

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ACSA SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL MEETING



***TEXT AND CONTEXT
IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION***

HELD AT THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
October 16-18 1988

TOPIC A: CONTEXT AS TEXT

1 1

In Search of a Lost Identity: The Schools of Architecture in Baghdad, Iraq.
Nadia M. Alhasani, University of Pennsylvania

2 0

The Influence of the Jury System on Architectural Education.
Kathryn H. Anthony, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

2 4

Gardens of Architecture: Reflections on the Plates of Architectural Graphic Standards.
George Barnett Johnston, Georgia Institute of Technology

3 1

Removing the Cultural Scotoma in Architectural Education
Kingston Wm. Heath, Ph.D., University of North Carolina Charlotte

4 6

Making the Connection.
George M. Polk, Jr., Clemson University

5 6

Paradigms for Professions.
Walter V. Wendler and Gerald Maffei, Texas A & M University

6 3

The Structure of Decision-Making in Design as a Context for the First Year Studio Experience.
Edward T. White, Florida A & M University

TOPIC B: INTERACTION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND CONTEXT

7 3

The Values of Architects and How they Affect Architectural Education.
Alexander Ratensky, University of South Florida

7 7

The Bilingual Condition: Architecture on the Edge.
Stephen D. Schreiber, University of Miami

THE INFLUENCE OF THE JURY SYSTEM ON ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Kathryn H. Anthony
 School of Architecture
 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
 Champaign, Illinois

This piece describes the results of some groundbreaking research examining the relationship between the jury system and architectural education. The jury system continues to be a "taboo topic" for architectural education, a sacred cow which has not been questioned in most schools. It is used in one form or another in virtually every school of architecture in the U.S. and the rest of the English-speaking world, and it is the most frequently used technique to evaluate student performance in design.

How much do students learn from design juries? How do students rate design juries compared to other aspects of their architectural education? More broadly, how do students' opinions of design juries compare with their views about architectural education in general? These are some of the questions which this research seeks to address.

This research is based on a five-year long series of studies of over 700 design students, faculty, and practitioners from across the U.S. (Anthony, forthcoming). An earlier portion of this work was summarized in some articles (Anthony, 1987a, 1987b, 1986) as well as a keynote presentation at the annual ACSA/AIA Teachers' Seminar held at the Cranbrook Academy of Art (Anthony, 1985).

This presentation concentrates on one recent component of this research: a study of a national cross-section of just over 100 American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) Chapter leaders. ¹

RESEARCH METHODS

The Sample. All 103 participants in this project are student chapter leaders of AIAS, the student counterpart of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

About two-thirds of the respondents (70%) are male, and one-third (30%) are female. Average age is 22.9, with a range of 18 to 31. The vast majority of respondents are Caucasian (84%), followed by black (7%), Asian (4%), and Hispanic (3%).

Almost nine out of ten students (88%) are undergraduates. Their average length of time in the architecture program at the time the survey was administered is

3.8 years; a majority (60%) are in their fourth or fifth year of architectural training. Students have taken an average of 6.3 studio courses, with a range from one to twelve.

Schools Represented. Altogether, a total of 71 schools are represented in this survey. Of these schools, 81% are ACSA members, 5% are ACSA affiliates, and 14% are neither members nor affiliates. Almost three-quarters of the institutions represented (70%) are state supported. The schools represent diverse geographic regions, with the largest groups being from the Southeast (22%), Northeast (21%), and West (21%), and the smallest group coming from the East Central Region (7%).²

The largest group of schools represented in this sample (38%) offer a five-year, professional Bachelors degree program; a quarter (25%) offer a four-year Bachelors degree; and the rest offer some combination of the above or an Associate of Arts degree.

The Survey. An 11-page survey was administered as part of a workshop on design juries at the AIAS Grassroots Conference in Washington, DC during summer 1987. The survey addressed students' descriptions of how juries are run at each school, detailed opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of design juries, as well as their assessments of various aspects of architectural education. It generally took students about 15-20 minutes to complete.

The survey items were based on research instruments which had been used to study design juries at a case study school (Anthony, 1987b). Specific items relating to satisfaction were derived from surveys routinely used to measure housing satisfaction (Francescato et al., 1979). In this case, these satisfaction items were adapted for our research purposes as the following four questions:

"If financial considerations and finding a job were of no concern to you, then ideally, how long would you like to study architecture?" (Responses ranged from "as long as possible" to "no longer than I have to.")

"If you were to start your schooling all over again, would you like to study architecture?" (Responses ranged from "would be very happy to" to "would be very

unhappy to.")

"Would you recommend studying architecture to one of your friends, if they were looking for a major and interested in the field?" (Responses ranged from "I definitely would" to "I definitely would not.")

"How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your architectural education? (Responses ranged from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied.")

Students were also asked to describe how satisfied they thought most students at their school were with several aspects of architectural education, including design education, design studios, design juries, interim and final juries, architecture lecture and seminar courses, and non-architecture courses. Most of the survey items had fixed-choice responses, often using a five-point scale.

Data Analysis. The surveys were analyzed using simple frequency distributions. Chi-square test were used to test the association between certain variables. Correlations were tested between the composite measure of satisfaction with architectural education (the four survey items listed above) and ratings of design juries, satisfaction with design studio courses, architecture lecture courses, etc. Responses from the four questions were combined and the total number divided by four to derive an average index of satisfaction. This procedure is similar to that used in several studies measuring housing satisfaction (Francescato et al., 1979).

RESULTS

Satisfaction with Architectural Education.

Most students sampled are either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their architectural education overall. If they were to start their schooling again, almost all would be happy to study architecture. When asked how long they would like to study architecture, 84% replied either "as long as possible" or "would like to continue." And 79% would recommend studying architecture to a friend.

When asked about specific components of their architectural education, results show that respondents are most satisfied with their design education, but least sat-

fied with their design juries. Opinions of interim juries are ranked the lowest, juries in general are next to last, and final juries are third.

Concerning the opinions of most students at their schools, results are somewhat similar. Just over two-thirds believe that most students at their school are satisfied with their architectural education. Respondents believe that their fellow students are most satisfied with their architecture lecture courses and again least satisfied with design juries. Note that the levels of satisfaction for all measures tend to be lower for the student body as a whole than for the respondents themselves.

Chi-square tests reveal that satisfaction with architectural education is significantly associated with satisfaction with architecture lecture courses ($X^2 = 57.97$, $p < .05$), ratings of final design juries ($X^2 = 62.91$, $p < .01$), and the extent to which instructors know their guest jurors in advance ($X^2 = 72.06$, $p < .001$).

Correlation tests demonstrate that satisfaction with architectural education correlates positively with satisfaction with design studios ($r = .35$, $p < .001$) and design education ($r = .27$, $p < .01$). However, it is not significantly correlated with satisfaction with design juries.

Students and the Learning Process. Student's responses indicate that, on average, they learn a fair amount from various techniques typically used in design studios. Students learn most from oral feedback, informal discussions with other students, desk crits from their instructors, and informal discussions with their instructors.

Although results indicate that students learn the least from written feedback and from criticism-either of their own projects or their classmates at juries--some of these results should be taken with a large grain of salt. In actuality, very few students ever receive written feedback on their design work. Only 3% of the students always receive written feedback from visiting critics who serve as jurors.

Design Juries. Half the students rate their design juries favorably. Interim design juries are rated lower than final juries. By comparison, students' ratings of design studios are somewhat higher. Over three-quarters of the students believe that design juries need improve-

ment, however. Eighty percent believe that interim design juries should be improved, and 77% believe that final juries ought to be improved. When asked what specifically would help improve design juries at their school, the most frequently mentioned response is that students should become more involved in the criticism process by discussing their work with critics in a give-and-take fashion. The second most commonly mentioned response is that visiting faculty and critics should be more familiar with student projects and program assignments when they arrive at the jury. The third most common response is that design projects should be due before the jury date.

Students believe that the most important goals of design project evaluations, be they juries, reviews, or otherwise, should be to learn how to: 1) respond to criticism, 2) to present their work professionally, 3-4) to improve both their design and communication skills, 5) to discuss their work with others, and 6) to improve oral presentation skills.

Students' sleeping patterns before juries fit the stereotype. Most students receive little or no sleep the night before juries, and relatively little sleep the week before juries. Over half the students (55%) generally eat much less than usual on jury day. While 60% of the students claim that they generally maintain a normal diet on jury day, 78% believe that most students at their school mainly eat junk food.

Patterns of administering design juries differ from school to school. Among the most common practices are that 1) the grading system varies from instructor to instructor, 2) instructors know in advance who the guest jurors will be, and 3) every student in the class presents his or her project individually before the jury. Those practices which occur the most rarely are: 1) students prepare for the jury by a) watching themselves on videotape (in fact, none of the student checked this response) or b) practicing their oral presentation before the class; 2) students receive written feedback from a) visiting critics who serve as jurors, b) other instructors who serve as jurors, and c) classmates.

Discussion. The relatively high levels of satisfaction with architectural education experienced by the stu-

dents sampled here inevitable reflect their roles as AIA leaders. If they detested architecture, they probably would not be serving as student chapter presidents. These students are more likely to have positive attitudes towards their education than would the "typical" architecture student.

Students' sheer presence at the Grassroots Conference may also help explain some of the favorable results. Many institutions at least partially paid for their student's travel expenses, a highly unusual perk especially for undergraduate students at any school. The conference was held in an extremely luxurious, comfortable conference room at the AIA headquarters, symbolically reinforcing the importance of the event and its participants. It is thus much more likely that these students would have positive rather than negative things to say about architectural education! Admittedly, when AIAS chapter leaders were asked to compare their own responses with those of their peers, their own responses were always more favorable.

Nonetheless, a comparison of these results with those from previous research reveals that on the issue of design juries, AIAS leaders' opinions are almost identical to those of 189 students at a case study school sampled in a previous study (Anthony, 1987). For example, in the previous study, 80% believed juries need improvement, compared to 79% of the AIAS students.

CONCLUSIONS

What is the relationship between students' opinions about juries and their satisfaction with their architectural education as a whole? A direct correlation between the two has not been shown. However, some kind of association exists, as demonstrated by the Chi-square tests, especially concerning final juries. And the correlations also indicate a significant relationship between students' satisfaction with architectural education and their satisfaction with both their design education and studios. Thus, the more pleased students are with their design education, and with their design studios, the more satisfied they are with their architectural edu-

cation as a whole. Design juries are fundamental components of both design education and design studios, so their role cannot be minimized.

Results of this study confirm those of previous research which indicate a high degree of dissatisfaction with design juries. However, the findings from this study may be even more meaningful than found previously, which focused only on one case study school. The dissatisfaction expressed here represents the sentiments of students at architecture schools across the nation. Considering the favorable predisposition likely to be found among the AIAS student chapter leaders, this dissatisfaction is all the more striking.

Some additional, recent data are currently being analyzed to further replicate both the original case study and this study of AIAS representatives. The completion of this next research phase will allow these new findings to be compared with results from architecture students from three new, additional schools. If findings from students at these other institutions in any way parallel those found in this sample and elsewhere, architectural educators must critically re-evaluate design juries. While a significant component of the architectural education tradition, they may be in serious need of reform.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The author wishes to thank the staff at the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) in Washington, DC for their invitation to participate and for their assistance in administering this survey at the 1987 Grassroots Conference. Special thanks go to Lee Waldrep, Carl D. Costello, Kent Davidson, Karen Cordes, Irene Dumas, Matthew Gilbertson, James Kurko, all at AIAS at the time of this research. She also acknowledges the assistance of Nana Kirk and Cynthia Cornfield with data entry and analysis, and Jim McKay with computer-aided graphic techniques. Finally, thanks go the University of Illinois School of Architecture for its financial support.

² The standard ACSA regional map was used to analyze the geographic distribution of participating schools.

REFERENCES

- Anthony, Kathryn H. "A Critical View of Design Juries." CRIT: American Institute of Architecture Students Newsletter, 1:6 (April 1987a), p. 4.
- Anthony, Kathryn H. "An Inquiry into the Architectural Jury System." Keynote address presented at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture/American Institute of Architects (ACSA/AIA) Teachers' Seminar, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI, June 1985.
- Anthony, Kathryn H. *Juries on Trial: An Empirical Inquiry of Design Education*. Book manuscript in preparation, forthcoming.
- Anthony, Kathryn H. "The Need for Creative Criticism at Design Juries: A Study of Architectural Student Diaries." in James Warfield (ed.). *Fostering Creativity in Architectural Education: Proceedings of the 1986 Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) West Central Regional Conference*. Champaign, IL: School of Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1986, pp. C51-C59.
- Anthony, Kathryn H. "Private Reactions to Public Criticism: Students, Faculty, and Practicing Architects State Their Views on Design Juries in Architectural Education." Journal of Architectural Education, 40:3 (Spring 1987b), pp. 2-11.
- Francescato, G., S. Weidemann, J. R. Anderson, and R. Chenoweth. "Residents' Satisfaction in HUD-Assisted Housing: Design and Management Factors." Report presented for the Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979.