that Professor Teller started this class and we really want to make these materials available to people and really kind of build on that legacy of the work that he's done. And if the work that we've contributed this year can help the class continue on and continue to grow and flourish, I think that's a really exciting part.

The second piece I think is really for the students, the opportunity to interact with people in the wider community, to share their work, the work that they have done. I think all of our students are very proud of the work that they've done. They really got into the projects and working with their clients. And so in having a public showcase at the end and having them communicate their work online, in video, or through OCW, I think is part of the learning experience, I think.

And the third piece is that we really think there's a big opportunity in terms of assistive technology education or kind of project-based education that we work with people with disabilities in the Cambridge or Boston area. But in a lot of ways, this model could be applied to a lot of other places, a lot of other colleges or universities in other towns or cities in the United States or around the world.

There's really a huge need or a huge opportunity, I think, to work in assistive technology. A lot of potential partners to spread geographically. And we want to kind of communicate how we did here. And maybe share some materials that make it a little bit easier for somebody thinking about doing this, or maybe just to inspire them to think about how they might be able to work on a course or a project like this.

GRACE TEO:

I think one of the more public aspects of the class as well was the fact that we asked our students to write up blog posts over the semester. So all of them had to write four different blog posts on a public blog for the class. And one thing that's very important to me when we teach about disability is that we're not coming in as saviors. And we're not coming in to like, oh, let's share our wonderful engineering knowledge with you.

One of the central aspects of this class is that it user-centered design. And we have to recognize that the clients themselves understand their disability the best. And they understand the type of challenges that come with living with a disability the best.

So one of the great things about having those blog posts was that the community outside could also engage with the students and say, wow, this is a good idea, maybe this is not a good idea, have you considered this other aspect. And so we think that by engaging our users, that also just makes the design process a lot more rigorous.