ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Annotation, the Crit, and Interactive Technologies in Producing Instructor-Student Relationships

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• Abstract (300 words):

Much has been written about psychological and political dimensions of instructor-student interactions in a conventional design studio environment. Similar attention has also been given to the power dynamics and toxic hierarchical relationships in the conventional formal review format. However, I argue, that a closer look at the real time acts involved in a ‘crit’ session between instructor and student, reveal the significance of the instructor’s ability to draw, to communicate concrete and abstract ideas, spatial representations, technical details, in a timely and succinct manner. These skills go a long way in establishing instructor-student relationship, with the student constantly looking to prove their drawing skills and the instructor demonstrating their degree of ‘comfort’ with subject matter. However, since the days of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, technologies for quick drawing, what I here call annotation, have significantly evolved, continuously (re)producing the ‘technological generation gap’ between instructor and student. With proliferation of increasingly complex software for drawing production, instructors felt ‘left behind’, often unable to show the same level of proficiency with each new design software, as students. Latest developments in digital annotation through various
hardware and software platforms, have however, shifted the dynamic yet again, bringing digital (vector) hand annotation back into fold. This paper is a reflection on my own experiences as a design faculty in India and the US, and my evolving relationship with the crit session. I argue against mono-functional analyses of the studio crit as, a ‘case’ for studying instructor-student power dynamics, an interrogation of teaching-learning effectiveness in design, or a search for best practice in techniques alone. I propose instead that the crit session, the act of drawing, the spatial format of meeting (virtual or in-person), the interactive technologies in play, are all part of an assemblage that co-produce instructor-student relationships, learning outcomes and design itself.

- **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

  Manas Murthy is an architect, urban designer, currently pursuing his PhD in Architecture at the University of Oregon. Manas has experience in action research and consultancy, in the fields of neighbourhood planning, sustainable mobility and community engagement. At the Princes Foundation in London, he worked on community regeneration and participatory planning, with a focus on density modelling, urban morphology and mobility. Back in India, he was project coordinator for a community based alternative mobility and last mile connectivity project in Delhi. Additionally, he has consulted on a number of national urban development programs such as the HRIDAY and SMART Cities Mission in India. As an academic, Manas has taught undergraduate and postgraduate students of architecture and urban design, with a niche focus in mixed-use housing and urban design studios, as well as theory courses on urban morphology, deliberative practice, and research methodology.

  Manas’s PhD research challenges conventional notions of urban informality through the case of an emergent building type called ‘builder floor’ apartments in Delhi. This research explores built environment production at the intersections of postcolonial theory, architectural scholarship on building cultures and typology, and urban planning theory.