

Building a culture of doctoral scholarship in architecture and design

A Belgian - Scandinavian case

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Objectives:

- present how a strongly practice oriented institution tackled the challenges of European policies for establishing doctoral level
- present an epistemological-pedagogical stance where professional doctorates are introduced to broader “knowledge landscapes”
- present initiatives taken by the authors an autonomous research education unit
- present how a new practice-based scholarship is emerging at the institution



Sint-Lucas School of Architecture, Brussels/Ghent, Belgium

- > Established in Ghent 1862, in Brussels 1887
- > At the forefront of developments in fields of architecture and design
- > Bologna-Berlin policies meant developing a new culture of research and doctoral scholarship
- > Intentions to develop experimental, practice-based research
- > Support younger members of staff, with double practice as professionals and teachers

Epistemological-pedagogical stance

Some opinions hold that practice-based researchers do not need epistemological and scholarly foundations

“avoid verbal theorising or credential-seeking through reference to texts from other disciplines”

(Reflective Practice Postgraduate Program, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology)

Our stance:

Professional and practice-based doctorates should

- be introduced to broader “knowledge landscapes”
- be trained in certain generic and transferable research skills
- be prepared to contextualise and position their research

to be communicative and innovative in a broad professional field.

Goodlad et al. (1979),
Curriculum Inquiry. The Study of Curriculum Practice:

“The Domains of Curriculum”

- > Ideological curriculum**
- > Formal curriculum**
- > Perceived curriculum**
- > Operational curriculum**
- > Experiential curriculum**

Examining the Five Levels of the Research Education at the Sint-Lucas School of Architecture

:: Research by design. *The ideological curriculum*

:: Research Training Sessions. *The formal curriculum*

:: The missing "mezzo-level". *The perceived curriculum*

**:: The autonomous unit of the research education.
*The operational curriculum***

:: The response of the doctoral students to the unit's content and its impact. *The experienced curriculum*

:: Research by design. *The ideological curriculum* ::

> **Long tradition of studying architecture “from outside”**

From perspective of established academic disciplines
Even art historians recognised that a perspective
“from within” has been missing

> **Architectural research relatively young**

criticised for taking over theories and methods
from other disciplines

> **Necessary to support architecture and design as disciplines**

equipped for qualified dialogue within academia
also search for new forms of research more engaging practitioners

- Make object of study “academically researchable”
- Develop modes of research based on expertise of the field

The challenge is how to engage in dialogue with other knowledge producers,
from academia and elsewhere

:: Research by design. *The ideological curriculum* ::

- Frayling (1997):** the practice-based doctorate advances knowledge partly by means of practice
- Rust et al. (2007):** Research in which the professional and/or creative practices of art, design or architecture play an instrumental part in an inquiry
- Biggs (2004):** practice-based research prioritises some property of experience arising through practice, over cognitive content arising from reflection on practice

Knowledge production in transdisciplinary and creative practice has been seen as outside of research and scholarship.

New conceptualisations and more inclusive model of scientific research allow more practice-based approaches

:: Research by design. *The ideological curriculum* ::

Sint-Lucas vision of research:

“Research at Sint-Lucas School of Architecture clearly gives a central position to a syncretic and holistic approach (‘designing’ as a verb; the process is important after all) and fuels it in a multidisciplinary manner from theoretical and analytical perspectives.

...

The research in the School of Architecture Sint-Lucas is developing as a reflection of this integrated approach, without also excluding rigorously defined research within the specialist fields of the staff involved. The emphasis in the School is currently on strengthening designed-based research.”

Johan Verbeke, rector of Sint-Lucas, 2006.

:: **Research Training Sessions. *The formal curriculum*** ::

The formal scheme for research education:

- > **Four Research Training Session (RTS) modules**
introduced 2006
- > **Another four modules in 2007**
as a continuation in a second year
- > **Now a two year program**
Each year four sessions each led by two international tutors
- > **Program targeted at architects and designers**
in their initial phase of research (by design)
- > **Program intentionally foster a diversity**
of perspectives and opinions
- > **Program modules be on meta-level**
relating to design methodology and culture rather than specific projects

:: **Research Training Sessions. *The formal curriculum*** ::

The RTS Modules:

Each module session is **two days of full time work** starting at Thursday afternoon and ending on Saturday afternoon

Intention of program is to discuss issues of research by design
Each participant develop research ideas into research project

> **Module 1: *Research methodologies and Communication***

> **Module 2: *Knowledge***

> **Module 3: *Reflection***

> **Module 4: *Design Cognition***

> **Module 5: *Why/How design research?***

> **Module 6: *Artefact, Action and Observation***

> **Module 7: *PhD by practice***

> **Module 8: *By design for design***

:: The missing “mezzo-level”. *The perceived curriculum* ::

Research Training Sessions – a **Meta-level** in research education

Individual tutoring – a **Micro-level** in the program

Students seemed not to perceive – relations between
Macro-level of inspiration and
Micro-level of own emerging project

To master post-academic science and Mode2 research one needs:

- > Apprenticeship with principles of traditional research
- > Intellectual identity of Mode 1
- > Transferable and generic research skills

A missing “mezzo-level” of mediation!!

:: The missing “mezzo-level”. *The perceived curriculum* ::

Introduction of independent unit of research education

Series of seminars and workshops on:

> Scholarly Criticism

- ongoing criticism one of most important generic skills in the professions

> Scholarly Craft

- mastering the field specific craft to be full-fledged professional
Both for design professions and for “research professions”

:: The autonomous unit of research education. *The operational curriculum* ::

The Macro level – The Research Training Session

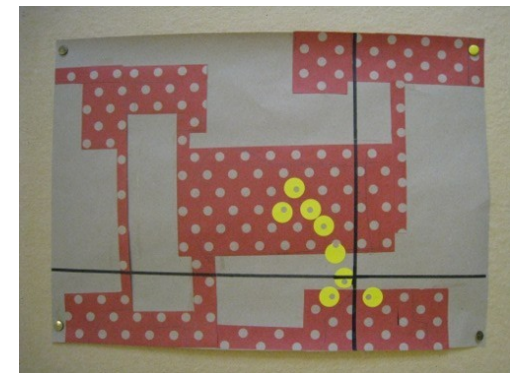
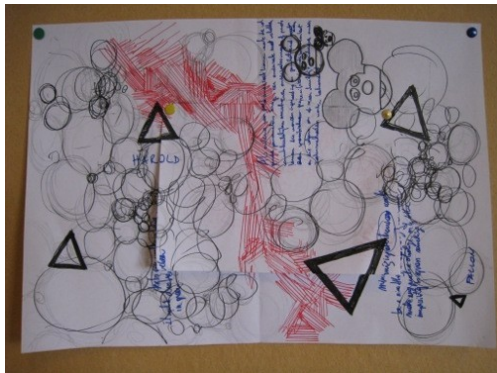
RTS on Knowledge Focused on different forms of knowledge
Established modes and notions
And other ways of knowledge production

“Roskilde Model” Concentrated ‘ex cathedra’ teaching
Preceded by literature studies; Followed by practical exercises

Using several media and methods

Reading, Writing, Listening, Discussing, Drawing, Criticising
Both verbal language and visual media

“Between argumentative and associative thinking”



:: The autonomous unit of research education. *The operational curriculum* ::

The Mezzo level – Scholarly Craft and Criticism

Scholarly Criticism I: Evaluation of doctoral thesis
The “art and craft” of academic evaluation

Scholarly Criticism II: Research Design
(i) introduction to and training in constructive criticism
(ii) peers give concrete feedback to own research project

Scholarly Craft I: Producing a Dissertation
Discuss the different phases and skills needed
when producing a dissertation
Borden & Rüedi Ray (2006). *The Dissertation*.

Scholarly Craft II: Navigating in various knowledge landscapes
Overview and positioning in relation to Philosophy of
Science, Natural and Social Science, Humanistic Studies
Linn Mo (2001). *Philosophy of Science for Architects*.

:: The autonomous unit of research education. *The operational curriculum* ::

The Micro level – Individual tutoring

> Traditional one-to-one tutorials

> “Tandem Tutorials” – two tutors with one or two doctoral students

Stage small seminar discussions to build academic culture and awareness
Look retrospectively at, present and discuss process of research project

:: The response of the doctoral students to the unit :: ***The experienced curriculum***

Feedback and written response from the doctoral students:

"I reread the articles we had to read and the little paper we made for this session: almost everything was very new and overwhelming to me then. Now this knowledge on 'Knowledge' seems common to me after these years, but then it was the first time I heard about Mode 1 and 2, tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge, transdisciplinarity and so on. I remember reading the articles, having a hard time to comprehend."

"The RTS session in which the concept of Mode 1 and Mode 2 have been introduced have been very clarifying, not only for me but for the whole research community at Sint-Lucas. The required reading (..) have opened up 'our collective mind'. The texts guided us through the first and often most dangerous 'minefields' in a country we had never been in before, a country where we are welcome...? This input also cleared the way to a first scheme of my approach, that still holds good today: it is still 'there' in my current scheme and my actual lines of thought."

"For this workshop I had chosen to read 'Ramble, linger, and gaze' by Katja Grillner. This whole new concept for a PhD opened up my eyes again: the concept of a PhD appeared to be 'designable'! Could it also be a 'thing' like this? Could it be a designed writing, or a written design, or a designed combination of both? The awareness of the possibilities concerning this matter began to emerge."

"While discussing at the workshop (...), it became obvious that there are 'schools of research. (...). Research in my opinion can not be (only) an introspection in the own design (processes). It has to have a purpose beyond the self."

:: The response of the doctoral students to the unit :: ***The experienced curriculum***

"I remember that we discussed how certain people critiqued paper presentations at a conference. For me that was very useful: this whole academic scene is really unknown to me, and I like to know what drives different actors on this scene and how they relate to each other. It makes it more distinct to me what I can expect when acting on that scene. (...) By making such an official moment of delivering critique my timidity dropped away and it was possible for me to learn it by doing it."

"The combined use of constructive criticism (during the process) and normative criticism (after the process) offered me an additional tool. This was a very professional session, in that it offered us much information that enables us to become 'professional' academics, to learn the skills, ..."

"This session had the same characteristics and qualities as Scholarly Criticism sessions. It has demonstrated to be a very important input for me in terms of the academic skills."

"The knowledge presented in this book seems to me important in order to be able to operate at the Mode 1 scene. ... And in conclusion, I believe that knowledge covered in the workshop is an important part of any PhD-education. And I am glad that have participated in this workshop."

The workshops (scholarly criticism- scholarly craft) provided in my opinion a setup of a strategic frame of learning and established strong connections between some of the participants in that respect, these workshops to me were the most powerful instruments during my RTS-period".

"The whole presented education-package is very consistent and has helped me in general to have a broader view on what I am doing (or should be doing) while acting on the research scene. All of the workshops were fun and interesting for me to do."

Towards a New Research Culture of Doctoral Scholarship at Sint-Lucas School of Architecture

The mezzo level supports development of ...

> Content:

- Awareness of own intellectual potential as researcher and practitioner
- Positioning among other knowledge producers
- Generic and transferable research skills

> Context:

- Social culture of research
- Dialogue on research issues in academia as well as in profession

... and building a culture of doctoral scholarship