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**Design Studio Pedagogies**

***Describing, evaluating, comparing***

The 'studio' is a highly regarded agency in design education practice, playing a crucial role in facilitating learning and teaching interactions in various ways. With the Master Program at the Faculty of Architecture & the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology offering a diverse range of design studios with varying topics and approaches, the primary goal of this project is to gain insights into these design studio pedagogies by describing, evaluating, and comparing them.

While problem-based learning and exploring future agendas are common aspects shared among studios, there are nuanced differences in their pedagogical approaches on a smaller scale. Some studios explicitly align with specific scholarly, designerly standpoints, philosophies, or topical classifications, where research and design methods, references, and outcomes are thoroughly discussed. On the other hand, other studio pedagogies are more implicit, drawing from long-standing valuable experiences, and emphasizing effectiveness and efficiency.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of studio pedagogies, the researchers opted for in-depth interviews as the method, starting with the involved tutors. These interviews cover a mix of content, pedagogy, and didactic-oriented topics, including 'position and pedagogies', 'creation of a learning environment', 'monitoring a learning process', 'teaching the teacher', and 'online teaching'. To address the challenges of transdisciplinary collaboration, tutors from all departments and studios were invited for interviews, offering therefore a broad representation of the whole faculty.

In order to crosscheck the teachers' perspectives with student experiences, a second questionnaire was designed for students. The questionnaire focuses on topics such as 'how to select a studio', 'assessment and feedback', and 'how students perceive their education in relation to their future roles in practice'. The results from the student questionnaire are then analysed and compared in parallel with the teachers' interviews.

The project allows for a comprehensive exploration of the various studio pedagogies at the Faculty of Architecture & the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology, and provides valuable insights into the perspectives of both educators and students. By combining these perspectives, the project aims to facilitate meaningful exchanges and point out possible advancements in design studio education.

**First round of interviews with tutors (2020-2021)**

The primary purpose of conducting these interviews was to gain insights into how different studios define their focus and approach to design education. The interviews covered a diverse set of questions, addressing content, pedagogy, and didactic-oriented topics, including the position and pedagogies adopted by each studio, the creation of a conducive learning environment, monitoring the learning process, teaching methodologies, and the integration of online teaching.

The general findings from the interviews revealed that studios are described as friendly, open, and creative environments, often likened to think tanks, families, round tables, or academic conversations, where collectivity and collaboration are as important as individual growth. Peer review among students is considered a valuable instrument in the learning process. While exploring future agendas and the roles of future professionals is present in studios, the ambition for innovation is not frequently mentioned. Additionally, the concept of opposition to stimulating learning was mentioned once, but there were no remarks about competition among students. The importance of allowing time for free exploration, experimentation, failure, and restarting during the course was mentioned in one interview.

Regarding the process of education, work is typically organized in cycles, moving from research and knowledge to design. However, the number of cycles varies among studios. Teachers continuously monitor ongoing education and make adjustments as needed, with the Covid-19 pandemic posing challenges in this regard. Some studios advocate for a strict structure to frame explorations beforehand, while others prefer to give students more autonomy. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education was also addressed, with blended learning being recognized for its advantages and its potential as an important future practice.

The relationship with practice is highly valued and realized through guest lectures, visiting critics, and the involvement of tutors and professors active in practice.

Regarding learning objectives, different studios emphasize specific methodologies or generic academic skills. Notably, in Building Technology, Urbanism, and Management in the Built Environment studios, the process of collaboration, a key skill in professional practice, is an important aspect of the learning objectives. Teachers who mentioned the Basic Qualification in Teaching (UTQ) were more explicit about achieving learning objectives compared to those who didn't follow this trajectory.

Overall, this round of interviews delivered interesting insights into the pedagogies and approaches adopted by different studios, shedding light on their goals, methodologies, and responses to current challenges.

**Second round of interviews with students (2021-2022)**

The main purpose of this second round of interviews was to investigate how the aims and objectives of the studios align with the experiences of the students. The interviews consisted of a mix of questions covering studio selection, assessment and feedback, and the students' perceptions of how their education will serve their future roles in practice.

General findings: The questionnaire was completed by a total of 76 first-year Master’s students from various tracks within the Faculty of Architecture & the Built Environment. An average of 10% of the total first-year Master students has responded: 49 students from the Master track of Architecture, 13 from Urbanism and Landscape Architecture combined, 8 from Building Technology, and 6 from Management in the Built Environment. Several students emphasized the importance of receiving comprehensive information about the studios, including details about pedagogy and didactics, to make an informed choice.

Studio choice and motivation: For all Master tracks, topics and content were the primary factors influencing students' studio choices. Interestingly, students in Urbanism, Landscape Architecture, Building Technology, and Management in the Built Environment tracks also valued the social atmosphere of the studio when making their decisions. Urbanism students, in particular, ranked all topics higher, likely due to being one large cohort without studio choices in the first two quarters of the first Master’s year. Teaching methods were often not known at the time of studio selection but were highlighted in the questionnaire as important differences between studios.

Feedback and examination: In general, students perceived feedback as a form of coaching. However, in the Master track of Architecture, final presentations were reported to evoke extreme stress and relief emotions. On the other hand, the Master track of Urbanism performed the best in avoiding stress. Management in the Built Environment and Urbanism students valued being seen as individuals with their own goals. Collaboration was identified as an area needing more attention in the Master track of Architecture.

Career expectations and future perspectives: Regarding career aspirations, 50% of students in the Master tracks of Architecture and Urbanism expressed a desire to work in design offices. Additionally, many students from all tracks expressed an interest in pursuing careers in education. In terms of skills, students from Management in the Built Environment and Urbanism expected their training to be highly relevant to their future practice. Architecture students rated the usefulness of their trained skills below average, while Building Technology students rated it above average.

In conclusion, the interviews provided valuable insights into the alignment between the aims of the studios and the students' experiences, bringing forward viewpoints on studio selection, feedback, and career expectations across different Master tracks within the faculty.