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Democratisation of design and design learning: *How do we educate the next-generation designer?*

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Democratisation of design and design learning

How do we educate the next-generation designer?

Overview - content

Background information

- What kind of design?
- How is design traditionally taught and learned?
- What are significant changes that are affecting the design profession and education?

Present research findings

- What design educators think on how to educate the next-generation designer?

Design area(s)

Sector-based view	Design discipline/area	Alternate names used in public domains	Main areas of activity	Examples of employment titles
Visual Communication	Digital media design	Digital design Multimedia design Interaction design	Websites, interactive multimedia applications, animation, film and television identities, motion graphics	Designer Digital Media Designer Digital Designer Multimedia Designer Web Designer Digital Game Designer Digital Animation Designer Interface Designer Information Architect Motion Graphic Designer
	Communications design	Graphic design, Visual communication, Graphic art Advertising design	Graphics, brand, print, information design, corporate identity, environmental graphics	Designer Graphic Designer Communication Designer Illustrator Exhibition Designer Display Designer Packaging Designer

Democratisation of design and design learning

How do we educate the next-generation designer?

Today's reality

Three significant changes that affect design education and the design profession

- 1 studio-based learning > large classes environment
- 2 technology > democratisation of design
- 3 technology > democratisation of learning

Lets' have a quick look at these 3 points...

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Change 1

Increasing enrollment numbers – pedagogies change
small classes (12-20 students)
Studio-based teaching/Signature pedagogies



The traditional Design Studio –
is challenged and in decline

- project based learning
- dialogical approach (master/apprentice approach, learning by doing)
- the critique
- reflective practice (action and reflection, Schön, 1987)

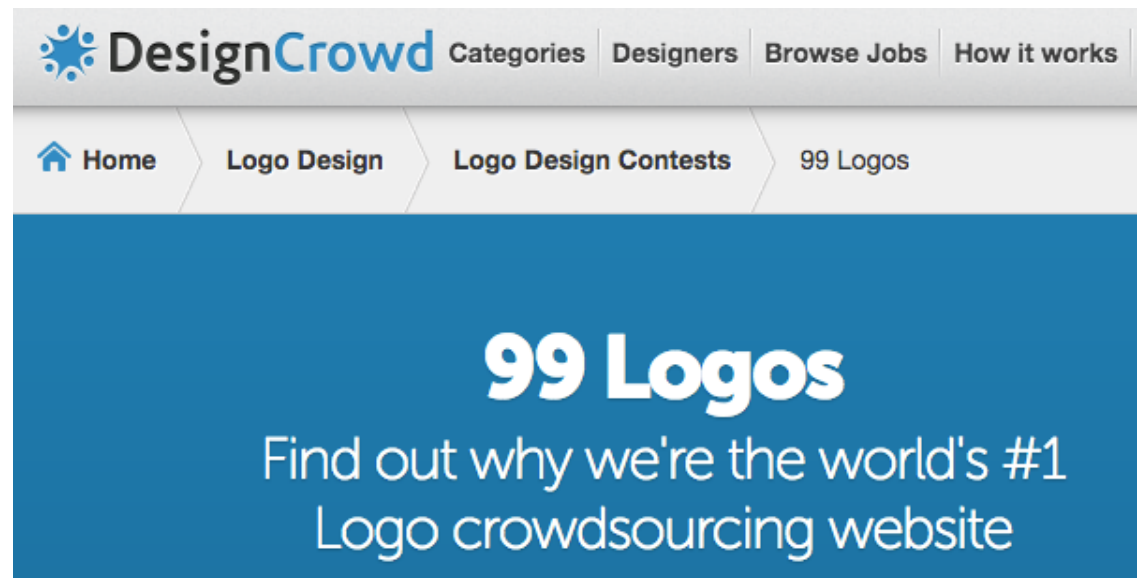
larger classes (60-120 students)
peer learning, peer assessment, peer-led reflection

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Change 2

Technology > Democratisation of Design

- the making of design is in the hands of not only designers but also amateurs
- Crowd sourcing of ideas and design has become popular
- Platforms DesignCrowd or Elance.com
- **Everyone can be a designer = threat**



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Change 3

Technology > Democratisation of Learning

- ever-increasing focus on online education
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) anyone with an Internet connection can receive an education from a university (e.g. Coursera, edX, FutureLearn, FutureLearn.org)
- hype around MOOCs has largely bypassed design education (signature pedagogies)
- first trials to translate signature pedagogies into online environment (project-based learning vs. assessed through automated testing, see MIT)

These **significant changes**, challenging the traditional understanding of **how**, and **by whom**, design is **practiced, taught and learned**.

Design educators need to find the answer to the question:
how can we educate the next generation of designers?

Research conducted: 10 interviews with design educators and program leaders from Australia, UK, USA

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Design educator view

How will students learn?

- offering design education fully online was not strongly supported;
- three respondents firmly believe that design education needs face-to-face interaction, for example

For me design education is discussing, it's showing people things. It's looking over their shoulder while they work. It will be a very sad day if all design education goes to be 100% online, simple as that. I think it's a tragedy. (DE3)

- other respondents: if to go online than a mix (online/face-to-face) is the solution (blended learning)

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Design educator view

How do students learn?

- agreement: students **need broader knowledge and skill base** to respond to more complex problems
- all educators shared the view that **multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary teamwork** will be an important part of design education;
- particularly for improving student **flexibility** and **understanding the significance of collaboration** and the limitations of an individual.

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Design educator view

What to teach?

- Common responses included the importance of '**critical thinking**' and '**design thinking**', sensitising students towards social issues and their own social responsibility.

*We need to create a space for the **students to think** and **that's where the future of design is**. ... I think maybe the future is media independent ... and the essence of design is actually the thinking...*
(DE7)

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Design educator view

What to teach?

- Overall, there was an underlying discomfort when design educators reflected on current and upcoming changes in the design profession.
- However, **only one** educator noted the **severity** of current changes (referring to crowdsourcing) affecting design education, and a resultant alteration of the design curriculum
- in that students need to become more **entrepreneurial**.

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Conclusion

Where to from here?

Design education in five to ten years

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Conclusion

The research presents only a small insight and more research is needed, however from the interviews the following could be observed

- A shift to a more **social focus**, within project work, was recognisable in all institutions;
- **Critical** and **creative thinking** skills were highlighted as the '**master skill**' that students needed to develop in order to equip themselves for a future in the industry;
- Particularly in context that these skills cannot be attained from online courses or in self-study mode;
- Online education is mainly seen as addition to face-to-face education.

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Conclusion

Critical reflection –

Current changes are severe and more changes will occur, leading to

1. More design programs will be offered fully online;
2. A broader diversity of design programs will exist in regards to what and how design is taught
3. Teaching students how to respond to client briefs will not be sufficient to prepare them for the future and a profession that keeps changing.

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Questions?

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