Education, Design and Practice – Understanding skills in a Complex World

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Live project: Understanding the design process from the project brief to post-occupancy evaluation

• Author(s) Name:
Ana Rute Costa & Susanne Bauer

• University or Company Affiliation:
Birmingham City University

• Abstract (300 words):
In this paper we will present a live project delivered to second year students (Ba (Hons) Architecture) at Birmingham School of Architecture and Design in partnership with a local contractor (sponsor and technical advisor) and a nursery (client). Students were asked to design an external structure for an outdoor area in a Montessori Kindergarten. In order to experience the building, design and construction process, this live project was composed by seven stages, directly related with RIBA plan of work:

Stage 1 (Preparation and Brief): Students were asked to perform focus group discussions with children, semi structured interviews with staff, behavioral mapping, site analysis, site survey and brief definition.

Stage 2 (Concept Design): Students, working in pairs, have developed and presented their projects to sponsors and to the client. Ten projects have been Short-listed after the presentation.
Stage 3 (Design Development) and Stage 4 (Technical Design): Students working in groups of 6 elements have produced a BIM project. Four final projects have been selected after a second presentation.

Stage 5 (Construction) and Stage 6 (Handover): Students were regrouped in groups of 15 students, have produced and assembled the external structures at the kindergarten.

Stage 7 (In use): In order to understand the impact of their designs, students went back to the kindergarten two months later and have performed a post-occupancy evaluation.

This live project enhanced student’s engagement and revealed to be beneficial for all the partners at different levels. Students could understand the different stages of the design process, work in teams of 2, 6 and 15 elements, deal with a real client, respond to a real budget and site and experience the construction process. The POE revealed to be a strong learning tool where students were able to reflect on the impact of their designs and develop their critical thinking. For the nursery, the work developed by the students was ground breaking and helped them to understand the role of the architect. The sponsors were pleased to support this project, develop their social responsibility and to be involved with the future generation of architects.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Ana Rute Costa
Ana Rute Costa combines the experience in practice, research and teaching. As an architectural practitioner, she designed and collaborated in projects of different scales from housing to schools, public buildings and urban plans. Her research focus is on relationship between the users and the build environment. Based on her PhD research she was able to define the Cycle of the School Build Environment and define ways of improving the learning environment from the design to the appropriation phases. Currently she is working as a consultant in learning and teaching spaces for the Government of Gibraltar. Regarding her teaching experience, she taught at Norwich University of the Arts and Faculty of Architecture from the University of Porto in Portugal. Currently she is lecturing at Birmingham City University, where she coordinates the second year (level 5) and is deputy programme director for the Ba (Hons) Architecture. For more information please visit her website here: [www.anarutecosta.com](http://www.anarutecosta.com).

Susanne Bauer
Susanne Bauer (Birmingham School of Architecture and Design, Birmingham City University) has a Diploma (2002) from the University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, a Master of Arts (2003) in Histories and Theories from the Architectural Association and a PhD from The London Consortium, University of London (2014). She was a Visiting Scholar at Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation in New York in 2013, a Visiting Scholar at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in Montréal (2016) and a Post-Doctoral Scholar at the Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU) in Brazil.
(2015-16). She worked as an architect for Foster + Partners and for AHMM and has taught at Norwich University of the Arts and the Birmingham School of Architecture and Design.