ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
From the drawing board to the screen: architectural pedagogy during and after the pandemic

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• Abstract (300 words):
In the context of the global pandemic, the thrust on online learning and delivery of education has taken an unprecedented turn. Teachers have suddenly transformed into designers and tutors equally; they are using unfamiliar tools and devices. Not just the teachers, even students are finding it hard to adjust to an “online” environment where interaction and learning from peers and seniors (or juniors) is totally missing. On the other hand, the online platform has facilitated the collaboration of expertise from any part of the world; for a jury, review, or a conference.

This paper will serve as a detailed analysis of the SWOT -Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats or Challenges in online teaching and learning of Studio based courses in Architectural studies. This is part of a larger study that utilizes both qualitative and quantitative research methods to probe and evaluate the experiences of both teachers and students (from different geographies) to the introduction of online learning methods during the pandemic and the future of such a mode of teaching and learning, specifically in the field of architectural education. Taking the case of an institute of architecture in the UAE the current paper will discuss the various facets involved in the
design and studio based courses with respect to hands on exercises during the early semesters, to contextual analysis required for urban design or planning based studios in the higher semesters. Between solving the problem of pandemic and an anticipated paradigm shift in the form of virtual and augmented reality, which could arguably be the future of architectural education; this paper and study, we hope, will force us to pause and gauge both the merits and demerits of traditional as well as contemporary methods of architectural education.

Keywords: Pandemic; architectural pedagogy; Studio based teaching and learning; Online teaching and learning.

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

Dipti Shukla1: Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator (Architecture Programs)

An architect whose interest towards understanding the larger forces which shape the physical environment, drove her to pursue Urban Studies. She did her master’s from CEPT University- India, with a First-class honors degree in Urban Design and award-winning projects at both bachelor’s and master’s level. She has worked with leading organizations in the urban domain ranging from city-level NGOs, to state and national level government organizations; to international firms in the corporate sector dealing with large scale urban projects.

Aligned to this, she has been teaching both graduate and post graduate students in the core area of Urban Design. She has two book publications under her name out of her research interests in vernacular architecture and is currently working on publications related to Architectural History and Urban Research. She is an avid traveler and artist by passion; her ‘SKETCHLOGS’, have been part of various Exhibitions, and National and International Publications. She is also the Founder of a creative enterprise, ‘Karasthani - a Design Palette Studio’, collaborating on an assortment of projects related to Design, Graphics, Arts, Editorials, Illustrations and Allied Fields. Her professional experience covers Urban Design, Planning, Research and Advocacy, Architectural Design, Landscape, Interiors, and Graphic design.

Dr. Shaji Panicker2: Associate Professor and Research Coordinator

Though trained as an architect and a researcher, Dr Shaji K. Panicker defines himself primarily as a committed teacher and a continuing student of architecture. His scholastic training may be broadly categorized under the heading of architectural history and theory. While Shaji’s research initially explored non-Western reactions to the International Style and Modernism, in his Doctoral work Shaji provides an account of the manner in
which history, context, agency and agents, come together at a point in time as a complex set of historically constituted social relations, to authorize and sustain particular viewpoints about – with respect to (but not confined to) his particular interest – contemporary Indian architecture. He is currently engaged in a critical study that examines the role of Indian construction labor and other technical and professional experts, in the initial phases of architectural and urban development in the UAE.

Apart from teaching and writing research papers, Shaji occasionally exits into a relatively slow-paced and self-reflective realm of artistic exploration (paintings and sculpture) to explore/exploit, via different media, his personal, philosophical, and poetic propositions.