ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION
SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

2014.01.24 NEW JOHN MOFFAT BUILDING WITS EAST CAMPUS

09h30-10h00 Registration and Coffee

10h00 Welcome - Prof Ian Jandrell, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, Wits

10h10 Introduction

10h25 Research-led Teaching: A scholarship of learning and teaching perspective
Prof Christine Woods, Centre for Learning, Teaching and Development, Wits

11h00 Workplace exposure as part of selection for beginner students in the architectural disciplines: The ninth tool
Nico Botes, Department of Architecture, UP

11h35-11h45 Tea break

11h45 Facilitating transformation through design pedagogy
Ariane Janse van Rensburg, School of Architecture and Planning, Wits

12h20 The transformation of architectural pedagogy in South Africa towards ethical social practice
Yashaen Luckan, Department of Architecture, DUT

12h55 Archischools in crisis - Reflections on Architectural education in contemporary South Africa with specific reference to transformation and good design teaching
Simone Le Grange, School of Architecture, Planning & Geomatics, UCT

13h30-14h00 Lunch

14h00 Design learning goes online: The role of ICT in architecture education
Jolanda Morkel, Department of Architecture, CPUT

14h35 Exploring research through teaching in the design studio
Stella Papanicoloau, School of Architecture, Planning & Geomatics, UCT

15h10 The Philosophy of Architectural Education
Annemarie Wagener, Department of Architecture, UF

15h45 Finding a place in a changing South Africa - Reflections on teaching professional practice
Christos Daskalakos, School of Architecture and Planning, Wits

16h20-17h00 General Discussion (with refreshments) Chair: Prof Randall Bird
ABSTRACTS

Research-led teaching:

A scholarship of learning and teaching perspective

Christine Woods

ABSTRACT

There are different interpretations of research-led teaching and Griffiths (2004) argues for four different models. This presentation considers research-led teaching from a scholarship of learning and teaching (SoLT) perspective which involves conducting rigorous, systematic, and evidence-based enquiry into discipline-specific practices. SoLT entails problem posing about an issue of learning or teaching, study of the problem through methods appropriate to disciplinary epistemologies, evaluation, self-reflection, application of results to practice, disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary peer review and appropriate dissemination. Through its dissemination, SoLT influences teaching, learning and scholarship beyond the local context. The overall intention is to build collective knowledge, improve student learning and promote educational quality.

Christine Woods
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University of the Witwatersrand

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Associate Professor Christine Woods is the Director of the Centre for Learning, Teaching and Development at Wits. She has a PhD from Rhodes and is an experienced academic development practitioner with 20 years of experience in higher education in South Africa and internationally. Professor Woods was a Fulbright Humphrey Fellow at Pennsylvania State University in the US and Head of Educational Development at Central Queensland University in Australia. Prior to that, she was the Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre at the University of Fort Hare and Manager of the Academic Development Centre at the East London Campus of Rhodes University. She has developed national and international collaborative networks around learning and teaching research interests in the areas of educational technology, assessment, evaluation, alternate access provision, student engagement, curriculum development and learning design. She has extensive experience in modelling best practice in learning and teaching and the use of web-based educational technologies to support active and collaborative learning in higher education.
Workplace exposure as part of selection for beginner students in the architectural disciplines: The ninth tool

Nico Botes

ABSTRACT

Research and experience show that outsiders, more often than not, regard architectural education as a mysterious, inaccessible process. This notion is compounded by the fact that most beginner students are novices to the architectural disciplines and the studio. In an attempt to bridge this gap the Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria, in 2007 introduced a requirement for applicants to the undergraduate programmes to visit practitioners before taking selection tests and interviews. Loosely based on the job-shadowing programmes that most South African private schools follow, it requires of prospective students to confirm their career choice through first-hand experience, to report on their impressions and, ultimately, also on the surety of their decision to pursue studies in spatial design. For most applicants this is a vital introduction and confirmation. While our surveys suggest overwhelmingly positive responses and outcomes, it should be mentioned that it is considered in conjunction with five other well-known selection instruments. To date workplace exposure has not been recognised as an addition to the eight established assessment tools used by schools of architecture worldwide. It is therefore presented here as the ninth such tool and one with specific application in a post-colonial and developmental context such as ours.

Nico Botes
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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Nico Botes grew up on the Eastern Transvaal Highveld, where the simplicity of the landscape left a lasting impression. He obtained his professional degree in architecture and a master’s degree (by research) in interior architecture at the University of Pretoria, where he coordinates the combined first year design studio. He also convenes selection for the undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programmes in architecture, interior architecture and landscape architecture. His doctoral studies investigate the selection of beginner students for these disciplines.
Facilitating transformation through design pedagogy

Ariane Janse van Rensburg

ABSTRACT

According to City, Elmore, Fiarman and Teitel's instructional core model educational theory (2009), student learning only improves if there are simultaneous changes to course content, student engagement and pedagogy. Since 1994 there have been substantial cultural and educational changes in South Africa and traditional architectural pedagogy does not facilitate successful outcomes equally for all students. I have been conducting an action research inquiry since 2009 to critically evaluate my teaching practice, investigating teaching strategies that I could apply in my first year design studio to facilitate architectural learning generally. I started by augmenting lectures to include formerly assumed background knowledge; then progressed to addressing different learning styles, inadequate language and self-management skills. Although this research was triggered by the deterioration between the equity profile of the BAS intake and BAS graduate groups, true transformation is much more than equity. It demands equal opportunities for success and a more inclusive discourse, which should originate from diversity in the studio. This requires facilitating social cohesion. This led to engagement with deeper levels of disconnection. Since 2009 the entry-level skills of school-leavers have also continued to deteriorate, necessitating strategies to address key cognitive capabilities, responsible academic behaviours and contextual skills and awareness. My PhD interventions will culminate with a 2-week academic orientation programme as a test run for new subject matter to be considered if the CHE-recommended curriculum reform is implemented.

Ariane Janse van Rensburg
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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Ariane graduated in Architecture from UCT. After gaining experience in practices such as Peter Hattingh Ball de Klerk and Revel Fox and partners, she opened her own studio, working in architecture and art glass. She returned to the academic world to do a research masters through Wits on religio-political symbolism in stained glass windows while doing sessional teaching in the architecture department of the University of Johannesburg. She started convening the first year architectural design studio soon after joining the Wits School of Architecture and Planning and has for some years been the undergraduate degree convenor. Disparate student outcomes in her own classes have continued to challenge her to investigate teaching strategies that facilitate potential success for all students, which has become the topic of her PhD research. She serves on various bodies concerned with teaching and learning and transformation in the architectural profession.
The transformation of architectural pedagogy in South Africa towards ethical social practice

Yashaen Luckan

ABSTRACT

Architecture, in traditional societies, formed an intrinsic part of the culture of such societies. However, the advent of formal professionalization of architecture in Europe during the early 17th century initiated the gradual disconnection of architecture from the process of building and craft, hence disconnection from society and culture.

Architectural education in South Africa has largely been inherited from Europe. As such, architectural pedagogies and practice are challenged to respond to the socio-economic and environmental realities at multiple levels of the local context, whilst at the same time being able to function in the global economy. The need to develop responsive, relevant and meaningful architecture raises questions on the validity of the general pedagogic approaches to architectural education in South Africa.

The research paper argues that an urgent critical review and transformation of architectural education is necessary in order to re-establish the place of architecture within society. The theoretical and conceptual framework is formed by post-modernist and critical theories, and the concepts of hybridity and interdisciplinary collaboration. This raises critical questions on the form and character of the principal architectural learning space, namely, the design studio. How then, can the design studio transform in order to inculcate ethical social practice?

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Yashaen Luckan is an academic and practicing architect with a keen interest in interdisciplinary approaches to architectural education and practice.

He holds a B Tech Degree (DUT) and a Master’s Degree in Architecture from the University of KwaZulu Natal where he is a PhD candidate. Yashaen is a member of the steering committee of the UNESCO Chair for Sustainable Urban Quality and Culture, and serves the South African Council for the Architectural Profession as a member of the Validation Panel and the Heads of Schools committee. He serves as evaluator of academic programmes for the Council on Higher Education.

Vast and varied experience in academia and practice as well as community engagement has informed Yashaen's critical approach to architectural education and practice. This has been the major driver towards his interdisciplinary research interests focusing on responsive architecture in the context of South Africa as a developing nation.
Archischools in crisis
Reflections on Architectural Education in contemporary South Africa with specific reference to transformation and good design teaching.

Simone le Grange
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Simone graduated from UCT with a Bachelor of Architecture degree with distinction in 1996. After working in practice (for Lucien le Grange Architects & Urban Planners) for five years she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 2003 to study a Master of Urban Design at the University of California at Berkeley. After a few more years of work in private practice as well as teaching part-time in design studios at UCT she took a permanent position at UCT in 2008 as the Academic Development Lecturer, which she currently holds. During her time in practice she participated in the design of award winning architectural and urban design projects that were predominantly social in their function (schools, clinics, museums, etc). Simone is committed to Architecture and Urban Design in terms of teaching it, making it and working towards socially relevant projects that heal our cities.

ABSTRACT

Architectural education faces two major challenges in contemporary times, in South Africa. The first challenge is one we share with most other disciplines, that of transforming a profession in the post-apartheid South African context. The second challenge is that of recognizing threats to architectural education that are occurring both locally and globally, and finding ways of overcoming them. This paper argues that these two seemingly disparate problems need to in fact be tackled simultaneously as one looks towards the future of the profession and craft of Architecture in South Africa today.

Twenty years after the first democratic election in South Africa we find that the lived reality within the profession of Architecture has not changed substantially. The experienced reality outside the profession has also degraded to a point where architects continue to lose their ability to effectively and positively change our environments.

Architectural Design, both in terms of its execution and education, has come under scrutiny in recent local and international journals. We find ourselves in a precarious design milieu, where there is a poverty of grounded design ideas, of environmentally and socially responsible work, and where flashy presentations are celebrated and form for the sake of form dominates.

The academy is becoming more and more dominated by the promotion of income generating publications and research. Schools of Architecture have become victims of academic bullying, where academic staff members are encouraged and rewarded for research outside of the discipline of design, and design teaching is given less priority.

This paper will argue that we are now at a critical point in architectural design education, in terms of what we teach, how we teach, and who we teach as well as who teaches. There is great opportunity to be seized if we understand the threats to good design education, and look at those with a particular focus on the South African context ie.transformation in a post-apartheid South Africa. This paper begins to understand these challenges in more depth, and to suggest ways of moving forward.
Design learning goes online:
The role of ICT in architecture education

Jolanda Morkel

ABSTRACT

Architectural learning traditionally happens in the studio as it has since design studio pedagogy was first established in the late 1800s. It originates from two models, the École des Beaux Arts, also known as “ateliers”, and the Bauhaus associated with learning through a social learning method where novices are supported to become experts through a process of apprenticeship.

Although it is still seen as the main learning setting for art, design and architectural education, the nature of the traditional studio is changing. Some of the most significant factors that bring about change are developments in architectural practice, increasing pressure on lecturing time and space resources, the changing profile of students and rapidly developing information and communications technologies (ICT).

Learning is expanding to a diverse range of settings and methodologies, moving beyond the physical studio space to the “real world”, the workplace and community and the virtual world where students learn as apprentices and in authentic learning contexts.

This paper explores the role and place of ICT in architectural design education, through a literature review and with specific reference to the OpenArchitecture part-time offering, presented as a case study. It investigates ways in which ICTs may be utilised in an undergraduate programme to promote learning as a change in learners’ actions (behaviourist), allow learners to actively construct new ideas based on existing knowledge (constructivist), promote learning within an authentic context and culture (situated), facilitate learning through social interaction (collaborative), support learning outside a dedicated learning environment (informal and lifelong), and assist in the provision of academic support of learners (learning and teaching support) (Naismith, L. et al. 2004).

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Jolanda Morkel is a registered architect and senior lecturer in the Department of Architectural Technology, Faculty of Informatics and Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, where she teaches in undergraduate design studios. Her research interests include design and design education, specifically related to studio-based learning. The focus of her current doctoral work is the online design learning conversation.

Jolanda has published a number of conference proceedings on the use of technology in design learning, and co-authored two book chapters in the field of design. She is the CPUT coordinator for the new part-time BTech (Applied Design) programme offered in collaboration with OpenArchitecture and commencing with 28 students this year.
Exploring research through teaching in the design studio

Stella Papanicolaou

ABSTRACT

The Undergraduate Architectural Design Studio (BAS at UCT) provides the context for the research currently underway. The production of knowledge, as understood by the university institute, presents a challenge to architect-academics who on the whole have been trained as practitioners, not researchers. This research takes the position that the discipline of architecture needs to develop its own approach to research that comes out of the knowledge and skills of its practice in order for research to contribute more constructively to the discipline. By exploring research through the studio it is hoped that two goals will be achieved. Firstly, the requirements of the design studio promote developing the tools of design practice as tools for research. Secondly, exposing students to collaboration in research will hopefully foster an interest in its potential value to the discipline, thus providing a platform for the building of a tradition in design relevant research.

The focus of this paper will be on the research method used for collaborative. Action Research, typically used in the social sciences to counter a positivist approach, has provided an approach to method, since research methods in Design Integrated Research have not yet been well developed or theorised.

The paper will report on how this method has been applied in the design studio through a project on “Walking, Mapping and Visualising” in the third year design studio at the University of Cape Town.

The paper will argue that research collaboration in the teaching studio has the potential to be mutually beneficial for students and academics alike.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Stella Papanicolaou has taught Design in the Bachelor of Architectural Studies (BAS) degree programme at the University of Cape Town (UCT) since 2001. She is currently the BAS convenor and teaches history and theory in the second year. She has worked in practice for Gabriel Fagan Architects (1984), Munnik Visser Architects on projects with Roelof Uyttenbogaardt and Julian Elliott (1997-99), at dhk Architects (2001-02), has worked in collaboration with Indigo Architects (2000 & 2005) and ran her own practice (2000-06) prior to taking on a full time academic post at UCT in 2008. From 1985 to 1993 she attended several and diverse courses at the University of Architecture in Venice (IUAV) and worked as assistant director for the International Centre for Cities on Water, where, among other activities, became involved in the editing of a number of the Centre’s publications. Her interests lie in architectural design; exploring meaning in the production of space with a focus on the role of architecture on the public realm; and aims to develop tools for critical thinking to enhance the creative process in the studio.
ABSTRACT

There is growing concern that its traditional pedagogical models are no longer serving the architectural profession as well as they should. Some tutors respond to these concerns but often implement educational theories without understanding their epistemological underpinnings or educational outcomes. This paper proposes that professional architectural educators should re-evaluate their accepted pedagogy against contemporary theory and develop an updated and rigorously defendable educational system.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Annemarie Wagener is a senior lecturer in the Department of Architecture at the University of the Free State, South Africa. As a teacher, she specialises in technical subjects such as construction technology and technical documentation. As a researcher, she is interested in the epistemology of architectural education. More specifically, her work examines the studio education model: for her master’s degree she researched students’ expectations of the physical/social studio environment; for her PhD she will be focusing on the what (rather than the how) of studio-based architectural education.
Finding a place in a changing South Africa:  
Reflections on teaching professional practice

Christos Daskalakos

ABSTRACT

As architects we are increasingly challenged to find a relevant role in South Africa beyond the traditional services as defined by the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP). Increasingly many projects in the built environment are led by other professionals such as engineers or town planners. Where resources are scarce, architects do not always form part of the team and the value they could bring is not always evident. Also in many instances Government Departments and Non-Government Organisations (NGO’s) call upon professionals to undertake professional services that are outside their traditional roles.

This concern has a direct bearing on the teaching of professional practice to architectural students which ordinarily can be quite challenging for a number of reasons. Firstly, students are easily distracted by more seductive course such as design. Students also give less time to courses to which they do not readily relate to. Most students may not have come into contact with the issues and subject matter dealt with in professional practice especially if their involvement in practice has been at a very junior level. Secondly, with a focus on legal and procedural matters the course may project professional practice as rigid – echoing the traditional role for architects.

During 2011 and 2012 I conducted a series of workshops with students which opened up both the issue of the role of architect and how this could be reflected or influenced by professional practice. The focus of the workshops was to look beyond the skills and knowledge being taught and to explore the metaskills that students have acquired and which if brought into awareness could open up possibilities for finding alternative and expanded roles for the architect and the way in which they practice.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Christos Daskalakos completed his Bachelor of Architecture degree at WITS in 1981 followed by a Master in Environmental Planning (Urban Design) in 1987. He was employed by the Johannesburg Metro in the Urban Design Section where he was involved in several urban projects including Rosettenville, Lenasia and Hillbrow revitalisation projects. Subsequently in 1990 moving to London he worked in the City on commercial projects and then as Environmental Projects Manager at Broxbourne Borough Council. On his return to South Africa in 1996 he formed the practice MHCD Architects and Urban Designers which was primarily involved in social housing projects in the city, Soweto and Alexandra East Bank. Since dissolving the MHCD in 2001 he continues to run an architectural practice in Winston Ridge. He lectures part time at WITS where since 2003 he has run the professional practice courses in BAS third year and M Arch (Prof). In 2010 he obtained an Honours degree in Psychology.
THE WAY FORWARD

Much of the material presented at the symposium is due for publication before the 2016 symposium and is therefore not published in full on this website. The academic contact addresses of the presenters have been given and you can contact them directly should you require further information.

The symposium was the launch of the ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION FORUM in SOUTHERN AFRICA. We plan to have the next symposium at Wits in 2016. In the meantime, we hope to meet regularly, the next opportunity being at the UIA2014 conference in Durban. To be on the mailing list for continued discussion, please e-mail ArchiEdForum@gmail.com

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Ariane Janse van Rensburg