

Contemporary didactics in architectural education

Contemporary didactics in architectural education is a basic pedagogical course, developed within the framework of the national research school in architecture, ResArc and hosted by the School of Architecture at Lund University. The course provides opportunities for doctoral students and lecturers within the field of architecture to achieve an overview of teaching and learning in higher education as well as a thorough understanding of contemporary approaches to architectural education. The course meets formal requirements of qualification for pedagogical work in higher education.

Teaching in architectural education is usually characterized by a strong emphasis on the design studio, where students develop their design skills through problem-based learning and with support from teachers and teaching assistants. The individual proposals are then presented to a jury in a review or critique. This format of teaching, described and analysed in depth by Donald Schön (1987), has been practiced in schools of architecture all around the world for more than a century (Ockman, 2012). The design studio has however, in its traditional form, been questioned – partly for its emphasis on the transmission of ‘tacit’ knowledge and abilities from the skilled master to the student, which has been referred to as an overly narrow description of architectural learning (Webster, 2008).

The course *Contemporary didactics in architectural education* aims to position architectural education in the context of pedagogical research through a close examination of current teaching practices. Studio teaching and critiques as well as other commonly used teaching formats in schools of architecture such as text seminars and lectures will be discussed from a learning perspective. A further aim is to critically explore taken-for-granted elements of architectural education in its present form and encourage the development of improved educational formats and practices that meet today’s educational focus on learning perspective as well as the professional architectural orientation towards collaborative practices.

Ockman, J.A. (2012). Introduction: The turn of education. In J.A. Ockman & R. Williamson (Eds.), *Architecture school: Three centuries of educating architects in North America* (p. 32). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Webster, H. (2008). Architectural Education after Schön: Cracks, Blurs, Boundaries and Beyond. *Journal for Education in the Built Environment*, 3(12), 63-74.

Course objectives

The overarching objective of the course is to support the development of pedagogical practices and research oriented approaches to architectural education. Further objectives of the course are:

1. to introduce the participants to ideas about higher education teaching issues in general, thus preparing them for taking decisions in teaching that benefit student’s learning;
2. to enhance the participants’ understanding of students’ learning perspectives on teaching, examination and course development in architectural education;

3. to provide the participants with a foundation for further professional development as a teacher in higher architectural education.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

For a passing grade the participant must be able to:

- explain fundamental concepts of teaching and learning in higher education,
- display in-depth knowledge about contemporary approaches to commonly used methods in architectural education, and
- describe how learning can be supported in architectural education.

Skills and abilities

For a passing grade the participant must be able to:

- reflect on common aspects of education (such as teaching formats, examination, evaluation, teaching qualifications etc.) on the basis of reading and experience,
- analyse, discuss and develop teaching in architecture with the support of theories and collegial discussions.

Judgement and approach

For a passing grade the participant must demonstrate:

- a willingness to understand learning from a student perspective,
- a critical and independent relation to traditional as well as new educational formats in architectural education and
- a reflective and improvement-oriented approach to one's own teaching.

General information

Assessment: For a passing grade, the participant must demonstrate approved course assignments as well as at least 80% attendance at seminars, lectures and group presentations.

Scope: The course corresponds to 3 weeks of full-time work and to 5 credits in third-cycle studies (with Pass and Fail as available grades). The course structure is comprised of 3+2+2 full days with lectures interspersed with group assignments and individual work.

Selection & Admission: The course is open to doctoral students and lecturers within the field of architecture and design. Application is made by email to resarc@arkitektur.lth.se **no later than April 1st, 2016**. The email should include name and affiliation.

Language: The course is taught in English.

Readings: The course literature includes, but is not limited to, research within the field of pedagogy in general and architectural education in particular. A full list of course literature will be made available.

Course leaders: Associate professor/ETP, Anders Ahlberg, LTH Academic Development Unit. Email: anders.ahlberg@genombrottet.lth.se

Assistant professor/ETP, Catharina Sternudd, School of Architecture, LU
Email: catharina.sternudd@arkitektur.lth.se

Category: The course is complementary to the recurrent thematic ResArc courses Tendencies, Approaches, Philosophies and Communications.

Location: The course is hosted by the Department of Architecture and Built Environment in Lund.

Course Structure

Module 1, May 9-11, 2016

The first module introduces the course and the group project. Participant's experiences are discussed as points of departure. Further subjects treated are:

- Students' legal rights, needs & differences
- Known obstacles to learning
- Different teaching formats
- Communication, feedback & handling conflicts
- Models for understanding and supporting learning
- Spatial settings and learning environments

The first day extends over dinner, and an evening meal is included in the course.

Module 2, May 25-26, 2016

Subjects treated are:

- Examination forms
- Course evaluation principles
- Assessment and judgement
- How to develop as a teacher or educational team
- Career issues
- Pedagogical strategies within organisations

Module 3, June 9-10, 2016

Subjects treated are:

- The architectural education in relation to the profession
- Individual analysis of one's own teaching
- Presentation of group project

Course Project

A group project will be introduced during the first course module and presented by the participants at a seminar at the end of the course. A self-perceived problematic or challenging educational situation is identified by the participants, and then examined from a range of different perspectives and related to theory. A great emphasis is put on the framing and understanding of the problems and potential solutions for the chosen situation will be evaluated. A detailed description of the assignment will be made available later.