Critiquing the crit: teaching and assessment practices in art and design

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Art & Design Education
Prepare students for architecture, art and other design based subjects
Projects

Project 1: Drawing

Project 2: ‘My Space’, Drawing & Site Analysis

Project 3: Container

Project 4: Chair
Studio Work

Independent Interests

Written Work
Portfolio Review
and
BA Interview
The aim is to teach students to develop and demonstrate

- creative thinking
- practical skills
- critical skills
- the ability to work independently
By testing out work and ideas through drawing...
testing out designs through modeling
Constructing work at 1:1 scale
Containers 2014
The major premise of criticism in art and design education is that it is an ongoing discussion where the outcomes are more comprehensive answers to design questions and problems than any one individual might achieve independently.
Critique:
an early case study
The Creation of Adam, Sistine Chapel 1511-12
Michelangelo Buonarroti
• How does the traditional studio critique promote learning?

• What are the barriers to effective learning in the traditional studio critique?

• What are some past influences and ideas about the training of artists?

• How might an inclusive studio critique promote effective learning and improve the learning experience?

…but first…how is feedback given?
Individual tutorials
Group crits
The traditional studio critique promotes opportunities for learning by reflection on:

- all student work separately and within the group

- the varied creative responses of students to individual and shared projects

- whether the work reflects the intentions of the student, the tutor, and the project brief

- the individual’s work, sharing their perspective with others, and developing critical thinking by analysing their own and others’ work
Advantages of the crit

- Receive feedback in a safe environment
- Develop understanding of Art & Design through dialogue
- Gain insights into what they’ve done
- Develop professional communication, discussion and presentation skills
- Gain confidence in their ideas and practice
Barriers to effective learning

- Poor physical environment and unplanned presentations
- Asymmetrical power relationships
- Past experience of feedback
Poor physical environment and unplanned presentations
Student presents work to the crit panel and student group
Asymmetrical power relationships: the physical power of the many against the one...
The ball of discourse drops like a Lead Balloon John Brazenall
Student and group listening to observations about the work
Student and group listening to observations about the work
Student perception of observations about work...
What are some past influences that still have an impact on art and design education?
The ‘sacred’ role of the teacher … 18th Century
The Academicians of the Royal Academy
1772 Angela Kauffmann
Education...is a painful, continual and difficult work to be done in kindness, by watching, by warning,... by praise, but above all -- by example.

John Ruskin
Art schools lose the plot
v.
Reflection and the pursuit of pure art in the 20th Century
“To be a teacher is my greatest work of art. The rest is the waste product, a demonstration.”

Joseph Beuys Artist

Awareness of power relationships and the democratisation of art 20th Century

7000 Oaks J. Beuys
Opening up the dialogue
the inclusive studio crit …
Students ‘pin up’ every session. The tutor facilitates while students make observations and learn to critique without being assessed.
Students are encouraged to dialogue about the work without the tutor present.
Students lead the critique and present in small groups.
Students individually critique each other’s work ...
… and write down their observations to give to each other.
The lecturer and guest lecturer sit with students and add comments to the student led crits.
The inclusive studio crit addresses:

- The role of the teacher and student
- The quality of the learning environment
- The experience of the crit
Students take ownership of and responsibility for their learning
Container Project model and finished work by Verda Uzdil
Art Box Container
Maureen Kinyua
Bila’s Butterfly Earring Box
Nabila Ivy
Architect
Organiser
Ahmed
Bukanan
Jamie’s Trinket Trove
Natasha Leh
Coin Storage Box
Dawn Wong
Coin Storage Box presentation sheet 2 Dawn Wong
‘Lounge Chair’ by Maureen Kinyua
‘27th Throne’ by Laith Zureikat
‘Lounge Chair’ by Yuksel Tabakci
‘Shoe Chair’ model and chair by Dila Cakar
Chair Project
‘Human Nest’ by Khadija Alaali ‘Puzzle Chair’ by Oyku Gur
Cardboard Chair
L. Adams

Lazy Day Chair N. Leh
End