

ExciTeS 2023

Disrupting the digital: evolving teaching and learning practices in contemporary higher education

Making space: architecture students' creative reflections on digital and physical learning spaces

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Session Outline

- Research context
- Methods
- Digital Pedagogies employed
- Selected Findings
- Questions raised

Research Task: Focus group

- In what ways does the curriculum support the learning of all students?
- What barriers do students encounter when learning within the curriculum?
- How might these barriers be minimised?
- How might the curriculum be delivered to support the learning of all students?

Approach

- A dialogic, inclusive approach - students central to the exploration process.

'Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students' (Friere, 1970).

- Reciprocity: Sharing vulnerabilities and difficulties with managing social relations post-covid.
- Framework using visual materials and methods.
 - facilitated students' communication of difficult to discuss topics,
 - prompted thinking and reflection through visualisation



Learning Space

Set up for a conversation about inclusive curricula

Collage tools and printed materials.

Waiting for the students.

Collage Making

Students respond to research questions by browsing, selecting, thinking, reflecting, chatting.

Exploratory questions

How you learn?

What you learned?





Discussion flows with tea, coffee and biscuits.

Visuals and text create relationships between student experience and knowledge of the course.

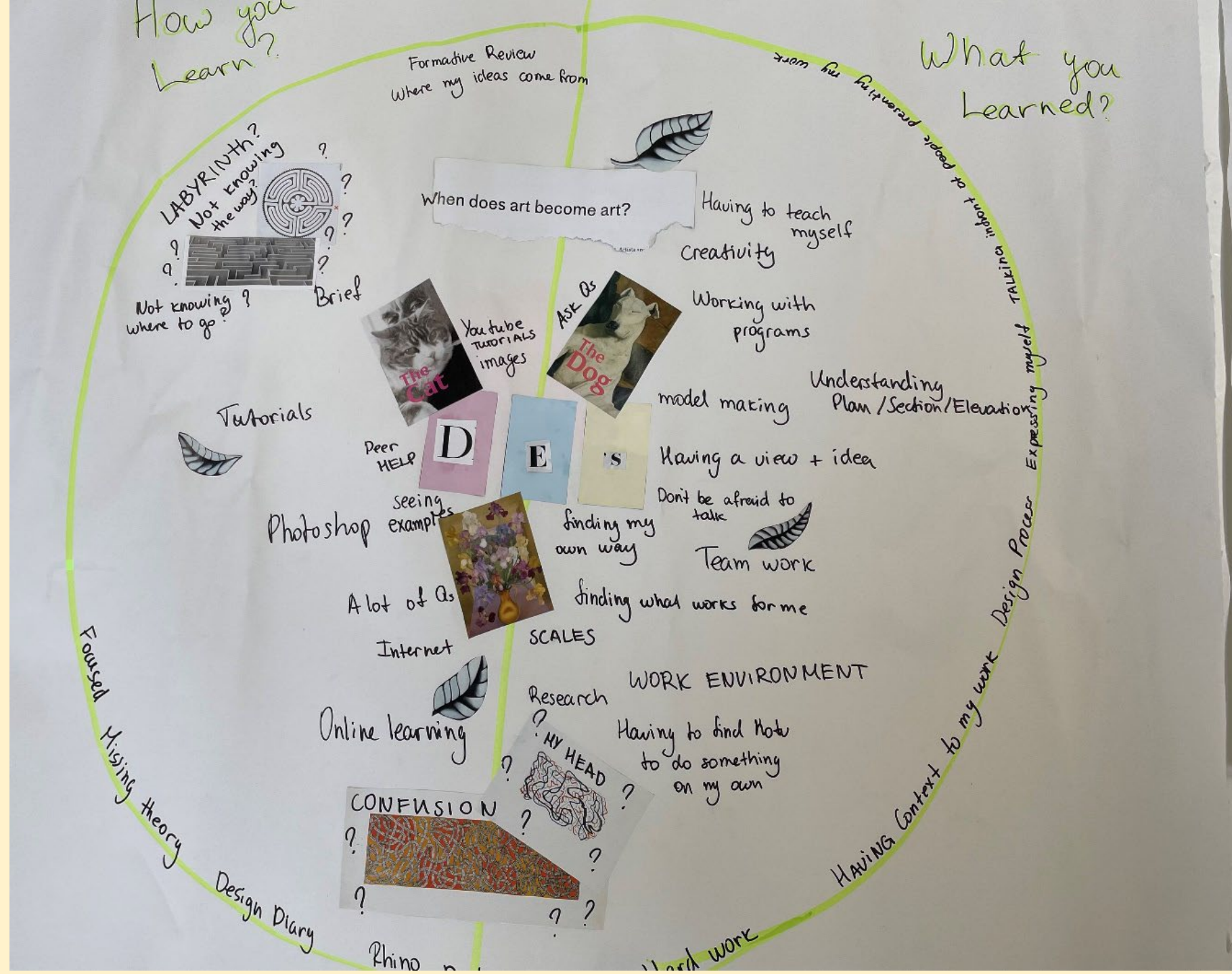
Students are prepared to discuss

Creative Outputs - collages

- Note the image in the centre, is a representation of an individual student.
- The words 'trapped in confusion' were explained in terms of the student not fitting in with the course.
- Lectures and learning online are placed on the edge of the circle displaying disconnection for the student.



- Shows a lot of detail of specific assessment tasks and learning environments.
- Note learning online, for this student has a stronger connection illustrating less of a barrier to learning.
- On the edge of the circle are 'expressing myself and talking in front of people presenting my work'.
- This student chose not to join in with the discussion, but obviously had a lot to contribute.



Digital pedagogies

Lectures replaced by fora
(thematic discussions of
short online 30 min lectures,
films, radio broadcasts etc.)

followed by small group
seminars to develop
discussions and end-of-day
reassembly

+

Miro boards for continuing
contributions and reflections

Assignment:

Visual research journal

+

Essay (1,500 words)

THE PLANNED CITY

Do cities need to be planned? and if so why?

Can you think of examples from your own experience of good planning or good urban design?

What makes them successful?

What did the film communicate to you about the experience of the city?

What memories do you have of cities you lived in or visited when you were younger?

What opens up (or limits) your own experiences of everyday life in the city?

THE EVERYDAY CITY

Can you think of examples where there is a gap between what is planned and what is lived?

How architectural identity reflects city's identity

Cities developing because trade, and trade routes changes they decline... cities are always changing in response to circumstances... Planning is a way of organised response to that change? But can it also anticipate change and shape it?

Cities built around seats of power - monarchy, government, religion Diversity of cultures can be introduced in class, but in other cases dominant culture will determine shaping of city

How cities collapse and then come back... Because of lack of planning? Planning as a response to problems, addressing them

Planning as a future-oriented activity, enabling city to grow and change in particular ways

Infrastructure needs - waste, water Planning of housing, making sure there is adequate accommodation, how it is laid out

Planning important not just for physical aspects of built environment but also economies, commercial and cultural activities, quality of life

Carbucci - example of planning, where Western model of design wasn't appropriate for culture and climate

Krakow central square and built environment heritage - thinking about what to preserve in the city and giving that a central space in the everyday experience of the city

London - neighbourhoods developed speculatively but results in visual uniformity, architectural logic in terms of the experience of that neighbourhood... generosity of space, wide streets

Example of Sheffield - Singapore - working with very city was not walk limited land area, thinking traffic infrastructure about ecologically sensitive walk from train station urban design centre - also topography of city

Successful because it privileged the bodily experience of the pedestrian, thought about the surfaces and experience of walking, wheeling, pushing a buggy etc - also a unified route with trees and lighting to lead you

Copenhagen in Denmark - environmentally friendly city - bike lanes enabling emission free transport - moving towards carbon neutrality Discussion of improvement of the city is part of the daily news cycle, making it a priority for everyone, and making information about planning more accessible

Example of Dubai transport planning - safety barriers so doors on platform open only when train is there

Robson Square Vancouver Planned to consider needs of people with reduced mobility

hierarchy - big structures and buildings? hierarchy of social structure - built environment shows this hierarchy - buildings monuments, kings palaces etc

shared experience of the city

Social organisation - movement circulation public private

Government, administration

Population - growing population City of Ur - 30,000 population needed agriculture Rome - 1 million in OAD Issues of waste management

Institutions - how things are managed - democracy?

Size and scale - large population, class, organisation, trading

Agriculture - smaller villages focus is on production for their own needs

With growth of cities, other settlements necessary to produce food for the city, freeing up cities for different activities

Question of diversity - more racial and ethnic diversity in cities than smaller settlements, because of trade, different roles and classes in cities etc

The Red Balloon - the child could weave in between different things - the balloon like a loyal friend would guide him through

In the film The Red Balloon, its much safer for children to experience the city on their own

Its much less likely that you would be able to walk in the city on your own these days

The falling down buildings and places in disrepair - make the city seem sad and run down

Perception of danger, levels of crime etc, can limit your experience of particular areas of the city

Prices in cities, for students particularly limits what you do, where you can live etc within the city

Whole film is literally dark, red balloon a bright, small, lost thing in this big city one boy gets pure enjoyment from it, the city and the bigger groups of boys feel like a threat... more fearful

Strong demographic of classes

Proximity of different functions within the city

Selected Findings – **needs work**

- In general, a number of barriers to learning were highlighted. Most of the students' contributions related to student identity – their relational identities as students and in relation to the course. Covid 19 played a large part in this and is still having an impact.
- They described feelings of anxiety around certain physical learning spaces. In particular, the lecture theatre was highlighted as a challenging learning space. One student explained that they did not like going to the front of the lecture theatre because she was anxious around her peers.
- Negative effects of split studios, which hampered social interaction
- Despite extensive efforts to build online community, some 'didn't feel like a student' in these digital spaces.
- Some students reported digital poverty, a lack of suitable work space at home, and caring responsibilities as contributing to difficulties.

Questions

- What are the affordances of online spaces for building social connections and reducing social anxieties for learners?
- What are the differences in *being* together online and in person, and what do these mean for learning?
- How have others experienced, navigated or researched these tensions?

References

- Sabri D. [*Students' Experience of Identity and Attainment at UAL, Final year 4 report of a longitudinal study for the University of the Arts London*](#) (2017)

*permissions for photography were obtained