The Changing Nature of Architectural Education

Do Live Projects prepare students for the realities of architectural practice?

Natasha Lofthouse

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Abstract

The future of architectural education has been at the forefront of architectural debate, particularly since the recent economic recession. Changes within the profession and with the Royal Institute of British Architects’ (RIBA) course validation, has encouraged and inspired alternative methods of teaching. Live Projects are now being used at all stages in architectural education, Part 1 and 2. Many people believe that it is through these projects, whilst dealing with real clients and scenarios that students are gaining the rights skills and competencies to deal with the ever-changing demands placed on architects in practice.

For the purpose of this dissertation I aim to investigate the use of Live Projects in architectural education to prepare students for the realities of architectural practice. I will examine the demands placed on architects and the profession, and whether they are addressed in current architectural education. Having established four key themes that impact on architecture; the environment, the economy, politics and technology, I will investigate three Live Projects that I undertook during my Diploma in Architecture at Oxford Brookes University.

I will discuss whether the four identified key themes feature in the three case studies I have chosen to evaluate. I will also explore Caroline Butterworth’s theories on critical learning, and whether the case studies were effective in achieving her set of objectives (Butterworth, 2012). My conclusion, based on my own critical reflection, will evaluate the contribution of the Live Project to architectural education.
Statement of Originality

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references.

Signed: Natasha Lofthouse
Date: 28th February 2013

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed: Natasha Lofthouse
Date: 28th February 2013

Statement of Ethics Review Approval

This dissertation involved human participants. A Form E1BE for each group of participants, showing ethics review approval, has been attached to this dissertation as an appendix.
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Biography

I was born in Edinburgh on 25th December 1985. I spent most of my childhood, and attended school in Cornwall and Devon. I was awarded a degree in Architecture from Brighton University and a Diploma in Architecture from Oxford Brookes University in 2012. After completing my Part 1, I worked for an architectural practice in Devon and the Channel Islands. After completing my Diploma I gained employment working within an architectural practice in London that specialises in community consultation and engagement.
Acknowledgments

The idea for this dissertation stemmed from my involvement in the Oxford Academy Live Project during my first year of Architecture Diploma studies. However, it was after the Development and Emergency Practice field trip to India that the idea took shape. Thanks to David Sanderson and Charles Parrack, who taught me so much during my last year of studies.

Special thanks to Harriet Harriss for her constant support throughout my Diploma, and for creating the opportunity for me to be involved with Live Project work at Oxford Brookes University. My involvement in the Live Project International Pedagogy Symposium and the Ping Pong Pavilion developed my thinking, and enhanced my interests in Live Projects and architectural education. Also thanks to Chris Livingston. His involvement in the Ping Pong Pavilion, and contact since, has been invaluable.

Thanks to Nabeel Hamdi, my supervisor, for his guidance throughout this piece of work. His advice and professional work has been truly inspirational and has influenced my career aspirations.

Thanks to the professionals and students who took the time to answer my questions. Your thoughts and personal experiences have become an important part of my research. Thanks to the students who participated alongside me in the Live Projects, in particular Charles Fisher. Each project brought great memories and experiences.

Thanks also to my best friend Laura Davis who has been a huge support over the last few months. Finally I would like to thank my Mum and Sister for their unconditional love and support, encouraging me to always believe in myself and strive to do my best (as well as the hours they spent proof reading!).
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Introduction

The recent economic crisis has put huge pressure on architectural practices and schools of architecture. Students who are leaving university are facing high levels of debt and unemployment. Many turn to other careers or work without a salary to gain vital experience. As a result new business models and alternative ways of practicing are being explored (Spiller, 2010). There is a need for the profession to reinvent itself and ‘back out of the cul-de-sac that architecture has partly built’ (Hill, 2013). Architecture schools need to be able to adapt to the speed and scale of changes that are occurring, and are inevitably going to occur in the future, in the construction industry. Students require the knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and values to face the demands placed on the profession, and to prepare themselves for working in practice (Nicol and Pilling, 2000).

“The recent economic downturn and ongoing restructuring of both the professional training and practice of architecture, signifies a tipping point in the way we currently teach and practice architecture.” (Harriss, 2012a, p.7)

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the changing nature of architectural education and the value of implementing Live Projects into Schools of Architecture. My hypothesis is that Live Projects offer students additional skills, tools and relationships to those gained during a ‘traditional’ design project, which will help prepare them for practice. Live Projects offer students the opportunities to gain practical construction skills, as well as collaborative social skills, whilst working with real clients and project constraints.

For the context for this investigation I plan to examine current research and literature on the structure of architectural education, and its current weaknesses. I then aim to investigate the forces that influence and impact upon the architectural profession, and the role of the architect in the 21st century. I will use an initial questionnaire to clarify and support the themes explored throughout my literature review. The questionnaire will target lecturers and students, who have been involved in various Live Projects. Their responses will be incorporated in the literature review and discussion. I will then define the Live
Project; the alternative method of teaching and learning I wish to examine.

After introducing the context, evaluating current research and the theory of Live Projects, I will define the set of research questions that I will use to structure the subsequent interviews and questionnaires. Having established the importance of ‘Live Projects’ I will examine three case studies, which I participated in at Oxford Brookes University, using my personal experience and the experiences of others involved. I will then evaluate the effectiveness of the three Live Projects using the key themes, identified in the abstract and expanded on in chapter 2.

In conclusion, I will assess the value of each Live Project, and determine the success of the projects using Butterworth’s objectives for Live Projects. My study will highlight the experiences of current architect graduates, (2012,) and highlight and expand on the dialogue regarding the changing role of architects and the need for architectural education reform.
Chapter 1: Literature Review - Architectural Education

Architectural education has been heavily criticised. “Architectural pedagogy has become stale” (Colomina, 2012). Education, its underlying rituals and processes, has not really changed over the past 20 years and this is one of its biggest weaknesses (Till, 2012a). Schools of architecture are struggling to keep up with the current issues that are transforming architecture practice, and students are not educated to meet the industry and wider market needs (RIBA, 2005). The general criteria for Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Part 1 and 2, asks students to have an ‘understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, and Part 2 students must show the ‘ability to generate complex design proposals showing an understanding of current architectural issues’ (RIBA, 2011a, p.52). However, students are often shocked when they begin their first job, as the work they have partaken in and produced at university, is not translated in practice.

“As students we’re presented with these grand social schemes by Le Corbusier, Hertzberger or Also van Eyck. Then when you begin your internship or first job you inevitably work under very constrained briefs for (very) market orientated proposals.” (Hyde in Breddels and Oosterman, 2013, p.250)

I questioned the nature of my Part 1 education when I began my placement year. I had little knowledge of what to expect from practice. When I started work I was surprised how little of what I had learnt at university, with the exception of drawing skills, computer programme knowledge, and modelling skills, translated into the work required of me by the practice. Architectural education can offer a single focus viewpoint of what architecture entails and what the responsibilities of an architect are. It wasn’t until I had finished my placement years, and commenced my Part 2, that I began to understand the realities of practice, and the importance of engaging with current issues.

1.1 The ‘Traditional’ Design Studio

One of the biggest criticisms of architectural education is the ‘traditional’ design studio. For the purpose of this paper I am referring to this as the typical paper-based studio projects found in most architecture schools. The traditional design studio is based on experimental learning and is a fundamental part of
our education. In the RIBA’s recent 2011 validation criteria, they state that “broadly interpreted design represents the key intellectual and practical skill of an architect; therefore, at least 50% of all assessed work at Part 1 and at Part 2 is to be executed as design studio projects” (RIBA, 2011a, p.49). However, key themes often raised, when discussing the pitfalls of our education, include the lack of practical experience, collaboration and communication skills, and business experience. All of these are rarely dealt with in the design studio alone.

A typical design studio works on a brief frequently written by the design tutor. These more than often develop into ‘elaborated scenarios’, based on private research and tailored to the student’s personal objectives, having little relevance to reality (Buchanan, 2012a). There is often a focus on showcasing individual creativity and finding ‘startling originality’, rather than engaging with wider contemporary issues (Buchanan, 2012b). “What is left out of university education is the ordinary” (Ward, 1996, p.11). Projects that steer too close to the norm are often seen as mundane or not innovative enough.

“Students quickly learn that formal gymnastics, visual sophistication and innovation are the most reliable routes to success. Those who reject this orthodoxy are often accused of not making use of freedom offered by education” (Mull, 2011, p.3)

The student brief offers a great deal of scope for students to formulate their own project. However, in practice developing the brief is often the client’s role, with the architect having little control of what and how it should be done (Breddels and Oosterman, 2013). Architecture is a participative process, but the design studio is often isolated from the real world and from the types of relationships and interactions that would occur in practice (Nicol and Pulling, 2000). Many courses focus on producing the ‘solitary genius, rather than today’s collaborator’ (Buchanan, 2012b). Students are not often encouraged to share and develop their ideas with one another unless working within a group (Nicol and Pilling, 2000). Even with group projects the outcome often results in an individual’s resolved idea and assessment. Students rarely have the opportunity to experience talking to other groups of ‘real people’, outside of
the institution (Mull, R., 2011). Communication skills are not assessed, therefore ‘insufficient attention is paid to human interactive skills, for example listening, questioning, negotiating, and explaining’ (Nicol and Pulling, 2000). These are vital skills for architects to have in practice.

“In the area of architects becoming more attuned with social change I think that education is too hermetic. Students are generally taught to that they have to work on their own, develop their own ideas and believe that collaboration dilutes their special vision. All of these ideas are unsustainable as we move into the future.” (Chris Livingston, Lecturer at Montana University, 2013)

Many disciplines work and operate in extremely separate worlds. This is also true in education. Architecture students often work in isolation, and therefore rarely obtain experience working with other related departments, and with the people they would meet in practice. This has an impact on the practical experience of students. One of the biggest reasons for the segregation between education and practice is the lack of technical and business skills. Students learn more by doing, but they do not have the opportunity to work within construction or a practice until their placement years. Many believe that the course should be part time with integrated placements to enable students to work whilst studying. Architectural practices would then engage with all stages of architectural education and invest in students and the future of the profession.

“Education of architecture remains thoroughly in the theoretical rather than practical and there is a huge gap between the expectations of future employers and what tutors are teaching in the schools.” (Sofia Davies, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)

“The best way to teach design is in an apprenticeship situation, by letting the student watch someone who has mastered the skills.” (Buchanan, 2012b)

However, due to the economic climate, many practices cannot commit to this type of sponsorship and
recruitment. So how can schools of architecture offer the teaching of these core skills and ‘replicate the motions of practice working?’ (Pike, 2011).

1.2 Alternative Pedagogy

There are many ways for students to broaden their interests and enhance their learning. However, these are often extra curricula, and are not accredited or recognised as part of the structured Part 1 and 2. Live Projects, specialisations and masters courses are a few examples of alternative teaching that can offer students additional skills and values from those learnt in traditional areas of architectural education, and can offer the link or the ‘common cores’ between different disciplines and related fields of work.

An early example of this was Cedric Price’s ‘Polyark and Potteries Think Belt’ projects. Price proposed that educational activities should be interlinked to everyday life (Brown and Pirrie, 2011).

“Price believed that it was counter-productive for all “embryo architects” to receive the same educational formula; instead a school should provide an ordered framework in which a students can put varied directions of architectural development to the test, thus producing graduates with a wide range of skills and priorities” (Mull, I., 2012)

The Prince of Wales’ Institute of Architecture offered a different method of working. The one-year foundation course was one of the first ‘radical alternative’ teaching institutions in Britain since the changes in education made by the RIBA. The course offered students the chance to construct a complete building by the end of the year. “Students at an early stage need to learn skills of hand and eye and habits of hard work...One of the Prince’s intentions was to achieve a greater reintegration of the construction industry and design, so there was an uncommon attention to materials and construction” (Powers, 2012).
Another well-known example of an alternative studio is Rural Studio, an undergraduate program of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture at Auburn University. The program focuses on practical hands on construction and social activism. “Architectural education had become more about academics and less about construction...the connection between aesthetics and the realities underlying design was being lost” (Oppenheimer, 2002, p.6).

However, architectural teaching heavily relies on RIBA criteria. The RIBA has been criticised regarding its role in architectural education. In September 2011 the RIBA brought out the new criteria and procedures for validation, which they saw as an opportunity for universities to review their course content and ‘define distinctive academic agendas responding to a more competitive educational environment’ (RIBA, 2011, p.5). The RIBA recommend that schools of architecture ‘avoid prescriptive compliance with the criteria in favor of an interpretation encouraging students to creatively develop all aspects of their professional skills’ (RIBA, 2011, p.5). This allows scope for alternate methods of teaching and encourages ‘experimentation, innovation and professional relevance’ within education (RIBA, 2011).

“Although there is tremendous innovation in teaching and research in the institutions themselves, every course in the country is beholden to the RIBA Validation criteria. Despite a significant and worthy attempt to rewrite these over the last few years, the revised documentation is simultaneously too vague and too constraining to be of any use. We should look to America, for instance, where there is a much greater diversity of approaches to architectural education. Students should be able to choose between schools that are genuinely different.” (James Benedict Brown, Lecturer at Norwich University of the Arts, 2013)

Not only is it down to the professional bodies and practice professionals to make changes within architecture, but it is also the responsibility of the teachers to be creative and offer and ‘establish new ways of thinking’, instead of feeling bound to curriculum and offering a ‘refried version of their own education’ (Wainwright, 2012).
Chapter 2: Literature and Discussion  
- The Expanding Profession

“Our societies are increasingly challenged by systematic issues on an unprecedented scale. All of these crises have spatial consequences that architects are well prepared to confront, and yet instead of diving in, we seem to be having our own crisis: a crisis of relevance” (Hyde, 2013, p.17)

The architecture profession is seen to be in a ‘crisis’, being affected by the financial crisis, the environmental crisis or the crisis of social cohesion (Hyde, 2013). The future of the profession is constantly being questioned, and the role of the architect scrutinised. Throughout education the majority of students are still taught to believe that the solution to a problem is a building, and this is incredibly limiting (Hill, 2013). We cannot predict what is going to happen in the future but it is clear that the architecture profession, and the role of the architect, needs to expand and forge new relationships and positions (Hill, 2013).

“The demands on architects haven’t changed much; we still face the same pressures to deliver on ever smaller budgets, frequently working for clients who will not use the end product. The difference is our youngest generation of architects (professionally qualified or not) are having to think and act outside the box to keep a toe hold in the discipline.” (James Benedict Brown, Lecturer at Norwich University of the Arts, 2013)

The construction industry has addressed the same challenges throughout the ages, for example, housing, public health, roads and railways (Hill, 2013). However, on top of these, architects now have to deal with issues such as urbanisation, climate change and exhaustion of natural resources, and humanitarian crisis.

“Professional architecture right now faces an interesting paradox – the need for design and design thinking in the world in terms of addressing inequality and poverty, and confronting issues like climate change and resource scarcity has never been higher. And yet all the architects seem unemployed. What is going on? Who are we working for?” (Parvin, 2012)
For this paper I have identified 4 key issues that are prompting architects to steer their work into new directions and to act alongside other professions.

2.1 The Environment

“Environmental crisis is the greatest challenge facing our age yet” (Hyde in Jeremijenko, 2013, p.255).

The environment has always had a huge impact on the architecture profession. Architects deal with control and mitigation of environmental issues concerning a building on a day-to-day basis (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011). Energy use, materiality and the focus on carbon zero buildings are at the
forefront of architectural design. However, the increasing scale of issues such as climate change, and the impacts this has on humans, leaves the built industry ‘overwhelmed and daunted’ by the prospects of change (Hyde in Jeremijenko, 2013). It is evident that environmental issues cannot be dealt with through technical fixes alone, and that one has to deal with how social conditions are linked with ecological conditions (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011).

“If the environmental crisis is seen in sociological rather than technical terms, then it immediately becomes an ethical issue, insofar as a concern for others is directly understood as a concern for the future well-being of others and how they will be able, and enabled, to live their lives in an environmentally degraded world.” (Till, 2009, p.182)

To engage with complex ecosystems, architects need to work with experts from all disciplines. Those architects that choose to work in this field, or wish to address environmental issues, need to become ‘the professional generalist’ (Hyde in Gang, 2013). General knowledge is required to know what specialist disciplines to engage with, and communication skills are needed to acquire the relevant information needed (Hyde in Gang, 2013). Architects must understand the need for shared knowledge, and explore new roles that bring together a team of experts who can collaborate efficiently and become resourceful problem solvers.

Climate change has escalated the number of natural disasters. Humanitarian crisis is increasingly hitting the headlines. Due to the increase in natural disasters, the architect’s role is becoming more and more valuable in disaster prone areas. Architects are being called upon to deal with short-term shelter provisions, and long-term reconstruction solutions, across the globe.

Rapid urbanisation and high levels of poverty often intensify the aftermath of a natural disaster. Problem solving needs to accommodate these changes and new ways of living must address ‘our new scale’ (Bruce Mau, 2013). Long-term solutions are becoming more vital to address recovery, and
resilience against future disasters and shocks. It is vital for architects to work closely with humanitarian organisations to be beneficial and effective in providing long-term solutions so people can provide for themselves. Architects need to understand the cause of environmental changes and the subsequent effect on the culture and way of life of the given population. Understanding the interdependent relationships between the natural environment and man’s environment is vital for progression and change (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011).

2.2 Politics

“There is politics in space because space is political.” (Lefebvre, 1991, cited in Till, 2009)

Politics is inherent to architecture due to its social responsibilities and spatial production (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011). Britain has recently seen a period of unrest and social division (Mull, R., 2011). The production of space, and social exclusion, has become a challenging problem that we face. This was highlighted after the recent London riots. Cultural segregation, housing and city planning were blamed, amongst other issues, for the events that unfolded that summer. Architects need to understand the political implications and long-term consequences of the processes and products of architectural practice (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011). The current social and political climate of the UK indicates the need for politicians and architects to see the importance of strengthening social structures and linking urban planning with politics (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009).

The need for socially engaged architecture is becoming more critical with current societal challenges. The government’s localism bill has shifted more power to councils and communities, giving them more control over housing and planning decisions. The involvement of communities in design, development and regeneration is paramount for architects to address social responsibilities. Collaboration with communities will alter the way architects work and the profession will require ‘skilled intermediaries capable of focusing and articulating the competing needs of local communities’ (Mull, R., 2011).
“Society creates the city and not visa versa” (Calame and Charlesworth, 2009, p.199)

Not only is politics linked to social space but it is also is deep routed in the challenges of humanitarian crisis. Natural and human induced disasters are currently often in the headlines. Complexities with the planning process and policies are more than often determined by politics. A political system can often contribute to the magnitude of a disaster, and can have a significant consequence on the level of vulnerability within a country. Disasters are forcing changes within government systems and cities. Architects need to engage with public planning, or re-engage with government, to attempt to change, or rebuild, a city or community (Vanstiphout, 2013).

“The key political responsibility of the architect lies not in the refinement of the building as static visual commodity, but as a contributor to the creation of empowering spatial, and hence social, relationships in the name of others.” (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011, p.38)

2.3 The Economy

We are currently in a financially driven climate (RIBA, 2011b). The current economic downturn has forced architects to adapt, and explore different ways of working. Many architects are looking beyond the typical client. The instability of the profession provides opportunities for architects to embrace new tools, and competencies, and participate in matters other than the production of buildings.

Figure 2. John Morefield, Founder of Architecture 5

“The ‘architect’ will play an increasingly limited role in the production of the built environment, not least because of the inevitable (and necessary) shift under conditions of scarcity from the production of
more stuff to the realignment of stuff that it is already there, and from an economy of financial capital to one of social capital.” (Till, 2012b)

“Having graduated from part 1 into the recession, I think there was (and has continued to be) a shift in architects becoming more proactive in acquiring work in comparison to previously where work was in abundance. This has led to architects becoming more collaborative with other professions in gaining work during the difficult period.” (Dhiran Patel, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)

The economic climate is also having repercussions on architectural education. Architecture graduates are entering into a profession with one of the highest rates of unemployment and students are expected to pay student fees of £9000 plus per year. Students, many from the backgrounds that the profession needs to deal with, whose access to architecture is restricted by the recent rise in fees, are seen as vital to deal with the scale of the profession’s current challenges (Hunter, 2012). “The students that will be excluded and pushed out of education are the students we really need to address the political and social issues” (Mull, R., 2011). An architect is unlikely to be able to solve issues relating to social housing if they have never experienced it.

Not only does the profession have to deal its own economic realities, but it also faces the increasing problem of poverty, unemployment and inequality on a national and global scale. Architects are predominately nurtured to design for the 1%, the single, autonomous client (Hamdi, 2011a). Buildings are being produced for city marketing, or for investors, and they have no relationship to the needs of society (Vanstiphout, 2013). “I think there is a real and important role for visionary architecture, but right now, especially that part of it, is completely bankrupt and empty” (Vanstiphout, 2013, p.94). Innovative and experimental architecture has often been linked to the booming economy, but in times of hardship architects need to take the opportunities to explore new business models and operate in a more dynamic way (Young, 2013). The client of the twentieth century needs to become the 100% (Parvin, 2012).
2.4 Technology

Advances in technology are continuing to place new demands on the construction industry. These include advances in computer software, construction and assembly methods, and materials. Architecture practices must adapt to the changing context of technology, to work more efficiently and effectively.

Building information technologies present new opportunities and challenges to the architectural profession (Andenas, Livingston and Nelson, 2012). The increased use of Building Information Modelling (BIM) programs is altering the way in which many architectural practices are working. As sustainable design advances, the search for computer software that can exchange information continues. BIM introduces an alternative form of design process, procurement and construction, and changes the responsibilities of different consultants within the design team. Stakeholders, including the client, architect, engineer, contractor and subcontractor, will be able to access the building information model. It will require ‘adaption, investment and greater teamwork between the core trades’ (Day, 2011). The BIM model is a jointly developed design process, enforcing a collaborative and interdisciplinary way of working that ensures that all parties involved record all modifications to the design and build.

“BIM is about integrated design, developing, visualizing and testing a design in collaboration with the design team, suppliers, constructors and the client.” (Brindley and Perry, 2012)

Architecture students are being exposed to the implications and consequences of BIM, and are currently being trained in BIM software. This has resulted in practices employing graduates with experience in BIM software only. However, not only will future employees need to be trained in using BIM software and technology, but an increased demand of construction knowledge, including in-depth knowledge of materials, assemblies and systems, is required to use these programs efficiently and correctly (Andenas, Livingston and Nelson, 2012).

“BIM represents a new professional challenge. In the past, fresh graduates typically spent their first
few years drafting, and in the process slowly learning how a building is put together. But with BIM, they need to know how to put a building together before they can use it properly.” (Khemlani, 2008)

The four highlighted issues do not exist in isolation. They will often have an impact on one another and mutually have an impact on the architectural profession (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011). The traditional role of the architect is diminishing. Architects need to create social, economic and environmental value by being resourceful, and engaging with these current issues. This in turn works towards more sustainable long-term solutions.

“Very broadly, the profession remains inward looking…..Meanwhile, the world outside is increasingly collaborative, dynamic, open and supportive to plural conversations, diverse economic forces and the inherent value of specificity” (Colin Priest, 2013)

“I think that the role of the architect is being changed by social change. Architects are no longer seen with the same kind of reverence that they might have been a half-century ago. Today the built environment is directed and created by myriad forces that inform the end product. The architect will naturally have to change; we can no longer believe that the building (exceptional form or not) is the answer. We need to become more participatory, better negotiators, financial managers, facilitators, and collaborators if we think we have a future because people will naturally go find a team to work with, and if we are not careful, that may not include an architect.” (Chris Livingston, Lecturer at Montana State University, 2013)
Chapter 3: The Live Project
- ‘Designing in a different mode’ (Till, 2012a)

Despite all of the criticism there are architecture schools that have progressed, and understand the importance of alternative projects that ‘engage with the culture we serve’ (Markey, 2012). ‘Liveliness’ is becoming a buzzword amongst educators and students of architecture. Throughout my time at Oxford Brookes University, I was involved in a number of projects that engaged with the ‘real and now’ (Till, 2012a); real people, constraints and current issues that were outside of the design studio and institution. For the purpose of this paper I will be referring to them as ‘Live Projects’. Live Projects are one example of an alternative way to teach within the built environment education (Sara, 2006). The three-day Live Project International Pedagogy Symposium, held at Oxford Brookes, in May 2012, is one of many events that have brought together those interested in reforming architectural education. Jeremy Till opened the symposium with the idea that Live Projects should not be introduced as an alternative but as a necessity (Till, 2012a). “Work is becoming marginalised. Signs that work needs to become live are becoming more urgent” (Till, 2012a).
Figure 3: Architecture Live Projects Diagram (2012)
3.1 Live Projects

There are many variations of the Live Project. These are dependent on the teaching ambitions of a particular architecture school. The outcome of a Live Project is often a built structure or one with an ethical motive. Many aim to ‘rehearse professional practice’ (Dodd, 2012), or bring about a project of value to a particular group of people or community. Rachel Sara locates the Live Project in between academy and the everyday (Sara, 2011). (see fig.4)

It was interesting to see, from the questionnaires and interviews I conducted, how the definition of a Live Project was dependent on the individual’s own experiences. Key themes included; collaboration, the built form, sharing of skills, value, and the real client and brief (See Appendix for questionnaires). However, I do not feel that there is a right or wrong definition of a Live Project. Every project in practice is a Live Project (Morrow, 2012), so shouldn’t this be translated in education? Alistar Parvin, at a recent ASF talk, stated that all projects in education should be Live Projects (Parvin, 2012).

“In education I would define a ‘live project’ as a project that enables architectural students to test out further skills that reflect the realities of designs by getting something built.” (Sonny Moore, Part 2 Graduate, 2013)

“A live project should include students experiencing a real, and importantly useful project, in motion and contribute to all aspects of the program at the same time as logging work-experience
credits within university time to shorten the route to becoming an architect. It should involve managing a team, creatively utilising the skills of contractors and overcoming problems.” (Charles Fisher, Part 2 Architecture Student, 2013)

“A live project is an assessed component of a Higher Education (degree level) course that engages students with a real project and a real client, for whom the students produce something of value that could not realistically be procured through the typical commercially driven client-architect relationship. Architecture live projects may include the construction of a built outcome, but it is not a requirement.” (James Benedict Brown, Lecturer at Norwich University of the Arts, 2013)

From my own experiences a Live Project focuses on the process in which a student formulates a brief, determined by external rather than academic factors (Cottrell and Watt, 2006), and how a student communicates within a group of peers, or with a client or community. Neil Dodd, at the recent Live Project Symposium, highlighted the importance of understanding this exchange of communication, ‘a process that needs to go on throughout design’, and emphasised that students need to explore how this exchange could happen during a project (Dodd, 2012). Live Projects ‘open up the secrecy of process’ and give students the opportunity to see what is involved in realising a project during a short and intense learning time frame (Morrow, 2012).

For this paper I will define the ‘Live Project’ as a way of educating students, architects and communities in the realities and complexities of practice, whilst introducing and developing participatory and alternative ways of working. As well as offering students new skills, Live Projects offer students the chance to observe the realities of mainstream architectural education and the give students the ‘empowerment to act in different ways’ (Morrow, 2012). Live Projects can also alter the power structure within the university (Till, 2012a). Many of the teachers I spoke to described themselves as the ‘facilitator’ or ‘enabler’, seeing their role in a Live Project as a collaborator, offering support to the students when needed.
“Crucially, I believe that Critical Pedagogy helps us overcome the dichotomous teacher-student relationship of most pedagogical theory. Critical Pedagogy treats us all as individuals with our own unique knowledge’s: we enter into a learning situation together and we can both learn. In a live project, tutor, student and client all enter into a learning process in which no one actor has superior knowledge or experience.” (James Benedict Brown, Lecturer at Norwich University of the Arts, 2013)

Generally, Live Projects offer a more collaborative approach to learning and can create strong links to practice, the construction industry and the outside world. Projects that focus on human activity and shared knowledge between disciplines encourage new ways of learning. Students can supplement their learning with a different toolkit to that developed in the traditional design studio. It is becoming more and more apparent that collaboration and social human activities, as well as technical and practical skills, are integral in preparing students for the real world.

“Live project participation and cross disciplinary collaborations (MBA collab) were made available to me, which I chose to undertake. It allowed me to address real-life issues introducing real clients and briefs into the curriculum, and required practical design and social responses. It was definitely an educative experience, and gave insight into the architect as a social agent.” (Yuting Cheng, Part 2 Graduate, 2013)

“Live project programs could help the profession in many ways; educating students in areas of social need, client relations, team building/collaboration to name a few as well as construction.” (Chris Livingston, Tutor at Montana University, 2013)
3.2 RIBA Criteria & Live Projects

Few Live Projects in schools of architecture are accredited. Many schools that implement Live Projects offer them as extra curricula projects or as short exercises at the beginning of a term. In a traditional design studio, students are given a tick box of criteria that they must adhere to. Live Projects can be extremely hard to evaluate and grade using the RIBA’s Validation criteria due to the unpredictability. How would you evaluate a project that failed? Failure can be a part of any profession, failure to secure a project, or client disapproval. In practice, failure is often a hurdle that architects have to deal with. In architecture schools failure is not often supported. In Live Projects ‘unplanned and emergent learning’ often arises (Watt, 2006), and failure can often occur, whether it is client disapproval or an un-built form. It is how this is dealt with and acknowledged that determines how successful the students learning process is. Evaluating what went wrong in the project and why it went wrong can be a critical learning tool.

The RIBA requires Part 2 graduates to have ‘problem solving skills, professional judgment, ability to take the initiative and ‘make appropriate decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances’ (RIBA, 2011). Live Projects offer these unpredictable moments to build upon these skills. Architects experiment, risk take and then reflect on their ideas and outcomes on a daily basis, throughout an entire project. Live Projects can create a ‘risk confident community of workers’ by making students more aware of the kind of danger they will be exposed to in professional life (Harriss, 2012b). But how do architecture schools grade students on risk taking and reflection rather than on a product or drawing?

“All criteria is important for students but criteria can often define what is done in schools and limit modes of teaching...criteria is needed for diverse teaching structures.” (Chandler, 2012)

Although Live Projects are not mandatory in the UK architecture curriculum, there are courses, primarily postgraduate, that run integrated live studios which follow the RIBA validation criteria (Harriss, 2012a). The 12 Year Live Project programme at Sheffield University has become a highly regarded and successful
course, which offers Masters students the opportunity to develop collaborative techniques and skills in communication and participatory practice.

Live Projects open a student’s eyes to the ‘alternative’. Many are going on to develop new and relevant ways of practicing architecture and responding to the future of the profession. “Hopefully students will be empowered to act differently as architects, and shape their own sense of future social practice where they can go on and test new roles and relationships from this way of working” (Butterworth, 2012)

“Those setting out early in their career are looking for new niches in the market, exploring to further expand the architects role.” (Edward Sharland, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)

### 3.3 Methodology:

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of three case studies where various approaches to working were used.

1) A studio based two-week project in Oxford where we were given a real client to work with.

2) A field trip to India, a developing county, where we worked with communities affected by the 2004 Asian Tsunami.

3) A built pavilion project, which ran as an extra curricula competition by the university.

I aim to evaluate effectiveness by determining whether the case studies/projects offered the opportunity to address the four key themes highlighted in chapter 2, and achieve the objectives set out by Caroline Butterworth below.

There are many different views, by academics and lecturers, regarding what Live Projects can offer students, but it is Butterworth’s theories on critical learning that I propose to apply to interrogate my
own experiences and learning. I will assess the case studies with regards to achieving Butterworth’s objectives, rather than by judging their success.

Does the Live Project empower students to:
- Critique the methodologies, frameworks and regulations of conventional practice and education.
- Understand the opportunities, challenges and consequences of participatory practice.
- Test and critique, with their external partners, design issues such as authorship, communication, representation, effectiveness and legacy.
- Act as different sorts of architects.
- Test new roles and relationships and understanding the consequences of this on their future architectural practice.
- Shape their future social practice.

(Butterworth, 2012)

My assertion is that without achieving some, if not all of these objectives and issues, the projects will not be, or may only be partially successful.

Live Projects are extremely hard to assess, particularly when there is no tangible outcome. In order to effectively evaluate the value and merit of the case studies, I developed a set of questions to ask students and teachers who have been involved in Live Projects (See questionnaires in Appendix):

- What key skills are gained from a Live Project?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the ‘traditional’ design studio?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of a Live Project?
- Do live projects offer the key tools for engaging with the issues impacting our profession?
- Should the Live Project replace the ‘traditional’ studio project?
The questions will help me to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of such projects and understand the following:

- The effectiveness, and value, of a Live Project in offering students the skills for working in practice;
- The limitations of this type of project.

I have chosen case studies that I have personally worked on, and that are based on my own experiences in education, in particular my Part 2 diploma course at Oxford Brookes University. This allowed me to carry out primary research. Since graduating in Architecture, and working in an architectural practice, I have been able to reflect on my own involvement in these projects and had the opportunity to speak to others who were also part of the process. My research, will therefore, follow a narrative methodological approach. Most of my research and data collected will be qualitative. The dissertation and conclusion will centre on my personal experiences and reflect the personal perspectives of those I will interview.

The time constraints of the research meant that only a small sample of 8 lecturers’ and 20 students were chosen for questioning. These were from a limited number of schools of architecture, so focused on a limited number of variant course structures. My research therefore cannot be said to be representative of the diversity of architectural education in the UK. However, the research does aim to provide an insight into the value of Live Projects in architectural education, and the opportunities and challenges that are faced by students.
Chapter 4: The Oxford Academy

In 2010, as part of our diploma design studio we were given a range of projects to choose from. I chose the Oxford Academy Project as I thought it would offer me the opportunity to design a realistic and feasible project. I and two other students commenced a two-week Live Project in Littlemore, East Oxford. This was a short, intense project where we were allocated real clients, architects from Oxford City Council, and real project constraints. The clients were asked to write the brief whilst our tutor oversaw the project.

“Academics should yield active control to their students, enabling them to assume leaderships of live projects outside the campus and studio setting” (Harriss, 2012b)

“We were assisted by rather than relying on university staff. This relationship change saw the tutor acting more as technical consultant rather than design critic.” (Charles Fisher, Part 2 Architecture Student, 2013)

The Project consisted of a three-part brief that looked at the renovation of three areas of the school (see fig.5):

1. A way to mark the school entrance.
2. A facade system to cover the only existing building on site.
3. A trim trail that linked the sports hall to the playing fields.

Figure 5. Oxford Academy Brief (2010)
4.1 Altering the brief

We discussed the brief and the design possibilities for each part. Initially we thought we would be focusing on one area of the school. After our first meeting with our client, Architect, Nigel Cunnings, we were informed that we were to produce elements for all three parts of the brief, which had to be affordable, practical and deliverable.

The New Oxford Academy was in the process of being built and there was a strong design approach. We researched the ideas behind the new school design and the ethos behind materials and forms. We contacted the architects working on the main building and the companies that had supplied the materials, in particular the façade specialist, Trespa.

Before making design decisions we visited the school and viewed the site. We met with architect Jane Farrow, the client, and Willmot Dixon, the contractors running the new build. We discussed the possibilities with the contractors and realised there would be limited materials left over from the build available. It became apparent that what the clients were asking for would not be feasible due to lack of funds, and also due to health and safety measures. We then discussed the brief with a specialist-landscaping consultant, Andrew Barnes, who had experience working on school projects. He made it clear that a trim trail would not be possible given the circumstances.

As a result we then discussed how we could interpret, alter or expand the brief to produce a proposal that would be more considered, feasible and realistic. This process showed us the importance of rewriting or altering a project brief, whilst still dealing with real constraints and issues. This is often the way architects work in practice, accommodating the client’s wishes whilst addressing factors that impact and influence design decisions. “Briefs are concerned with giving instructions...Negotiation of the brief is a key part of their (students) creative responsibility” (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011, p.70).
Due to the short time scale and lack of funds available to us we were encouraged to question the brief, to be resourceful and think outside of the box. We worked through a series of questions, examining each part of the brief and the possible outcomes. After a couple of days of designing, it was clear to us that we should not focus on the end product but on the process in which a project could evolve.

“It is argued that the ‘open’ nature of such briefs encourage students to experiment more, so they discover and develop specific creative capacities and leave university with a more sophisticated design sense” (Harriss, 2012a)

Many Live Projects offer the client or community a product or outcome that would not have otherwise been achieved. These projects are often unachievable due to limited funds or resources. Getting students to work under these constraints is vital given the economic climate. Students need to understand how to use their creative skills to engage with the difficulties and problems within society. The Oxford Academy project gave us an insight into working with a client from the 99%, and the importance of working in new ways. It also highlighted that a project does not always result in a building.

4.2 Recipe for Design
We then wrote a more suitable set of design outcomes that followed a ‘recipe’ for design. During our initial research I discovered a quote by the contractors on the Oxford Academy’s School’s website:

“We will be supporting the team in helping delivery of the curriculum through our time on site and hope that there are students who will want a career in construction after seeing what goes on during the new build.” (Martin Adie Mice, Operations Director, Willmott Dixon Construction LTD)

This inspired us to think about the schools role in the project rather than just our own. We soon realised the best way for the proposal to be successful was to involve the students and local community in the three small-scale projects. Our ideas soon developed from the idea of a ‘green gym’ and the trim
trail into a ‘learning trail’. Our idea was to produce a network of outdoor classrooms and social areas, which would link different areas of the school. The design and construction would be integrated into the school’s curriculum and students would have hands on involvement with the projects and would construct or design each element of the brief, during art or construction lessons.

Involving the students ‘cultivates ownership and, with it, a sense of belonging and responsibility’ (Hamdi, 2010).

We began to research for available materials. We contacted local businesses and projects, and had a really positive response considering the current economic climate. People wanted to get involved with the project, either by donating materials or creating links with the Academy. We created a stakeholder map to visually represent the networks that could be formed for each of the small projects. We also created a diagram that portrayed how the various groups of people involved could work together, and what roles they could undertake (See fig.6). This diagram was used to explain the process behind our idea and it became a key tool when presenting to the clients, and later to the school, regarding how the project could be realised and integrated into the schools curriculum.

We knew if the project was to be successfully developed in the future we had to engage with the local community. Although the Academy was successful in achieving a new building, the school has had to put many of their projects on hold due to the economic crisis and educational spending cuts. There has been a staggering 81% cut to the schools infrastructure budget (Drury, 2012). Future development and regeneration of the school would depend on its wider networks with local companies and businesses. We saw this project as an opportunity to start the process.

The section of the brief that caused us the greatest issue was the new façade system for the technology block. With no funding and materials, the design process was difficult and the end designs were not as successful as other areas of the project. We could not change the form of the building or envelope it due
- CLADDING OVER SOME AREAS OF FACADE
- DONATED TRESPA PANELS USED TO CREATE IMAGES. THESE IMAGES WILL REFLECT THE ACADEMY’S SPECIALIST SUBJECTS AND WILL BE DESIGNED BY THE PUPILS.
- OUTDOOR SEATING AREAS
- OUTDOOR EXHIBITION SPACES

Trespa panels can be laser cut to produce more interesting images. These can be used to clad the facade.
to the lack of materials. We therefore had to design something, cheap and easy to construct, making many of our initial designs redundant (See fig.7). We focused on the concept of student’s involvement and the schools identity. The constraints did inhibit our creativity but we were focused on achieving a feasible outcome. This limited our imagination to an extent and innovation was difficult to achieve in the short time (See fig.8).

Jane Farrow acted as our main client throughout the project. This communication allowed us to discuss our ideas and modify and develop them as she thought appropriate. This interaction helped us to achieve a deeper understanding of what the Academy and Council were hoping for. However, we did not have any communication with the school directly. The original brief given to us suggested that there would be opportunities for collaborative workshops with the students, but unfortunately this was not achievable in the time given. I felt this was the biggest weakness of the project. It would have been valuable to ascertain the student’s perspective, as the aim of the project was to integrate it into the schools curriculum.

Figure 8. Oxford Academy Final technology Block Façade Design (2010)
4.3 Presenting

At the end of the two weeks we presented our design proposals and design construction process to the clients, studio peers and tutors (see fig.9-11). Aiming to please our peer students, design tutors, and also the public, encouraged us and fuelled our motivation to produce something tangible. The most important aspect of our designs was the research and sourcing we compiled; showing how the brief influenced the design and the design influenced the brief (Jones, 2012). We wanted to make sure that this was represented clearly. Some of the design aspects were criticised for having little aesthetic appeal, but the most rigorously explored areas of the project were praised.

“No longer associated simply with objects and appearances, design is increasingly understood in a much wider sense as the human capacity to plan and produce desired outcomes.” (Mau, 2007)
Figure 10. Oxford Academy Learning Trail Design (2010)

Figure 11. Oxford Academy Entrance Design (2010)
We were acknowledged for the process we used. Instead of designing the end product we designed the process in which the students could be involved and an outcome could be achieved. It was suggested that we continued by presenting our ideas to the school, which meant we had to rethink our presentation to ensure our ideas would be understood. Further work was done in response to comments during the initial design review and after our own evaluation. Self-reflection allowed us to learn from what we had already completed and as a result take the project to the next stage. Diagrams were simplified and drawings annotated so that the process was clear and legible. We then had a series of meetings with the school staff, including the head teacher, the finance director, and the architects who were appointed for the new school building (see fig.12). They gave us further advice on what was able to be built, and gave us the go ahead to try and realise the learning trail part of the project. This was because of its connection with the nature area and the school’s future plans.

We are still in communication with the school, and the designs are being discussed with the finance director and extra-curriculum team. They will then take lead of the project once we have handed it over. The school run a number of construction classes for students who are likely to go into practical jobs. The learning trail was seen as a perfect opportunity for these students to develop their practical and building skills. However, the scheme has still not been shown to the students. This communication has remained limited and we have been left to our own devices until we present a project that is ready to go and can be integrated into the academy’s curriculum next year. The handover document will include construction and assembly details, as well as the tools and materials needed. Whether this project is successful in becoming realised will be dependent on the quality of this document. This is where skills learnt through our education: creativity, practicality and presentation, will be implemented.
4.4 Reflecting on the design process

I had no preconceived ideas of what the project would offer in terms of learning. This was partially due to not having a set of learning outcomes and marking criteria. Instead of following a list of guidelines and tick boxes, our work was based on communication with the client and our own formulation of the brief. When the studio-based project had finished, we communicated directly with the school. New problems arose that only became apparent to us outside the studio environment. This highlighted the importance of being able to accept changes and respond by acting professionally. This process of working is not often found within a traditional design studio, where the student more than often has control over their design decisions.

“If the ‘creative’ brief does not mention clients or users, students are typically expected to rely on secondary or circumstantial data to drive forward ‘user-responsive’ designs” (Harris, 2012)

Throughout the project, I wrote a project blog (see fig.13). This was a fantastic way to communicate our ideas and reflect. By referring back to our research and work we were able to re-evaluate our designs and proposals. This continued throughout the project, and continues today, by circulating the process of feedback, design and brief making (Fisher and Lofthouse, 2012). Reflection, to test and evaluate, is a key element of the live project process (Butterworth, 2012).
Figure 13. Oxford Academy Blog (2010)

Figure 14. Presentation to Oxford Brookes Student Community Fund (2011)
Over the last two years we have received funding from two Oxford Brookes award schemes, the Santander Student Fund and the Alumni Association, to realise the learning trail. By presenting our project to university donors, and through various university publications, we have created networks that we hope will create future links between Oxford Brookes University and the Academy community (see fig.14). The project gave us further opportunities. Charlie Fisher and I were asked to present a paper on the Oxford Academy at the Live Project International Pedagogy Symposium at Oxford Brookes University, and the paper has been selected for publication. The project was also in a Live Project booklet published by the Oxford School of Architecture in 2012. Resulting from this work I also had the opportunity to be involved in another Live Project set up by the university, the Ping Pong Pavilion (See chapter 6). The biggest lesson I have taken from this project is that the purpose of a Live Project is not the completion date, or product, but the ongoing ripples that the exercise creates (Fisher & Lofthouse, 2012). This project informed the type of work I continued to do throughout my postgraduate course, and influenced my choice of specialisation in my second year. Research, communication and collaboration became key themes that ran throughout my Part 2 work and guided my dissertation topic and career choice.

“Students are exposed to an exciting array of ways to understand and practice architecture and are encouraged to explore their own preoccupations and thereby to build on their own identities over time” (Gaskin, 2012)
Chapter 5: Tamil Nadu Field Trip

In the second year of postgraduate Part 2 studies we had the opportunity to choose a specialisation course. There were a range of subjects to choose from including Sustainability, Urban Design and Development and Emergency Practice. I chose the latter because I felt it offered me the opportunity to do a Masters class with students from various professions and to partake in practice based learning and community engagement. It was only when the course began that I understood the importance of this type of work within architecture, and the tools, relationships and skills that could be gained from this experience.

Architect, Nabeel Hamdi, founded the Development and Emergency Practice course in 1991. The course initially attracted predominately architecture students but has since grown into an extremely multidisciplinary course. “The programme today draws from its architectural heritage, reflected in creativity and innovation, a focus on practicality, and an approach that brings together wide-ranging backgrounds and interest to address problems and issues.” (see fig.15)

(http://architecture.brookes.ac.uk/research/cendep/dep.html n.d)
In January 2012, the cohort had the opportunity to travel to Tamil Nadu, in South India, to visit and work with a number of communities affected by the 2004 Asian Tsunami. Students from the USA’s University of Georgia and the NGO Resource Centre for Participatory Development Studies (RCPDS) joined us. The 10-day voluntary field trip enabled students to use methods of participatory engagement tools and take architectural training beyond the constraints of the institution, putting learning into practice (see fig.16).

“It is a common experience that you learn more about another specialisation through collaborating on a project than from a course of lectures.” (Buchanan, 2012b)

Figure 16. Using PRA tools in Gramathu Medu, India (2012)
Nagapattinam was the worst affected area in India, accounting for 76% of deaths within Tamil Nadu. Over 6000 people lost their lives and approximately 40,000 houses were destroyed (CENDEP and CED, 2012). During the field trip we visited four communities: fishing, farming, a widow and a gypsy traveller village. Each community had its unique problems, varying in importance and needs. As a result of the visits, we developed a greater understanding of the theory we had learnt in class. We compiled a report at the end of the trip.

“Live projects are about more than skill. They are about deep learning and embodied knowledge.”
(Jane Anderson, Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University, 2013)

5.1 Learning the tools

“Field Trips must engage locals and promote critical thought about relative ways of seeing.” (Fulcher, 2012)

During our first few days in India we spent time trying to understand the ethos of the villages and the problems caused in the local area by the Tsunami. We worked with two villages, the first Gramathu Medu, an agricultural village for two days, and the second, Vizuntha Muvadi, a fishing village for one day. We took part in a number of participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) workshops with members of the Resource Centre for participatory Development Studies (RCPDS), who had experience using these techniques. We were introduced to different tools and shown examples of the settings and circumstances in which these tools could be used. Many of us had not used these methods before and we had to decide what tools we considered would be suitable to gather the type of information we needed from the communities.

This type of learning differed from my previous learning experience. We focused our research on the response and recovery following the tsunami, the levels of vulnerability of each community, and the community priorities for the following 5 years. We explored environmental and climatic issues and
external factors, including the government and local NGOs, and their effect on recovery and development. We had to engage with a new set of tools, and new ways of communicating, whilst delivering a number of student led workshops in each of the villages (see fig.17-18). We had help from a number of local interpreters, which helped us with language barriers and to carry out many of the exercises we wanted. Most of these were visual; maps became tools for action and dream maps became a tool to get the younger members of the community involved and to tell us their aspirations and desires. Through application we soon learnt what tools were appropriate for each specific context.

“\"I was able to interact with the local community through a translator, asking often very difficult questions about their lives. This required a level of empathy, cultural sensitivity and tact.\"  (Thomas Smith, Part 2 Architecture Student, 2013)
The tools enabled us to visualise and understand how people, the environment and other factors relate to each other. The methods and tools we used, to present our findings to the villagers, aided understanding of our work by all parties (see fig 19). We were able to ascertain if the information we had collated was correct. On occasions information was misinterpreted or information collected from different groups did not triangulate. The community presentations gave us opportunity to initiate conversations between community members and to clarify and address any confusion.

It was vital for us to understand the cause and effects of the Tsunami to develop a list of recommendations for response and recovery in the area. Without understanding the bigger picture, such as the political structures within the village and district, or the impacts of continuing environmental changes, we would not have recognised the implications of social conditions on the environment and visa versa. This awareness was crucial for us, as students, to develop any long-term recovery solutions. These skills
are not only vital for dealing with environmental challenges, or working in disaster response, but also for working in the 21st century’s general architectural practice. Working with communities, particularly those facing a crisis, requires a place and people based approach to change (Burnell, 2012). A deep understanding of people, and their aspirations, beliefs and hopes, is required to develop a project that truly represents society (Burnell, 2012).

“An acute sensitivity and understanding of the causes and symptoms of climate change would seem to be a profoundly useful trait for a young architect graduate today.” (Hyde in Young, 2013, p.224)

The methods used to collect and present data gave us experience in consultation work and this became an inherent part of the architecture students’ final design projects. This enabled us to develop ways to clearly communicate our research and findings, and see how it resolved into a design outcome.

Figure 19. Presentation to Gramathu Medu, India (2012)
“PRA, I think that it is invaluable and the techniques and tools can be applied across so many disciplines.” (Sofia Davies, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)

It became clear to us that Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) methods could be used in other projects and disciplines and I have since seen these techniques used in practice. Fluid, the architecture practice I now work for, and Soundings, its sister consultation company, are both involved in public and stakeholder consultation and use their own set of unique tools for community engagement and participation in the UK (see fig.20). This form of practice is becoming more evident in the UK and the skills knowledge we acquired during the field trip has only helped us to become more relevant within the widening profession.

“If architects are to succeed in making themselves accessible to more than just the privileged few they need to simplify their language and incorporate other media for communication that more people can relate to.” (Heron in Scott, 2012)
5.2 Collaborating within a multidisciplinary team

During the Development and Emergency Practice course and field trip we worked as part of a multidisciplinary team. This differed to many of the architecture field trips I had previously been on, where we had worked predominately with architecture students. We studied with people from a number of different cultures and professions with varying expertise and skills. The ‘convergence of different types of knowledge’ made an enriching learning experience for me as an architecture student (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011).

“(I had an) awareness of other more noble professional roles at home and abroad” (Charles Fisher, Part 2 Architecture Student, 2013)

Interdisciplinary working opened our eyes to different methods and approaches to problem solving. It also drew our attention to the value of partnerships at all levels. Architecture should not be an independent profession and if it is to be relevant the role of the architect needs to be one within a much greater interdisciplinary team. Working with a group of people with a diverse branch of knowledge, was crucial to broaden our learning, collaborate and explore new methods of problem solving.

“Collaboration is a huge issue: everyone talks about it, everyone wants it, and everyone says it needs to be done, but its hugely difficult...and that goes back to education because departments are so separate”. (Breddels and Oosterman, 2013, p.251)

Education needs to focus less on the individual but on the student’s role in the construction industry and in the wider society. “The design team for the 21st century is increasingly becoming everyone” (Parvin, 2012). The specialisation courses, offered at Oxford Brookes University, integrates architecture students with other disciplines within the university, and the field trip further offers students the chance to work with other cultures and professions.
“These trips to India provide us with a first-hand experience of that vulnerability, as well as an amazing opportunity to learn from other graduate students in related disciplines from a country outside of our own.” (Stephanie Wolfgang, Landscape Architecture Student, 2012)

After presenting our findings to the communities, the cohort spent a number of days compiling a report focusing on the response and recovery of the victims of the Tsunami (see fig. 21). Through exchanges of knowledge and ideas, the report was completed. The report was a valuable way of compiling all of our research and highlighting the key areas of concern. The report was a compilation of all of our research; the lessons learnt and highlighted the community’s current concerns and the priorities currently and for their future (CENDEP and CED, 2012). We presented our findings to a number of local NGOs and Government Officials involved in the post-tsunami recovery. This was a valuable opportunity to work within a large team. This created the foundation for my studio design project, creating the basis of research for the project and design proposal.

“Students and faculty need to have this kind of ‘in-the-trenches’ work to make us better designers, planners, conservationists, teachers and learners. There is no better place to experience that than in the context of the world’s most populous and rapidly developing country: India.” (Pratt Cassidy, Lecturer at the University of Georgia, 2012)

Figure 21. Presentation to NGO’s and Government Officials in Nagapattinam, India (2012)
5.3 Research into Design

When we returned from India the architecture students were given their final design project. Presenting techniques and ideas, and our fieldwork research, were brought into the studio environment. We mapped out project ideas and ways to present the data we had collected. Several students focused on designing built structures whilst others rejected the building and focused on the processes in which communities could build their own solutions. All the designs responded to the site and community conditions or constraints.

“The addition of a building is not necessarily the best solution to a spatial program and that there are other ways of making a spatial difference.” (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011, p.31)

“I learnt critical appreciation of the role of the architect in the wider world, and the notion that architects are not always required to design built projects.” (Thomas Smith, Part 2 Architecture Student, 2013)

Using the PRA tools, I was able to obtain information and stories from the villagers that helped to determine the type of intervention I considered were needed to improve social, financial, human and political assets. From my research I was able to see that clean water was one of the most important needs for the villagers. I soon realised that designing a built structure was not an appropriate solution and a community driven project was needed. My designs and ideas quickly became integrated into a series of educational posters to illustrate small interventions that could be scaled up in the future. These would be used to help improve the community’s resilience to future shock and stresses, such as water shortages, natural disasters or disease (see fig.22-25).
Figure 22. Rainwater Harvesting, Gramathu Medu (2012)

Figure 23. 2nd Wave of Intervention (2012)
Although the project was completed within a traditional studio environment the initial research and background work had been done in context and was based on real interviews with real clients. This meant design decisions were justified and were based on physical, social and political context. Socially engaged design proposals were produced. Through the specialisation course we expanded our learning beyond the ‘traditional’ studio.

“I think that the field trip gave my design proposal a depth of knowledge and greater understanding of the issues with which I was trying to interact. The workshop was a form of live project however the design proposal was my own – it came out of a perceived need and although there was ‘real clients’ involved my proposal was developed in more of a ‘traditional design studio’ scenario.” (Sophie Morley, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)
“I would say the skills of interpreting what people say into something tangible (is key for students). Taking the needs of a community and proposing a product that will satisfy these needs. It might not be a physical product (building) and realizing this and seeking the best solution (by thinking laterally) is a skill that is not easily acquired in a traditional studio setting.” (Chris Livingston, Lecturer at Montana University, 2013)
Chapter 6: The Ping Pong Pavilion

Throughout my education I did not have many opportunities to work in unpredictable environments. This was due to the confinements of the studio environment and the lack of real project constraints. However, during the Ping Pong Pavilion Project at Oxford Brookes University I had gained firsthand experience in the realities of a short intense project, where I learnt to think quickly and deal with unforeseeable outcomes.

6.1 The Playful Pavilion

In early 2012, a group of Part 2 students and I were asked to work with Harriet Harriss, Senior Lecturer, on a collaborative Live Project between the Oxford School of Architecture and Montana State University, USA. We were to work on the competition brief and organise the logistics behind the project. After brainstorming a number of themes and ideas for the project brief it became clear this would be dependent on the funding we could obtain and the size and location of the site. The next few months were spent finding a suitable site for the pavilion, organising funding and workshop training for the Montana students upon their arrival. This proved difficult due to major building work across the university site and health and safety.

After months of negotiating, the budget and site were both secured. The design brief, written by Harriet Harriss, referenced the upcoming summer events: the 2012 Olympics and the ‘Playful City’ London Festival of Architecture. The competition was open to the School of Architecture at Oxford Brookes University and Montana State University (see fig.26). Entries were received from all years, including both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The two winning entries, (see fig.27-28), from third year Oxford Brookes students, were chosen due to their practicality and innovation, and were to be combined for the final built structure. This would become part of a collaborative design process in a number of design workshops during the first few days of the project.
INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL
2012 LIVE PROJECT: THE PLAYFUL PAVILION
CALL FOR COMPETITION ENTRIES
DEADLINE FOR DESIGNS - 10TH APRIL
BUILD 12TH - 26TH MAY

FOR FULL DETAILS, THE SITE, BRIEF AND MORE, SCAN THIS:

AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO’VE DECIDED YOU DON’T NEED A SMARTPHONE: groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/live-projects-summer-school

Figure 26. Playful Pavilion Competition Poster (2012)
The two-week Ping Pong Pavilion project took place in May 2012, in time to complete construction for the opening of the Architecture School Exhibition and End of Year Show. The pavilion also coincided with the Live Project International Pedagogy Symposium lead by Harriet Harris. The project consisted of 13 Oxford Brookes students, from final, undergraduate and postgraduate years, and 5 Montana students. Chris Livingston, a teacher from Montana University, and Andrea Placidi, a teacher from Oxford Brookes University, were also involved, along with Joel Chappell, the Oxford Brookes architecture workshop manager.
6.2 Collaboration & Construction

“Placing students from different discipline fields on the brief creates a space in which different knowledge bases can inter-play, where different types of skills and knowledge can be shared and exchanged, or where through such interplay, more options and solutions are generated, ‘stress tested’ and refined” (Harriss, 2010)

The first few days were spent getting to know the other students and working to combine the two winning designs (see fig. 29). It was immediately apparent that the group consisted of a number of very strong-minded students. Each student had their own ideas regarding how to tackle the project and how the design of the Ping Pong Pavilion should evolve. Different skill sets, conflicting ideas and design differences meant that conflict occurred at the initial design phase. Most of the Oxford Brookes third year students had previous experience working on small scale built projects during studio work at the university. They brought energy and creativity but were less concerned with budgets, health and safety and were not influenced by the realities of professional experience. The students became very protective of their winning designs, and initially compromise and collaboration proved to be difficult. The senior Oxford Brookes students took control of expenses, site issues and university logistics. The
Montana students had experience in construction and took the lead in much of the detailing. Initially conflicting views slowed the project down but soon became valuable. We engaged in conversations (see fig.30), which lead to the creation of original detailing and smart and quick design decisions that combined practicality with imagination.

“While the design studio offers time to think and contemplate, the live project requires action. This action can be a weakness if it is approached as just the need to respond. It can be strength, if the spontaneity of the moment or situation is harnessed to produce exciting results. An example of this would be in the Ping Pong pavilion design charrettes when the idea to use cargo straps to fasten the floor materials together was formulated. This was a pure magic moment, which not only solved a problem but also created a design solution for other aspects of the project including the roof. This is the power of action over contemplation.” (Chris Livingston, Lecturer at Montana University, 2013)

“Working with the Oxford-Brookes students was great,” Wotzak said. “Their course curriculum was very different than ours, so they had completely different ways of looking at the design and were able to bring new ideas and problem solving skills that we, the MSU team, weren’t necessarily thinking
about, and vice versa: We brought new ideas and a new mindset to their design.” (Schmidt, 2012)

“I think that our Live Project helped me to process internally and learn to sit back and relax and listen. There are many times when the best option is to sit back, take lots of mental notes, and react later.” (Morgan Andenas, Architecture Graduate, 2013)

We sourced a number of the building materials before the design workshops to ensure early delivery for the construction. Once further design decisions were made we could order further materials and fixings. The scaffold frame, wooden floor and wall panels needed to be sourced as quickly and cheaply as possible. The project had a budget of £3000. Due to the short time frame most of the materials were bought new, as there was not time to source high quality recycled materials. Health and safety was a concern throughout the project so we had to ensure all the materials and details were of a high standard. The pavilion was designed so no permanent fixings were used (see fig.31-32). This resulted in problems with floor levels and roof fixings. We did not want to compromise the ethos and flexibility behind the design, which made the project more challenging. During the construction when we visited the site we realised it was too small for the proposed structure. This huge error highlighted the importance of communication between all parties at every stage of the project. However, it became interesting as designs had to be adapted to fit the site (see fig.33-34).

Figure 31. Ping Pong Pavilion Floor Detail (2012).
Figure 32. Ping Pong Pavilion Roof Detail (2012)

Figure 33. Completed Ping Pong Pavilion, Oxford Brookes University (2012)
“(Live projects) can teach you to understand the process of selecting materials, the importance of forward planning and the effects delayed decisions and awaiting materials can have on a schedule.”
(Edward Sharland, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)

“I used to think that the architect was responsible for just the design, but after helping with the Ping Pong Pavilion, I now feel as though the architect is more than just a designer. An architect must be able to fully examine the construction of a project, and be able to explain the slightest details while also being able to construct the project as a whole.” (Zyg Wotzak, Architecture Student, 2013)
Although all students had an architecture background, a few of the Montana students started their careers in other professions and had a very different skill set to the Oxford Brookes students, having a greater knowledge of construction detailing and materials. As the group started to work together, individual’s strengths and skills became more apparent. At this stage the group began working more cohesively as a team, listening to one another and utilising each individual’s abilities in an efficient way. Throughout the construction phase, partly due to time constraints and a deadline, differences in opinion were put aside to reach the end goal. Ideas were tested and risks were taken. Improved working and social relationships were formed through support, peer respect and admiration. These newly formed relationships became one of the most rewarding aspects of the project. The collaborative design process gave the students an insight into interdisciplinary working and emphasised the importance of working within a design team. This is a crucial learning process considering the introduction of new technologies, such as Building Information Modelling (BIM), that require a more integrated design process.

“Trying to manage strong minds and opinions as well as three very different cultures of people was a huge challenge” (Gareth Leech, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)

“The knowledge of construction is a skill that cannot be totally mastered in an academic environment because typically there is no opportunity to make the drawings physical. We don’t build in the design studio, but in practice we see actual building. When an intern visits a project site, the drawings all of a sudden become real materials and complete the learning process.” (Chris Livingston, Tutor at Montana University, 2013)

6.3 Legacy

Live projects can often impart knowledge of costing, construction and an understanding of issues of temporality/legacy. (Jack Wates, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)
Throughout the two-week construction a number of us were involved in publicising the pavilion project. This included signing up for the London Festival of Architecture, contacting various architecture journals and organising the next site for the built pavilion. Christina Norton, from the architecture practice Fluid, visited the pavilion and offered us the opportunity to re-locate the pavilion to the site of their project, ‘Industrius’. Fluids’ ‘Industrius’, was designed to be a place where locally sourced waste materials could be transformed into high-end goods. Although most the materials used to construct the pavilion were not upcycled, the pavilion had been designed and built to be easily dismantled. Materials could be reused once the pavilion was no longer needed. The entire structure was detailed so that there were no fixed joints or screws but held in place by a number of fixings and straps that could easily be removed.

After the Architecture Exhibition finished, The Pavilion had to be dismantled and transported to its next location, Canning Town, London (see fig.35). The transportation process, disassembling and reassembling the pavilion, was a huge project in itself. We were able to build on the prior knowledge gained during the first stage of construction. The move sparked further discussions and practical thinking within the team, particularly when reassembling on the London site. We had to rethink construction details and were forced to adapt the pavilion to its new site and environment (see fig.36). Issues with ground levels and materials meant that we had to find ways to support the structure and fix it to the ground. Some technical failures became apparent after the structure had been on site for a couple of weeks. During periods of heavy rain, pools of water collected in the roofing fabric and due to the weight stretched the material down through the roof frame. It became clear we had not created a great enough pitch to allow water to run off during heavy rain.

“Live projects have every problem a large scale architectural project has, even if it has been constructed previously and is just being dis-assembles/re-assembled” (Chris Livingston, Tutor at Montana University, 2012)
Figure 35. Canning Town Map, Industri[us] (2012)

Figure 36. Construction of Pavilion at Industri[us], London (2012)
During The Pavilions time at Canning Town I was also involved in the publicity of the events that were being held at ‘Industrius’. This included facebook and twitter events, published articles in Bustler, Time Out, The Architects Journal, and advertising on the London Festival of Architecture website (see fig.37-38). This was valuable experience, and talking to outside parties regarding the project emphasised the importance of the process and the skills I have developed. Industri[us], the ‘Festival of Upcycling’, ran from March until August 2012, but unfortunately had to close down due to lack of visitors and site management costs. In November 2012 the site was handed over to Groundworks. The Ping Pong Pavilion materials are currently being stored on site until they are donated to a third party by Oxford Brookes University.

““Its all about putting theory into practice” (Jack Chazse, Part 1 Architecture Graduate, 2012)

All of the issues we faced throughout the project became an integral part of the learning process. The built outcome felt and functioned differently from what we first imagined and from the initial discussions and drawings. Without constructing the pavilion and testing it in its new environment and surroundings, we would not have been able to observe and understand how the structure worked. The students developed an ‘nascent interest in how materials and systems go together by immersing oneself in the complexities of construing [the mental] and constructing [the physical] on a small scale’ (Livingston, 2013. See appendix/questionnaire). Many architecture schools are now implementing BIM training into their curricula, but these skills will be redundant if students lack the construction knowledge to understand how a building is constructed. The majority of the students involved in the pavilion will no doubt, in the near future, have to use BIM software during their professional training. The Ping-Pong pavilion offered us a unique opportunity to build upon valuable construction skills, including detailing, assembly and materiality.
Playful Ping Pong Pavilion (Part of the London Festival of Architecture & Industri-us)

Where: London, UK, Silvertown Way, E16 1EA (map it)
When: Wednesday, July 4th, 2012 - Sunday, July 8th, 2012

As part of the London Festival of Architecture, a playful pavilion co-designed & built by Architecture students at Montana State University (USA) and Oxford Brookes University (UK) will feature as one of a series of installations at the Industri-us project at Canning Town ran by Fluid: [http://www.industri-us.org/](http://www.industri-us.org/)

The pavilion will be open to all from July 4th to July 8th and will include a ‘Ping Pong tournament on Saturday 7th July, 17:00 - 22:00.

All architects and/or those with very strong feelings towards architecture or ping pong should come along.

No (formal) qualifications or expertise (in architecture or ping pong) needed! 10 player round the world knock out rounds will begin from 17:00 onward.

Figure 37. Bustler Article (2012)

The Ping Pong Pavilion Tournament

4 July at 10:00 until 7 July at 22:00

Join us at the Fluid Office Industri-us festival for the Patriot’s Ping Pong event and the Architects Ping Pong Tournament.

The two events are to mark the installation of the PLAYFUL PING PAVILION, a collaborative project that explores ideas around public engagement in sport and offers everyone the chance to play ping pong – all at the same time! Built by students from Montana State and Oxford Brookes Universities.

EVENTS: @Industri-us, opposite Canning Town underground station, Silvertown Way, E16 1EA

- PATRIOTS PING PONG EVENT – Wednesday 4th July (All day)
- ARCHITECTS PING PONG TOURNAMENT (10 players-per-game knockout tournament) – Saturday 7th July (5-10pm)

Everyone welcome! No expertise in architecture or ping pong needed!

Visit our blog: http://playfulpavilion2012.blogspot.co.uk/

Figure 38. Pavilion Facebook Event (2012)
“As Building Information Modelling begins to be implemented the typical apprenticeship will have to change based on the drawing technologies requirement for construction knowledge. In the next decade, here in the US, the majority of interns out of architecture schools will be doing some sort of drawing in a BIM program. I think this is the economic reality.” (Chris Livingston, Lecturer at Montana State University, 2013)

The opportunity for The Pavilion to be part of a wider scale architectural project gave us an insight into the complications, hurdles and issues dealt with in everyday practice. For all concerned this was an opportunity to deal with real constraints, take initiative, and deal with unpredictable outcomes.

“With a Live Project it is all accelerated and in real time. You have to problem-solve in-situ, which I think is an extremely important skill to have in life!” (Morgan Andenas, Architecture Graduate, 2013)

Construction and building projects are often a token activity within schools of architecture. Knowing that the project would result in a built form created motivation and enthusiasm amongst the students. It was the first built project I had personally been involved in and the end result was extremely rewarding. The Pavilion Live Project has been included as part of my Professional Education and Development Record (PEDR). This would not have been possible using a traditional, ‘paper’ based project. Although the project was extra curricula it became an integral part of my final portfolio and professional CV. The Pavilion Project has since lead to further opportunities for the universities and students involved. A new partnership between Oxford Brookes and Montana University has formed. The project was the start of a new Live Project scheme led by Harriet Harriss. This year an international summer school is in the process of being organised and is looking to collaborate on a project overseas.
7. Conclusion

How have the Live Projects examined had an impact on preparing myself, and the other students involved, for working in practice and engaging with the issues impacting the architecture profession?

Evaluation of the success of these projects in achieving Caroline Butterworth’s objectives.

- critique the methodologies, frameworks and regulations of conventional practice and education
- understand the opportunities, challenges and consequences of participatory practice
- test and critique, with their external partners, design issues such as authorship, communication, representation, effectiveness and legacy
- act as different sorts of architects
- test new roles and relationships and understanding the consequences of this on their future architectural practice
- shape their future social practice (Butterworth, 2012)

Each case study only touched on the one or two of the demands discussed in chapter 2, environment, economy, politics and technology. The Live Projects described should be not be used in isolation to teach students the realities of practice. Each project has its own strengths and weaknesses. If the skills and tools gained from all three projects are considered, not as an alternative, but in conjunction with the experience and skills taught during a ‘traditional’ design project, then the values of integrating Live Projects into architecture schools curricula can be recognised.

“"The only way to show ‘liveliness’ is by making (drawing) and doing” (Till, 2012a)

7.1 Reflection

Each project ended with a process of reflection. The Oxford Academy required us to complete an evaluation form and the India Field Trip resulted in a design project whereby we had to reflect on the information we had gathered and also the tools we used to ascertain the information. The short
span of many Live Projects make them difficult to assess therefore they cannot be critiqued like a traditional studio project (Morrow, 2012). As a result, reflection can be an effective way to evaluate the significance of such projects, and for students to recognise and communicate their learning processes (Cottrell and Watt, 2006).

“Experience exists as a memory to be processed by reflection.” (Cottrell and Watt, 2006)

Writing of this dissertation has been an important process to measure the value of each project I participated in. It has been a way to understand the consequences and opportunities of participatory practice and to be critical about the ways in which I have worked. The dissertation has been an opportunity for self-assessment. The focus has not been on the design outcomes but on the interpersonal processes that we went through, assessing the way in which we worked as a team, presenting to different audiences, and our abilities to negotiate and develop a design (Nicol and Pilling, 2012).

The Oxford Academy enabled me to critique the Live Project, in comparison to a traditional design studio, and subsequently helped me to inform the type of learning I chose for my second year of diploma studies. Since writing the dissertation I have been able to critique the methodologies, frameworks and regulations of conventional practice and education by turning reflection of learning into reflection on practice (Morrow, 2012). This has enabled me to contemplate the contribution of each project on my professional development. I hope my experiences, and this dissertation, will offer students a valuable experience-based resource to draw on (Care, Chiles and Petrescu, 2011).

7.2 Participatory Practice

During the Live Projects we worked with students, lecturers and organisations from Oxford Brookes University and from external institutions. Each new partnership brought a new set of skills and expertise. For each project to be successful in achieving its goals, good communication was key to efficient and effective working relationships.
The Playful Pavilion Project relied heavily on the communication between each group member to engage with the construction and detailing process. The Oxford Academy was dependent on group dynamics and liaising effectively with our clients. The success of the community workshops in India was determined by how we worked as a team to select and use the appropriate tools to engage with community members. In each project there were occasions when conflict arose. Challenges of difference in opinion, self-assertiveness and applying compromise were all part of the learning process.

Networks were built during each project and continuing relationships with internal and external individuals were established. The connectivity to other disciplines through participatory practice, and collaborative learning has enhanced my individual learning process. Working within teams of varying skills and expertise is necessary to deal with complex issues and for building future relationships and partnerships in practice. Students need to understand their role as part of the construction industry and the wider society and collaboration and participation in education is one way to achieve this.

7.3 Working with external partners

During each case study we worked with external partners, outside of the university setting. These included clients, local and international communities, local businesses, the media and architectural practices. Communication with all parties was crucial to test and critique design issues such as communication, representation, effectiveness and legacy.

Communicating and representing ideas and information was a critical process in each Live Project. Good communication was imperative during the Oxford Academy to obtain the information we needed and to clearly understand what was required from our client. During the Oxford Academy Project, and India Field Trip, we had to tailor our presentations to a diversity of people, and overcome language barriers. We had to be innovative in finding ways to present the information and research we had collected. It was essential for us to engage and involve members of each community to gain more information and encourage community discussion. By working with other disciplines we had the opportunity to learn
from their expertise and as a result communicate more effectively with the clients and community groups.

These skills were also used when publicising the Ping Pong Pavilion project. The legacy of the project was important to all those involved so promoting the Industrius events effectively, and collaborating with Fluids team, was key in bringing users to the pavilion at Canning Town. Legacy has also been a key concept of the Oxford Academy Project. We hope to realize the learning trail section of the brief to start the process of a long-term development. The success of the initial project will have an impact on any future built projects within the school curriculum.

In my experience, working on authentic projects, with real clients, motivates students to achieve successful outcomes. For each project we had a personal responsibility to be effective in our approach to thinking and explaining. Testing these all of these design issues encouraged us to ‘conceptualise, reinterpret and redesign’ the architectural process (Colomina, 2012).

7.4 New ways of working

Each project offered a unique working environment that differed to any educational experiences I had previously encountered. The constraints of the studio environment had been removed and as students we were able to work more freely. We engaged and participated in working beyond our comfort zone and used our creative skills in new ways.

“Studying architecture does not make you an architect”(Gane, 2011)

During the Oxford Academy project we concentrated on the process of design, rather than on the end product, working as the facilitator or enabler for Oxford City Council and the school. During the student led workshops, we carried out in India, we worked as researchers and communicators; listening, questioning and understanding the context of the issues we were addressing. My roles during
the Playful Pavilion project were coordinator, communicator and team player. During the three projects students were able to be experimental and take risks, providing they worked with with the constraints of each project. This gave us the opportunity to test new roles and relationships, and enabled us to learn through action. We were able to interact with new information and experiences (Nicol and Pilling, 2012). The diversity of projects, and their settings, highlighted the various roles that could be utilized in architectural practice, other than the traditional designer and maker. These projects have made me more aware of the professions responsibilities and I have developed an understanding of the consequences of architecture and its significance over the object (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011).

“I think that the acquired skill that is most important (for student, for practice) is related to people issues; how to collaborate, how to negotiate, how to listen and respond to people’s needs.” (Chris Livingston, Lecturer at Montana University, 2013)

Testing out new roles has shown the importance of educating students for a wider discipline, where there will be ‘looser definitions and more slippery modes of practice’ (RIBA, 2011b, p.29). There are alternative ‘ways of thinking and behaving that are relevant and applicable in a multitude of design contexts’ (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011, p.34). Exposing students to Live Projects, like the ones I have experienced, and broadening the skill set of graduates, will help to form a more relevant profession that reconnects with society. However, this will only be achieved if attitudes are changed within the profession and the role of the architect is rethought and transformed.

“We need new assumptions to guide the way we think, do and organise and unlock a greater new kind of resourcefulness with which to tackle some of the big issues more strategically”. (Hamdi, 2011a)

7.5 Future social practice

I have developed and built on my skills and knowledge as a result of the diverse projects and studios I experienced throughout my Diploma at Oxford Brookes University. It has been the combination of
teaching approaches and learning experience that have brought me to where I am today and direct the type of architect I aspire to be. Since the first Live Project, I have questioned the nature of my Part 1 education and architectural education in general. The projects empowered me to choose my own path of study throughout my Diploma and in turn have control and responsibility over my learning, which will contribute towards my professional career and develop my professional competencies.

“Architecture’s context in the wider world needs to be reinforced to students at key stages so they can continually reconsider their trajectory.`` (Fulcher, 2012)

This empowerment to act, and shape my architectural future, has lead to further opportunities since graduating. I am now working for an architectural practice that stemmed from a Live Project run by one of the company directors from a London university. Community consultation work with students inspired the directors to start a practice that focused on ways to engage with communities and create socially centered architecture. My diploma education has inspired me to challenge architectural traditions and engage with a new and relevant profession.

I think that both ‘live’ and ‘paper’ projects are essential to provide the skills required for architects to thrive in our current climate (Jack Wates, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)

I think there is a place for the ‘traditional design studio’ to develop a style and creative practice outside of real life constraints but it should also be complimented by live projects. (Sophie Morley, Part 2 Architecture Graduate, 2013)
In conclusion the three projects set in motion new ways of thinking and learning and gave the students the opportunity to develop a new skill set. However, each project centred on a particular theme, whether construction, development or creativity, and presented only a limited scope of learning. Due to the constraints and realities of a Live Project, creativity can be inhibited. Therefore the use of the Traditional Design Studio can still promote innovation, originality and individuality, all of which are important traits of an aspiring architect. In combination, the Traditional Studio Project and the Live Project can develop a much broader set of skills, competencies and relationships in a student.

For each student learning is different. It is what the student does with that learning that defines the type of professional they become. It is the responsibility of RIBA and architectural schools to offer a diverse range of courses to enable students to choose their own route through education and in turn develop their own interests. None of these projects should be used to reshape architectural education alone. A combination of both field based work and studio projects should be used expand architectural education and hopefully as a result benefit the architectural profession.
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Appendix 1. Ethics Form

SCHOOL OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

FORM E1BE RESEARCH ETHICS FOR STUDENTS ON TAUGHT COURSES
Please read the Guidance overleaf

Section A - You and your research project

What is your name?  
NATASHA LATHOUS

What is your student number?  
12063004

What is your email address?  
natasha.lathouse@gmail.com

What is your supervisor’s name?  
NABEEEL YASNOI / David Smedley

What is your supervisor’s email address?  
nabees.romdile@gmail.com

In which Department are you studying?  
Architecture
Planning
REC

What course are you taking?  
Architecture

What is the topic area of your research?  
ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

On what kinds of topics will you be collecting data from the participants in the research?
- LINE PROJECTS
- ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Section B - Your participants

What kind of participants will be involved in your research?
✓ Professional/management group
✓ Members of the general public
✓ Vulnerable individuals

Briefly describe these participants
TEACHERS + STUDENTS (ARCHITECTURE)

How many participants will be involved?  
Number of people

How will the participants be selected?  
STUDENTS + PROFESSIONALS IN LINE PROJECTS

Section C - Your data collection methods

How will you be collecting data from the participants?
✓ By in-depth interviews
✓ By face-to-face surveys
✓ By telephone
✓ By email
✓ By post
Other, please specify

What kind of data will you be collecting?
✓ Quantitative/statistical/numerical
✓ Qualitative/written/text
✓ Images/drawings/maps

Will it be possible to avoid asking for personal data from the participants?
✓ Yes  
No

Will it be possible to ensure the participants are not being deceived in any way?
✓ Yes  
No

Will it be possible to ensure the participants remain completely anonymous?
✓ Yes  
No

Will it be possible to ensure the participants do not suffer any negative consequences?
✓ Yes  
No

Section D – Declaration

I declare that I will

- give all participants an information sheet conforming to university guidelines
- not contact any participant until my supervisor has approved my information sheet, research questions and methodology
- be sufficiently well-trained in necessary methods of data collection and analysis

Student signature  
Date

Supervisor’s signature  
Date

Research Ethics Officer signature  
Date

Fieldwork may commence when the form has been approved, signed and returned via the Supervisor. If a Form E2 is required, the student and the supervisor will be notified by email.
Lynne Mitchell, School Research Ethics Officer, 01865 484296, lmitchell@brookes.ac.uk

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Appendix 2. Teacher and Student Questionnaires
1. How do you think the architecture profession and the demands placed on architects are changing?
I can’t really comment as I don’t practice much anymore, but I think with the new requirements of BIM etc. the practice of architecture in the corporate world is changing more than ever.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes, how, if no why not?
Not sure really, depends on which bit of the profession you are talking about. I think that architectural education is based on a ‘problem based learning’ methodology and each student decides how much they want to learn during their education. So I had two students last year who taught themselves Archicad/Revit during their 2nd year, so they will be equipped to work in a practice that is changing to BIM. But I think architectural education is supposed to be about teaching students to think creatively, and if that is the case then I think the universities are doing a pretty good job. If students realise it’s not about creative form making but creative thinking then I think they are pretty well equipped to work in the profession and learn on the job the boring stuff about detailing, reflected ceiling plan layouts, planning etc. etc. Imagine learning to do a bathroom layout in your 2nd year… would you have carried on – that’s a hard question because perhaps if that was the training you got then maybe you would have dropped out and done something else? But that’s called training and not education.

That said however, I do feel that there should be a bit more in the course on ethics, the financial side of developing a project, urban design and how the planning system actually works.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A real client with a real brief. Working with other team members and professionals collaboratively to solve the project problems…so a real project.

4. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working in practice?
Thinking creatively, never thinking you know all the answers, being able to ask relevant questions, how to approach a design project, how to analyse context, how to respond in a sustainable way (economic, social and environmentally), being professional in the way you deal with consultants and other people, good at communicating your ideas and approach to the design.

5. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working with communities?
participatory design tools, really listening, being creative, working collaboratively.

6. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer your students the opportunity to gain or build upon these skills?
If yes, how, if no why not?
We don’t really do live projects anymore as they have limited student’s creativity in the past and can be really disempowering for undergraduate students who find the real world issues completely overwhelming...and their marks suffer! But we do have a real context and expect the students to have a very mature and thoroughly well researched hypothesis on which to develop their design proposals. See unitd2011.wordpress.com and unitd2012.wordpress.com.

7. What other skills do you think students gain during a ‘live project’?
depends on the live project. If it’s a building project then technical skills, collaborative skills, really listening and being creative. If it’s a participatory design project then no technical skills.....

8. What learning outcomes do you think a live project covers?
Don’t know.

9. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
problem based learning very effective in a studio type design context, great place to learn from your peers if you participate in tutorials, customised problem solving one on one relationship with your tutor. Space too small at Brookes for storage and learning through leaving work up and accessible, too short time in the year, too many students.
10. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?

engage with local community and work to solve problems and help within the context of the university having a larger reach

At Cape Town University where my partner studied, they had live projects in their 5th year, but most of these projects related to the university’s own community engagement charity which included other students and teachers being involved in the projects in the long run. This worked well within that context.

Weaknesses at undergraduate level include inhibiting creativity, lack of skills and knowledge potentially being harmful to the output of the project depending on the tutors’ ability to manage expectations of the client, hard to manage expectations of the client.

11. Do you think live project should replace the traditional design studio?

No, but I think the model for part ii at Sheffield (and UCT as noted above) is a very good one – but not for undergrad...students know very little at undergrad – there is just too much to do and learn in 3 years without also adding in live project studios

12. What do you believe your role, as a tutor, to be during a ‘Live Project’?

enabler and facilitator – when we did live projects and the work I do at ASF

13. How many of your ideas are you allowed to implement into your design studios?

It’s really up to us to do anything we like so long as we meet the marking criteria at the end of the year.

14. Do you feel governed by bureaucracy? – Who stops you from doing what you want within your teaching studios?

.RIBA marking criteria.

15. What different kind of architect are you trying to nurture through your teaching?

The unit ethos challenges students’ perceptions of the traditional role of the architect and develops their skills as designers, innovators, instigators, agitators, collaborators and most importantly builds on their ability to lead the ‘ethical’ profession within the civil economy of the future.

But this is not through live projects....
1. How do you think the architecture profession and the demands placed on architects are changing?
I am not a practicing professional (ie in architecture practice though I do practice design) so I can’t judge this from the inside - I can only measure the level of decision making where I see architects present in society. It’s pretty low down the food chain and late in the process. They no longer lead just do as they are told really. Sad position for such bright, informed multi-skilled, hardworking and ethically equipped individuals

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes, how, if no why not?
no - and if it must be at a pace I can’t detect

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
doing something beyond the normal academic control mechanisms. - outside of tutor-student relationship

4. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working in practice?
ability to ask good questions, be brave enough to not care about asking dumb questions, brave enough to act, ability to negotiate, be respectful of others and use their visual communication skills and conceptual language skills to clarify the context, issues, process for all involved. Ability to read power structures and manipulate to the benefit of people’s socio-spatial requirements

5. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working with communities?
strong conceptual thinking is critical- the only thing designers have to offer communities is good design skills (don’t have to result in buildings of course) so strong conceptual thinking is crucial - beyond that an open sensitive, unbiased, professional stance with a large dollup of humanity and ability to help people work through the existing power structures to achieve what they need.

6. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer your students the opportunity to gain or build upon these skills?
If yes, how, if no why not?
Yes - but mostly only afterwards when we reflect on them and imbed that learning - surface learning is a danger in most live projects

7. What other skills do you think students gain during a ‘live project’?
bravery, confidence and active engagement - at least that’s my hope but as with all pedagogy in holistic environments its difficult to untangle what is actually learnt / gained

8. What learning outcomes do you think a live project covers?
strengths:
Camaraderie
being in a network of learners
a place to work in abstraction is always necessary - bringing real life stuff back into abstract context is very useful learning space

weaknesses:
Extreme work culture favours young and single
Power relationships to tutors not helpful

9. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
problem based learning very effective in a studio type design context, great place to learn from your peers if S breaks open power structures
All involved gain something different - so can be non competitive
Outreach is good for any university

W
not understood by existing culture can cause friction
Need to be resourced differently
10. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
S
breaks open power structures
All involved gain something different - so can be non competitive
Outreach is good for any university

W
not understood by existing culture can cause friction
Need to be resourced differently

11. Do you think live project should replace the traditional design studio?
NO- need both

12. What do you believe your role, as a tutor, to be during a ‘Live Project’?
facilitate and remind them to be brave when the situation is a tough one
hope them to see the value / learning in what they have done

13. How many of your ideas are you allowed to implement into your design studios?
- as many as I want?

14. Do you feel governed by bureaucracy? – Who stops you from doing what you want within your teaching studios?
lack of resources
I am a designer with creative skills and can read most systems - bureaucracy is just another context I have to deal with - it exists so I either work within it or get around it

15. What different kind of architect are you trying to nurture through your teaching?
Not certain what an architect is, neither now nor in the future so its up to the students to find the one they will be
- so helping them to define their interests and their praxis is crucial for the next 30-40 years of their professional lives - Just generally encouraging whilst showing them how to develop critical skills
1. How do you think the architecture profession and the demands placed on architects are changing?
More global working, more competition for work as well as for tasks previously within the role of the architect, more consultation and participation in working practices, advanced sustainability and IT knowledge imperative, value of design under threat.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes, how, if no why not?
Education is changing but too slowly. An awareness of all of the above is generally present but answers have not been found to all of the issues identified in question 1 above.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
“A live project comprises the negotiation of a brief, timescale, budget and product between a client and an educational institution.” See link for reference: http://liveprojectsnetwork.org/?page_id=7
This definition was coined by myself and Colin Priest in our paper presented at the Live Projects Pedagogy International Symposium at Brookes in 2012. The paper is titled: “Developing a Live Projects Network and Flexible Methodology for Live Projects”. Please credit us if you use this definition.

4. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working in practice?
Skill in design (including planning, building regs, health and safety and cost) and related core subjects (technology, representation including IT, cultural context, practice).
Personal skills: creativity, motivation, leadership, team working, time management and critical judgement.
Entrepreneurial skills including marketing, promotion and business (including sources of funding); legislation,

5. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working with communities?
Creativity, motivation, leadership, team working, critical judgement, personal responsibility

6. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer your students the opportunity to gain or build upon these skills?
If yes, how, if no why not?
Yes. Do you mean the skills listed in Q4 or 5? Live Projects offer opportunities to build upon all of the skills in Q4 and 5. Not every live project can offer the opportunity to learn all of these skills. No live project can guarantee the opportunity to learn all of these skills. Some live projects will give the opportunity to gain some of these skills that were initially unanticipated.

7. What other skills do you think students gain during a ‘live project’?
Apart from the skills listed in Q4 and 5 above, each live project is unique and may offer the opportunity to learn additional skills, just as projects in practice vary in the demands that they make of their designers.

8. What learning outcomes do you think you a live project covers?
The tutor designs the live project to cover certain learning outcomes as required. The students will learn more than the learning outcomes but the skill of the tutor is to negotiate the live project brief with the client to ensure that the required learning outcomes can be met. Please reference: Anderson, Priest, “Developing a Live Projects Network and Flexible Methodology for Live Projects” (forthcoming)

9. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
The requirement to suspend disbelief can leave tutors in control of what is actually real, creating a power imbalance between tutor and student. Live projects help to remove this. Please reference: Anderson, Priest, “The Live Education of an Architect: John Hejduk and Oxford Brookes Year One Live Projects”. JEBE (forthcoming)

Difficult to maintain currency and connection with the world outside.
Difficult to practice some key personal skills and apply certain areas of knowledge.

10. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a’ Live Project?
Strengths: motivation, relevance, richness of opportunity
Weaknesses: risks of damage to learning experience (students and clients) associated with poor management by tutors. Students and staff seem to find it harder to be critical of their performance in a live project compared to a studio project.
11. Do you think live project should replace the traditional design studio?
No

12. What do you believe your role, as a tutor, to be during a ‘Live Project’?

13. How many of your ideas are you allowed to implement into your design studios?
All

14. Do you feel governed by bureaucracy? – Who stops you from doing what you want within your teaching studios?
Time and resources are restricted as they would be in any situation.

15. What different kind of architect are you trying to nurture through your teaching?
Strong designer, engaged, knowledgeable about the status quo and sufficiently bold to change it.

16. Any other comments?
Live projects are about more than skill. They are about deep learning and embodied knowledge.
1. How do you think the architecture profession and the demands placed on architects are changing?
Even in the good times, it takes a long time for most architects to achieve significant success in our profession (vis: the AJ “Forty Under Forty” list; the “Young Architect of the Year” award to entrants under 40, etc). The current “Great Recession” has been under way since before I graduated from Part II, leading me to an alternative career instead of the traditional full time architectural practice and professional accreditation I expected. The demands on architects haven’t changed much, we still face the same pressures to deliver on ever smaller budgets, frequently working for clients who will not use the end product. The difference is our youngest generation of architects (professionally qualified or not) are having to think and act outside the box to keep a toe hold in the discipline.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes, how, if no why not?
No. Although there is tremendous innovation in teaching and research in the institutions themselves, every course in the country is beholden to the RIBA Validation criteria. Despite a significant and worthy attempt to rewrite these over the last few years, the revised documentation is simultaneously too vague and too constraining to be of any use. We should look to America, for instance, where there is a much greater diversity of approaches to architectural education. Students should be able to choose between schools that are genuinely different. At the moment, all schools are too obsessed with being able to demonstrate they meet the RIBA/ARB joint criteria.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A live project is an assessed component of a Higher Education (degree level) course that engages students with a real project and a real client, for whom the students produce something of value that could not realistically be procured through the typical commercially driven client-architect relationship. Architecture live projects may include the construction of a built outcome, but it is not a requirements. Live project clients should not be commissioning work that they could afford to procure from an architect, and they must be active and engaged participants throughout the project. Live project curators must brief clients to understand that they may not receive anything useful from a live project.

4. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working in practice?
Communication, project management and financial/business management. That is not to say, however, that these skills must be taught as part of an undergraduate or taught postgraduate course in architecture. The right of the university to educate rather than train must be protected.

5. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working with communities?
Again, communication and project management.

6. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer your students the opportunity to gain or build upon these skills?
If yes, how, if no why not?
Yes. Live projects offer students a unique opportunity to develop their communication skills with people who are not members of either the architectural or academic communities. Provided live project clients are adequately briefed and prepared for the process, they too can learn more about what architects and co-professionals can deliver.

7. What other skills do you think students gain during a ‘live project’?
If the process is both carefully prepared and managed, either by students or tutors, students can develop collaborative working skills, listening skills, communication skills and empathy. However none of these are a given. Learning does not happen automatically, and time and space must be provided for students, clients and educators to critically reflect upon the successes, failures and learning outcomes of a live project. Live projects must never be scheduled at the very end of term or without adequate time to critique them afterwards.

8. What learning outcomes do you think a live project covers?
See above. Learning outcomes are defined by the educational institution and the course leader, so it’s not really possible to comment.
9. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?

The “traditional design studio” is an ambiguous term. I understand the term in several different ways: the physical space in a school; the teaching periods in a weekly calendar; and multiple pedagogical techniques that take place therein. My answers respond to all three.

No two students experience the studio in the same way. What is, for one person, the ideal working environment, can be an intimidating and seriously damaging environment for another. While feminist critics have already identified the inherent male bias in many design studios, it should also be noted that anyone (although specifically ethnic minorities, LGBT students, women, etc) can be intimidated by the hot house atmosphere of the studio.

As a positive, however, and especially in contrast to a live project, a healthy, well resourced and well supported (with staff and students) design studio environment can provide students with an excellent environment in which to work individually or collaboratively. In a traditional studio project (with no client, budget or other constraints) there is tremendous opportunity for a student to let their imagination run wild. The best inspiration or ideas can come when given the freedom to work outside the actual constraints of a real project.

10. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a Live Project?

Strengths:
- the Live Project can activate and engender a wider political awareness and engagement
- students can learn how to understand and critique architectural cultures (see Garry Stevens book The Favored Circle) by communicating and negotiating with people outside the academy and the profession
- students can learn to negotiate between different (academic and non-academic, for instance) value systems. For instance, a project may be praised by architectural academics and practitioners for its design, but panned by a community for failing to respond to their needs.

Weaknesses
- reality can be too much... real life can get you down, and the constraints of a real project can stunt imagination and creativity
- a badly managed live project can burn bridges between an academic institution and an external community. Live projects are not an opportunity to reduce teaching input; they definitely require more effort to get right.

11. Do you think live project should replace the traditional design studio?

No. They should work in tandem.

12. What do you believe your role, as a tutor, to be during a ‘Live Project’?

I aspire to be a facilitator, rather than a tutor. My teaching practice has been particularly influenced by the writings of Critical Pedagogy (Paulo Freire, but more importantly his disciples – Henry A. Giroux, Peter McLaren, Joan Wink – and his critics – Diana Coben’s (1998) Radical Heroes : Gramsci, Freire and the politics of adult education really helped me to move forward from blindly believing that all critical pedagogy must be inherently good. Greg Crysler’s 1995 article in the Journal of Architectural Education - 48(4), pp. pp. 208-217 – is important too.

Crucially, I believe that Critical Pedagogy helps us overcome the dichotomous teacher-student relationship of most pedagogical theory. Critical Pedagogy treats us all as individuals with our own unique knowledges: we enter into a learning situation together and we can both learn. In a live project, tutor, student and client all enter into a learning process in which no one actor has superior knowledge or experience.

13. How many of your ideas are you allowed to implement into your design studios?

I am an early career academic (Lecturer, on probation) so I do not have the authority to write course materials. However I have significant liberty ‘on the ground’ to interpret course materials and teach in ways I choose.

[ This question is highly dependent on the situations of your individual respondents – I’m not sure it can be accurately answered or compared. ]
14. Do you feel governed by bureaucracy? – Who stops you from doing what you want within your teaching studios?
Yes, but in my extensive experience of talking to architectural educators, EVERYONE is governed by bureaucracy!

We are primarily limited by our teaching budget, and this is an area of consistent negative change in all sectors of Higher Education. I do not believe we are unique in that respect. We have to do more with less, and as a creative discipline we have to justify and defend our very high resource requirements (large studios) compared to other disciplines. That said, it is completely unreasonable to expect every student to receive 30-60 minutes of one-to-one tuition in this day and age. We are struggling as a discipline to get over this because it was the norm for so long. Not only is it highly irregular in the university, it is not pedagogically beneficial. Small group tuition (for instance, four students all engaged in a conversation around a table with their sketchbooks open for sixty minutes) is, in my opinion, better than four fifteen minute individual tutorials.

15. What different kind of architect are you trying to nurture through your teaching?
In a word, critical. Critical pedagogy is the most influential field of theory for me, because ultimately I want to educate students to be independent and critical thinkers, as well as politically active and engaged members of society.
1. How do you think the architecture profession and the demands placed on architects are changing?
Creative schools in general – and schools of architecture & spatial design programs in particular – confront enormous challenges and disruptions from market forces, pervasive technologies and government policy shifts. There’s never been a better time to be thoughtfully innovative and take the initiative. The opportunities for calculated boldness and impact are excellent. We need to be enthusiastic and optimistic about how ‘professional’ education can add enormous value to students and encourage research that advances the industry and society both.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
Some schools are better than others. There is a lack of differentiation among architecture schools due to a curriculum driven emphasis on producing graduates ready for practice as usual and not practice of and for the future.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
Rachel Sara (2004) owns the territory on this – check out her PhD thesis.

4. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working in practice?
If the Egan and Latham reports are anything to go by, architects are poor team players and worse client collaborators. In the face of global recession, all sectors should be focussed upon innovation and entrepreneurship and this includes architects.

5. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working with communities?
Same as question 04. In terms of entrepreneurship – this translates into social innovation – it’s not always about imposing solutions but about inventing ways to leverage inherent value and cultural assets within a community.

6. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer your students the opportunity to gain or build upon these skills?
Yes, because all the skills in question four are actively required within a live project.

7. What other skills do you think students gain during a ‘live project’?
An enormous list…. (sometimes its helps if you ask the interviewee to name three):
- professionalism
- problem-solving
- risk management

8. What learning outcomes do you think a live project covers?
Graduate attributes include civic responsibility/global citizenship.

9. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Weakness: Emphasis on individual performance, undemocratic: teacher as ‘expert’, lack of scope for authentic prototyping.
Strength: Creative/abstract/conceptual exploration and development.

10. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a’ Live Project?
Strengths see Q4.
Weaknesses: conflict with academic timetable, lack of theoretical framework, lack of curriculum support from RIBA.

11. Do you think live project should replace the traditional design studio?
No.

12. What do you believe your role, as a tutor, to be during a ‘Live Project’?
Enabler

15. What different kind of architect are you trying to nurture through your teaching?
One that will lead whichever profession they end up in.
1. How do you think the architecture profession and the demands placed on architects are changing?

I see the most significant changes occurring in the areas of technology related to the documentation and construction process. (maybe because I teach building construction courses in addition to design studios) Whatever we might think about Building Information Modeling (BIM) it is here to stay, especially in the US. More and more of our MSU advisory council to the school are stressing this as one component that they look for in a graduate. One of the most interesting things I have read in a while was an article on the website AECbytes discussing the challenges for the profession with the advent of BIM (I am attaching it here)

“Another big challenge for HOK, as it is for other AEC firms as well, is hiring and tracking talent, particularly in the area of BIM. Even though BIM has now been around for a few years, it is still difficult finding people that are good with BIM. And while fresh graduates are certainly more computer savvy and quick to pick up new technologies, BIM represents a new professional challenge. In the past, fresh graduates typically spent their first few years drafting, and in the process slowly learning how a building is put together. But with BIM, they need to know how to put a building together before they can use it properly, so there is really no extended period of apprenticeship and learning as there used to be in the past. Thus, while architectural schools might be extending their curriculum to cover BIM, this might not really solve the talent problem for the AEC industry in the near term.”


As Building Information Modelling begins to be implemented the typical apprenticeship will have to change based on the drawing technologies requirement for construction knowledge. In the next decade here in the US the majority of interns out of architecture schools will be doing some sort of drawing in a BIM program. I think this is the economic reality. Interns are typically drawing more and more construction documents because it is the most cost effective way to run an organization (or so they think). This may not be the case but it certainly is happening.

I don’t agree with all of these changes because it places unrealistic expectations on the university. Does the profession want designers that can creatively better the built environment or do they want technically proficient computer operators because I don’t think it is currently possible to do both.

I also think that the role of the architect is being changed by social change. Architects are no longer seen with the same kind of reverence that they might have been a half century ago. Today the built environment is directed and created by myriad forces that inform the end product. The architect will naturally have to change; we can no longer believe that the building (exceptional form or not) is the answer. We need to become more participatory, better negotiators, financial managers, facilitators, and collaborators if we think we have a future because people will naturally go find a team to work with, and if we are not careful, that may not include an architect. There are a lot of creative people in the world, a lot of people that can ensure the health safety welfare of the public (engineers come to mind) and a lot of people that can get buildings built. If architects don’t adapt, this type of strategy will eliminate our participation.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?

If yes, how, if no why not?

In general I would say no. While I hear about programs having specific courses related to BIM this is not backed up with the proper amount of construction courses. The profession thinks that we should educate students to be productive workers and academia see education as teaching students to think, to form critical opinions about design and the built environment and to have an impact on design into the future. I stand on the side of the later but the debates will inevitably continue in the future.

In the area of architects becoming more attune with social change I think that education is too hermetic. Students are generally taught to that they have to work on their own, develop their own ideas and believe that collaboration dilutes their special vision. All of these ideas are unsustainable as we move into the future and if architecture is to survive as a profession we have to work in a different, more progressive manner.

There are not enough architectural programs that discuss these ideas. Studios are generally still taught in the same manner as 50 years ago and professional practice courses generally focus on traditional issues. Profession
al practice courses are also not appreciated by students and therefore, even if the content was more progressive, they will still be ineffectual. The broader development of architects is what we should be concerned with if we want to remain relevant as a profession. This is backed up by many articles published over the past year, namely the Architectural Review theme issue on architectural education that came out this past September. I do see more programs creating design/build or ‘Live Project’ curricula but in general this is not as widespread as it should be. Live project programs could help the profession in many ways; educating students in areas of social need, client relations, team building/collaboration to name a few as well as construction knowledge (construction knowledge as far as developing an nascent interest in how materials and systems go together by immersing oneself in the complexities of construing [the mental] and constructing [the physical] on a small scale).

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
I would define a live project as any project that investigates an issue or set of issues with an actual client and results in a ‘physical’ product of some sort. This is an ambiguous answer so I will explain. The design studio typically contains a brief which will include an array of information and while the client may or may not be real, the goals of the studio are more to explore the conceptual possibilities of what the project could be. In this way it probably doesn’t matter if the client is real or not. In contrast I believe that live projects typically have a real client and a need that must be met. How this need is met I believe is also important. I think that the ‘product’ of a live project should be a ‘physical’ product; ranging from a structure of some sort to a strategy that when put to use, or enacted, produces ‘effects’. I don’t think it is enough to create a product that might be used or might be built. I believe that for a project to be a live project it must be executed in the world so it’s efficacy can be tested and determined. Paper architecture is not enough.

4. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working in practice?
Practice teaches students how to become an architect. In a practice of architecture the overall business practices of acquiring work, marketing, contracts, client negotiations are revealed along with design, construction technology, drawing practices, and the realities of actual building. I think that the acquired skill that is most important is related to people issues; how to collaborate, how to negotiate, how to listen and respond to people’s needs. Additionally, the knowledge of construction is a skill that cannot be totally mastered in an academic environment because typically there is no opportunity to make the drawings physical. We don’t build in the design studio, but in practice we see actual building. When an intern visits a project site, the drawings all of a sudden become real materials and complete the learning process.

5. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working with communities?
I think the most important skill is listening; really listening. Listening and understand what your community wants and not what you can impose upon them. Additionally I would say the skills of interpreting what people say into something tangible. Taking the needs of a community and proposing a product that will satisfy these needs. It might not be a physical product (building) and realizing this and seeking the best solution (by thinking laterally) is a skill that is not easily acquired in a traditional studio setting.

6. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer your students the opportunity to gain or build upon these skills?
If yes, how, if no why not?
Yes. Live projects allow students access to real clients and allow them to practice their listening skills. We had a project a few years ago here at MSU (the design of the wash station for the community supported agriculture program) where the students didn’t really listen to the client when it came to the materials on the project. The students wanted all metal mesh and the client wanted wood. When the students decided to not respond to the client and started laying the project out on the site the client, sensing that the students were not listening to him, fired all of the students and temporarily suspended the project. Quite a blow for the students. They asked me what to do and I responded by asking them if they still wanted to work on the project. I told them if they did they were going to have to listen to the client and respond with some new solutions that included a creative use of wood and not metal mesh. The students then met with the client, listened to his concerns and responded with some new solutions and the project came back on line.
This is the type of situation that will naturally occur on projects of this sort and it is invaluable, I believe, to a student’s education.

7. What other skills do you think students gain during a ‘live project’?
While confidence is not a skill, I think they gain confidence due to the face to face dealings with communities, individuals and other professionals they will work with on the project. Maybe this skill is called people skills or organizational skills or thinking outside the box skills. Whatever it is called there is an empowerment that comes from these types of projects that is transformative.
8. What learning outcomes do you think a live project covers?
The learning outcomes are difficult to assess. I think communication skills is one outcome; design thinking skills would be another. Communication skills are vital to the success/failure of any live project. How well you communicate is implicit in collaboration, listening and responding in a meaningful manner. Design thinking skills relates to thinking laterally or thinking outside the box. Being nimble or pliable, able to respond to situations, these are all valuable learning outcomes.

9. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
The strengths of the design studio is the available time and freedom that allow students to think, acquire and digest material and then make evaluations on this material, transforming these ideas into design solutions. Time is the greatest attribute of the studio environment because it takes time to sort things out. Additionally, the conceptual nature of the studio is also good for developing ideas when the realities of the world are held at bay for a short period of time. A final strength is the opportunity to fail; the opportunity to not get it right without the ramifications of the real world. I like to think the studio is a bubble or safe zone where students can explore, create and have spectacular failures with limited damage.

10. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a’ Live Project?
I think that I covered the strengths pretty well in questions #7, 8. I think that the weaknesses of a live project is the lack of available time which is opposite from the design studio. While the design studio offers time to think and contemplate, the live project requires action. This action can be a weakness if it is approached as just the need to respond. It can be a strength if the spontaneity of the moment or situation is harnessed to produce exciting results. An example of this would be in the Ping Pong pavilion design charrettes when the idea to use cargo straps to fasten the floor materials together was formulated. This was a pure magic moment which not only solved a problem but also created a design solution for other aspects of the project including the roof. This is the power of action over contemplation.

11. Do you think live project should replace the traditional design studio?
No. I think they both have their place and actually work well when combined together. I think that the combination of live projects and studio projects gives a well-rounded education in design.

12. What do you believe your role, as a tutor, to be during a ‘Live Project’?
I see my role as a facilitator. Typically the students engaged in a live project are there because they have limited experience in this setting. They have limited construction knowledge or experience. As a facilitator I guide the project, mentor students on how to work with clients, suggest possible tactics of collaboration & coordination. In actual construction I like to get involved in the construction and lead by example allowing students to become comfortable with construction through working together. In general I believe that it is important to be actively involved in the projects because a safety net is important. While some may feel that throwing students into the deep end of the pool is best, I find that this creates an undue stress and can be counterproductive. I also just like to be involved.

13. How many of your ideas are you allowed to implement into your design studios?
Typically all of them. When I am given a studio assignment I first look at the criteria established by the NAAB (see #14 below). This will tell me the learning outcomes for each studio (for last semester’s third year studio it was accessibility, life safety and use of precedents). If it is a studio in the undergraduate curriculum I will then consult with the other faculty teaching in that year and we will determine the type of project we would like to offer. Typically the program is the same but the direction of the instructor will vary from faculty to faculty. In the graduate program all of the studios are individual and I have full responsibility for the content of the studio. I can choose the project type, direction, field trip location (if a field trip is included) and how I would like to focus the readings, process, etc. So we are somewhat structured in the undergraduate years but the program opens up in the graduate years to allow for complete control by each faculty.

14. Do you feel governed by bureaucracy? – Who stops you from doing what you want within your teaching studios?
At our University there are guidelines for all studios and support courses. These come from two places; our accrediting body, NAAB, and by the faculty. NAAB, the national architectural accrediting board establishes the learning outcome criteria for architecture schools and this is dispersed throughout the curriculum. While the criteria establish areas of focus for each class it is up to the faculty to determine how those criteria will be met. As long as you are meeting the criteria you can teach as you wish. It is the same with the faculty. As a group of third year faculty for instance, we will decide the types of project the students will engage in during the semester but it is up to each faculty to decide the structure of the class, the methodology, etc. In this way there is a structure but every faculty is free to interpret how they would like to run their studio. You can do what you want within
15. What different kind of architect are you trying to nurture through your teaching?
In my teaching I am interested in students developing skills that allow them to think on their own. I want them to leave here with a feel for thinking laterally across many different fields and disciplines. In my own work I find myself looking at sociology, the sciences and other fields that interest me. I believe that my students should be intellectually curious and think about the forces that impact the profession so they can act accordingly. Again the word to describe this would be nimble.

16. Any other comments?
I am a big fan of live projects for a variety of reasons. Primarily I like live projects that require a final project that is a physical construction. I know there are other ways to look at live projects but for me it is about building something, learning about tools, methods of construction, how to work with others and how to trust the work of others. I like projects that have a short fuse or timeline where invention is the name of the game and a fast and furious pace takes over. These projects take on a life of their own and force a collaborative environment due to the time constraints. They are wonderfully creative and incredibly satisfying. But that is just me.
Teaching Questionnaire
CHARLES PARRACK – Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University

1. How do you think the architecture profession and the demands placed on architects are changing?
   ...I have no direct experience of this ........................................

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
   If yes, how, if no why not?
   ...not applicable..................................................

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
   .......in education, a project which has a real client outside the educational establishment...

4. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working in practice?
   ...details, project management, community consultation..........................

5. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working with communities?
   ......listening, ability to step outside your own prejudices, PRA tools..........................

6. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer your students the opportunity to gain or build upon these skills?
   If yes, how, if no why not?
   ......yes, many live projects entail community consultation..........................

7. What other skills do you think students gain during a ‘live project’?
   ......realisation of what effects architecture has on people and communities..........................

8. What learning outcomes do you think a live project covers?
   ...same as key skills in q5........................................

9. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
   strength is problem based learning, highest form of learning, weakness is lazy, complacent, uneducated tutors

10. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
    strengths: learning about people and communities
           Learning about how architecture affects people and communities
           Learning pra tools
    Weaknesses: possible lack of design freedom
               Possible lack of experimentation
               Danger of unrealistic expectations on both sides..........................

11. Do you think live project should replace the traditional design studio?
    ......no........................................

12. What do you believe your role, as a tutor, to be during a ‘Live Project’?
    ...negotiation of correct learning outcomes for students, negotiation of realistic outcomes for client, managing
    expectations ........................................

13. How many of your ideas are you allowed to implement into your design studios?
    ......full freedom within certain minor constraints..........................

14. Do you feel governed by bureaucracy? – Who stops you from doing what you want within your teaching
    studios?
    ......not governed by bureaucracy, I find there is always a way round any obstacles as long as I can demonstrate
    relevance to architecture..........................

15. What different kind of architect are you trying to nurture through your teaching?
    ......one who knows about people and communities..........................

16. Any other comments?
    ......why are architects so bad at talking to people?......................
1. How do you think the architecture profession and the demands placed on architects are changing?
Very broadly, the profession remains inward looking (only have to look at the architecture journals) and predominately elitist with an expectation that an architect deliver all forms of spatial production to be relevant / successful: frustratingly a Jack-of-all-trades, master of none millstone. Meanwhile, the world outside is increasingly collaborative, dynamic, open and supportive to plural conversations, diverse economic forces and the inherent value of specificity, and generally unaware of this millstone and what added value an architect can really bring to the table.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes, how, if no why not?
It is dependent upon individual academic context and teaching approach.
Yes, through the application of various types of ‘Live Project’ scenarios, enabling real world focus and humble action.
No, through repetitious and celebrated paper-based tutor-led dogma and instruction.
Off course there are variations between.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
“A live project comprises the negotiation of a brief, timescale, budget and product between a client and an educational institution.” JA / CP

4. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working in practice?
Relevant tools for communication (talking, drawing, acting) to ultimately be a creative individual in society

5. What key skills do you think are most important for students to learn for working with communities?
How do they wish their voices to be heard within that community, if at all?

6. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer your students the opportunity to gain or build upon these skills?
If yes, how, if no why not?
Sometimes, depends upon the context of the ‘Live Project’ construct and individual motivation / value / ownership of the project in hand.

7. What other skills do you think students gain during a ‘live project’?
Making skills, friendships, work-place connections

8. What learning outcomes do you think a live project covers?
?? Dependent upon course curriculum and the nature of assessment.
Architecture school has RIBA/ARB, but not all space maker courses are accountable to these criteria, thankfully.

9. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
What is a traditional design studio? Is there such a thing?
This is both its strength and weakness.

10. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a’ Live Project?
In the context of a predominantly paper-led education system, real world opportunities are a bonus. The weakness, the marrying of schedules, the academic timeline is shorter than the real world, making opportunities for reciprocal and productive crossover rare and lengthy to coordinate.
This is rarely communicated to involved parties and leads to frustration, re-learning from enthusiastic academics/students who take up the baton – a cycle that will only change when assessment criteria is reviewed / removed.

11. Do you think live project should replace the traditional design studio?
NO... this suggests that this is the only way an architecture school can function, to go ‘live’ – this would imply yet another singular dogma. For an inclusive and open higher education system to remain relevant, there needs to be a state of flux and respect for individuality and focus. Imagine how dull the world would be if everyone did exactly the same thing...

Students and Teachers alike are not machines; we are all inconsistent, fickle, passionate and unreliable — we are human. The term Criteria disables this notion.
12. What do you believe your role, as a tutor, to be during a ‘Live Project’?
A supportive voice with a perspective

13. How many of your ideas are you allowed to implement into your design studios?
?? Do not understand the question.
All and None?

14. Do you feel governed by bureaucracy? – Who stops you from doing what you want within your teaching studios?
Stop is an odd word – adapt, adjust, contextualise, respond...
A natural consequence of contemporary being...

15. What different kind of architect are you trying to nurture through your teaching?
Perhaps an architect that questions the status quo, finding his or her own position and voice within a diverse discipline. Suggesting that life is perhaps too short to sacrifice personal happiness for the life-long burden of a professional title that might not deliver, when maybe taking a risk above and beyond the norm could be far more rewarding.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education? If yes, what changes?
I really didn’t pay much attention to architecture before I went to school. I'd say how I look at the profession has changed over the years. I think there is an emphasis on realistic graphics & clients wanting a higher level of deliverables for a lower cost. In the US we have a phrase: Champaign tastes on a beer budget.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes? If yes how, if no why not?
I think a lot of public education needs to happen. Everyone knows what doctors or lawyers do, but no one knows what architects do. Sometimes I don’t know what architects do! I think client management is a huge deal, but I don’t know if that is something you can teach in school. But, I think it’s becoming more important in the age of Do It Yourself when everyone thinks they can do our job.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
Design in action! A lot of times when you design you don’t have the immediate effects of your design. If you do a detail wrong with traditional drawings you might not find out until 15 years down the road. But, with a Live Project it is all accelerated and in real time. You have to problem solve in-situ, which I think is an extremely important skill to have in life!

4. Do you think 'live projects' offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities? If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
I really enjoyed my experience! I probably learned more in 2 weeks than I have learned in entire classes. I think that our Live Project helped me to process internally and learn to sit back and relax and listen. There are many times when the best option is to sit back, take lots of mental notes, and react later. There are always meetings where the best option is to nod & smile!

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
Being thrown into a group of new people who have different backgrounds than you is always difficult. But, there are always solutions & there is always common ground. Working with others is a key life skill!

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
In design studio most people have a similar background and are going through the same classes. So, this was definitely different!

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths: structure & direction, a support group, challenging exercises
Weaknesses: too structured, you don’t see the consequences of your designs, have to be a building

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
Strengths: Problem solving, you see the consequences of your design, Exciting!
Weaknesses: Tension, can be too short, limited to what can physically be built

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio? If yes, why? Not a replacement of; in addition to. I think you need both.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable? If yes, how, if no, why not? It was definitely a resume booster and gave me a real project to talk about. Most of my co-workers don’t have this type of experience coming off graduation.

12. Any other comments? I so enjoyed my time and it was one of the best things I have done thus far!
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
If yes, what changes?
While in school, I saw the role of the architect quickly find ways to adapt to survive during a recession. This pushed the architect to fight to keep their duties relevant and involved. My schoolwork, on the other hand, taught me the importance of the architect’s role and if you compare academic and professional experience, it is simple to see the architect’s struggle to keep its power in the life of a project.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes how, if no why not?
No, I have not experienced or seen an adequate change in the architectural education process reflecting the professional environment. Though there are a few classes that take on growing interests in adaptive reuse (like the TAP Gallery Project – Detroit, MI which was designed and built by a graduate studio), most classes do not prepare the student for the nature of the professional environment.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A project whose timeline is progressing steadily towards completion. These are not often the case for architectural academic studio projects.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
Yes, live projects will teach you the skills to mediate a number of tasks simultaneously. Project management skills that involve budget, and client correspondence as well as design development skills are worked on and hopefully improved upon.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
My live project experience lies purely in my professional experience, where I have learned about each of the design phases from schematic design up through construction documentation. Most of my experience has been gained within the studio; I have less experience in project management and on-site construction management/work.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Academically, n/a.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths: strong creative voice;; exercising a more ‘open canvas’ in problem solving (no budget restraints);; allows for a wide number of solutions that vary in their realistic nature. Weaknesses: no budgeting issues, no client correspondence, often yields unrealistic solutions to the relevant programs

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
S: real problem solving for real issues;; project management skills worked on;; research into minute details of a project that often make a live project shine.
W: often the project involves many more components than a traditional design studio and the timeline is not necessarily elongated to accommodate those with little experience;; working towards a concrete goal with a larger group of students can be troublesome;;

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
I think that both academic environments are important, however traditional studios may need to become a foundational studio for a live projects environment. This way, you get to experience two extremes in the architectural learning environment.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
n/a
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
   If yes, what changes?
   I haven’t noticed personally, as during my time in education I am detached from life in day to day practice, although the downturn in jobs and projects was evident to see through social media, journals and news articles. It was more a matter of being informed on the role of the architect shifting towards social entrepreneurship, rather than sensing this for myself. However this argument is only one of many that speculates on the role of the architect today.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
   If yes how, if no why not?
   Yes, in terms of my own architectural education, live project participation and cross disciplinary collaborations (MBA collab) were made available to me, which I chose to undertake. It allowed me to address real-life issues introducing real clients and briefs into the curriculum, and required practical design and social responses. It was definitely an educative experience, and gave insight into the architect as a social agent. It’s a great thing that such methods of learning are now accessible for those who wish undertake it, however I don’t think it should be mandatory. This obviously varies on a school to school basis, as candidates will appraise courses based on their own needs.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
   A project with a defined client, with an initial brief that requires a problem to be solved in real-time with or without a built solution, ideally with frequent discussion between all parties involved (architect, users, client, etc).

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
   If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
   I do believe that skills gained through live projects often act as a primer to working with communities and to an extent, in practice. This is especially true of developing consultation skills with client/community.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
   Skills in communication, consultation and tact! Dealing sensitively with the end user group. Remembering the fact that you are not designing for yourself, hence tone down levels of wanton subversion.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
   Yes very different, you do not have much room to be madly ‘experimental’ with somebody else’s time, brief, and user group. It required a very much sensitive, responsive and pragmatic design approach. This however, could be attributed perhaps to the specific brief I had, as opposed to live projects in general. But, because I wanted to have this experience, I chose the project that I did (probation centre). On the other hand, as students we are paying for an educational service, and I see the actions of students who do not want to go near a ‘live project’ and instead push their creativity in a ‘traditional’ design studio as being totally valid also.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
   strengths: pushing conceptual thinking, open to exploration and experimentaiton, freedom to voice one’s own design/social/political convictions.
   weaknesses: isolation, often lacking in having the option to connect with the professional world

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
   strength: groupwork, communication & consultation, compromise
   weakness: unflexible, indecision (but this could be a strength as it teaches you how to solve it)

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
   If yes, why?
   No. Not replace.. just offered as an alternative, preferably alongside.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
    If yes, how, if no, why not?
    No. I thought it would, but during interviews, not one mentioned the live projects even though there was a page dedicated to live projects on my CV., there was more interest in my work experience in practice.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?  
If yes, what changes?  
I think there have been slight changes within niche markets in order to diversify their business so that they can compete with other professionals, such as becoming consultants, or enablers. I think there is a lean toward more socially responsible architects however I would say the traditional role of the architect has been difficult to move away from as it is still seen in the mainstream profession.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?  
If yes how, if no why not?  
I think to a certain degree they are responding as you see individual units more engaged with the social responsibilities however the education of architecture remains thoroughly in the theoretical rather than practical and there is a huge gap between the expectations of future employers and what tutors are teaching in the schools.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?  
I would define a live project as an opportunity to create a scheme (whether architecture or otherwise, or whether physical or like a program) whereby you are able to put theory into practice and learn from a process of carrying out realities involved in projects which involve a monitoring and evaluating system in order to learn from the process.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?  
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?  
Absolutely, the reality of these projects better equip you for the skills needed. Although you will never learn from one project alone it does enable you to understand the principles or basics of a project to lay a foundation in your knowledge for preparing you for practice. It also gives you skills in communication when working with the community or developing skills in approaching communities and developing their brief and interpreting their wishes. I think talking to students may also encourage communities to feel less intimidated as they may do with professionals and therefore lean to heavily on their expertise but instead there is a mutual understanding and respect in sharing knowledge and developing trust.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?  
Communication is key. Maintaining an open mind. Different technical knowledge and construction techniques. Endurance!

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?  
Yes because in a design studio the tendency to design alone means that there is not the sort of compromise that occurs in a live project. Therefore the diplomacy, understanding and communication channels are vital. In a design studio this is often only concentrated on during group work projects which often only last a couple/few months and what is designed is usually based very much in the theoretical.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?  
Strengths:  
The creativity aspect. Learning from your peers.  
Weaknesses:  
The way in which projects often bear no relation to how a project runs or is designed in practice. ie no concept of plan of works or planning permission or building control. Technology is often an afterthought. Social responsibility is lacking in terms of engaging with local communities.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?  
Strengths:  
Learning the practicalities of physically building. Learning the practicalities of administration and what has to occur aside from building and designing in order for a project to be successful. The very real nature of a project rather than fantasy.  
Weaknesses:
Engagement, involvement and commitment can be patchy from participants. Funding has to be sourced. They are often more extractive for the students rather than enabling others to benefit; ie students do the project get what they need out of it and then often don’t think about it again or about the longer term issues such as evolvement, sustainability/longevity or maintenance.

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
Not quite - I think they should run alongside design studios as another module ie as part of Practice, Management and Law - you could apply the principles learnt here into reality as a case study whilst continuing to learn communication channels, administration, engagement of communities, building skills, technical skills etc.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
Yes I think it shows an initiative and intuition to engage with real life practical projects. Also shows experience in involvement in a project and therefore understanding the process - this can then be transferred to understanding the project process in practice.

11. (Part 1 students) Would you like to see ‘live projects’ as part of your Part 2 course? Would this influence your decision in choosing a particular school?
If yes, why, if no, why not?
I am a part 2 student but I just wanted to say I would have heavily influenced my decision in choosing a school.

The following questions are aimed at DEP Specialisation students only:

13. What three key skills have you learnt/gained that you don’t think you would have if the specialisation course had not been integrated with students from other disciplines?
1. Monitoring and Evaluating - how much this is key in any kind of project.
2. Communication - the effects that can have on various communities
3. Ability to work with other professionals from other industries (which is reflective of the construction process of practice whereby you have to engage with other consultants)
4. Have to mention PRA as I think that is invaluable and the techniques and tools can be applied across so many disciplines.

14. How did the DEP field trip influence your final design project and the process in which you came up with a proposal?
Made me realise that buildings are not necessarily the solution as some that had been built after the tsunami were not suitable neither physically or culturally therefore I didn’t design a building. I designed a process in which to enable a community to become more resilient and be able to build skills.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
   If yes, what changes?
   Yes, and for two reasons. Firstly, the role of complex information modelling has jumped ahead in large and medium sized firms to the point that the uninitiated are letting the computer programs set the design limitations. This is not a new phenomenon, as seen in multiple ‘SketchUp’d’ schools, hospitals and supermarkets, but it seems to have become a more acceptable form of creative lapse. Secondly, the marketing aims of architects has been altering with the advent of new forms of social media. Architect’s, on the whole, self-recognised as being terrible at anything outside of the remit of their educations and this includes business skills. It has become a lot easier to promote and run a business and architects can finally use their creative skills on platforms that reward them; facebook, LinkedIn, wordpress, tumblr, twitter just to name a few.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
   If yes how, if no why not?
   No. The BIM side of things is still taught like playing ‘The Sims’ with students not being pushed to design components and use the free modelling side of the parametric tools to create what their mind and pencil desire. Architects draw representations of buildings in BIM, engineers draw the actual buildings as built – this is the major shift in thinking that needs to occur. We are not taught marketing in any useful way, I have had one project and a two hour lecture on branding in my seven years at university.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
   Hate the term. At the moment I think it’s architecture students making small simple temporary structures from timber, metal and recycled material. I rarely think they push the students to consider complexity at the expense of time and they seem to be physical rather than real-world case study.

   A live project should include students experiencing a real, and importantly useful project, in motion and contribute to all aspects of the program at the same time as logging work-experience credits within university time to shorten the route to becoming an architect. It doesn’t need to be a pre-fab-clip-in-façade-mega-block-come-supermarket but it should involve managing a team, creatively utilising the skills of contractors and overcoming problems.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
   If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
   They don’t offer the skills to work in practice because practice is disconnected from the creative aims of universities – it’s largely paper pushing. I do, however, think they have the ability to teach community interaction skills however I question how necessary these skills are to be taught as a primary skillset in university. Most students will have had 18 or so years working out how to deal with other people before coming to university, it shouldn’t be that hard to build upon. Creativity and innovation are the hard skills.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
   Effective communication with stakeholders. Learning to use jargon such as ‘stakeholders’. Working effectively within a team and managing leadership roles. Aspects of raising the necessary funding.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
   We were assisted by rather than relying on university staff. This relationship change saw the tutor acting more as technical consultant rather than design critic.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
   Strengths: Push design creativity, a space to think hard on one thing, individual/selfish
   Weaknesses: Fictional, not multi-disciplinary enough and individual/selfish

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
   Strengths: Push technical creativity, develop construction skills (if applicable), often team-based
   Weaknesses: Lacking complexity, not multi-disciplinary enough and often made for photographing rather than having a life-span

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**Student Questionnaire**

**CHARLES FISHER—Part 2 Architecture Student, UK**
9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
No, there is a place for both to exist and also to combine dependant on the situation. Theory is hard to develop on the ground.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
Yes but only because it makes me different to other students. I have all the normal university crap plus a few real things. They wouldn’t make me more employable for my construction skills.

The following questions are aimed at DEP Specialisation students only:

13. What three key skills have you learnt/gained that you don’t think you would have if the specialisation course had not been integrated with students from other disciplines?
1. Appreciate whole group-projects not made of architecture students
2. Awareness of other more noble professional roles at home and abroad
3. Developing an understanding of global politics.

14. How did the DEP field trip influence your final design project and the process in which you came up with a proposal?
It hasn’t. I won’t want a job in Palestine so any work I do there will be for myself not to prove my abilities to European employers. Therefore I won’t be integrating this into my design project. It may enter work at a later date.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
If yes, what changes?
The traditional contract is becoming less used. More Design and Build contracts. There are a lot more consultants taking on the role of the traditional architect.

Social architectural thinking is re-emerging with architectural theoretical thinking even in practice, only the other day we had the yearly practice meeting and this was mentioned, their projects reflect this thinking.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes how, if no why not?
Yes and No. In post grad you learn a lot about social architecture, but this is down to your choice of unit. And a definite no as architectural education has continued to be isolated from the profession, focus just on the elements of design and image and not on what makes a professional architect, like coordinating the construction team. We are unlike other professions, where we go to uni and don’t actually learn how to be a practicing professional.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A real project dealing with real clients.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
Yes. You gain real life experience, dealing with real clients, understanding their needs and creating a design that reflects their needs. This differs from the typical uni project that is very isolated and only really cares for the end image. It is not just about good photoshopping skills.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
Collaborating with other architectural students, working as a team to produce a design and listening to the needs and views of a mixed bag community group / client group.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Yes as we dictated the flow of the work and what needed to be produced, and how to coordinate our conversations/ meetings with the clients.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
- Creativity - strength
- Weakness – working in isolation
- Learn a range of skills – drawings, computer programs, theoretical thinking, articulation.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
- Working with a real client and sometimes to a budget.
- Weakness – if working in a team, sometimes one persons work ethic could lack and not pull their weight, but they will still be marked the same as the rest of the team
- Working to time constraints, you have a deadline to meet.

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
No. I believe Live projects should be integrated into the traditional studio as an individual project. Students should still work solely on projects to gain the mix bag of skills they need.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
Yes. I was recently employed, and during my interview they were very interested in the live project I was a part of. It showed a key skill in that I could deal with real life clients and project their needs into the design. As well as this it showed I could work in a team.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?

If yes, what changes?

I wouldn’t say that the role of the architect has changed in my architectural education. One element that has changed is the type of work the architect gets involved with, new clients with individual needs have appeared, who uses the architects abilities and skills to help develop a specific project. This doesn’t necessarily have to mean a built solution; it may result in feasibility studies of ideas, changes made to a system to allow something to work better, art installations or temporary structures.

The role of the architect is essentially the same, someone who helps someone else work to create the right design solution for them. What may have changed, in specific circles of architecture, is the attitude of the architect. It may not be the chief designer/leader or the ‘god-like’ figure any more; they are another person within the team working to create a final product. It is about removing the egotistical stereotype and show the architect as a key part within the chain of the building process.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?

If yes how, if no why not?

I don’t think that architectural education has changed. It is still essentially churning out students with many skills, without focusing them into any of the lines of work. A student can use a myriad of software, understand a basic technical amount and know roughly how to design space. What they don’t really know is how to use all their skills in a realistic and communicable way. Current architectural education is producing self absorbed and self focus members that very quickly after leaving school need to adopt a more cooperative position within a team of people.

What is missing in current architectural education is the ability a student needs to have, which allows them to work within a structure of people, with real clients and within regulations. In the past the ‘office experience’ elements at the end of part 1 and part 2 give the student an insight of the real architectural realm. However it is dangerous to not make it implicit in architectural education that at the end of the day, you are not going to design whole buildings by yourself with endless pots of money. There has to be a crossover of practical experience and self development.

The ability to work with other people is key, with the ability to communicate to those outside the architectural world being paramount in the development from a student into an architect. Current architectural education does not even show a student that this is crucial in the progression to an architect; it should be something that is implicit in education, with experience being given, especially at part 2.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?

A live project is one which has a real client with real needs, who allow architectural students to work together with the client/end-user to help come up with a solution or design. It may involve physical construction, design ideas through group discussions or activity sessions, but fundamentally allows the architectural student to actively be involved in the creation of a real project.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?

If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?

From my experience of ‘live projects’ it is not necessarily about providing skills for working in practice or with communities. I think the idea of a live project allows a student to be more physical and work within a group reaching a common goal. So perhaps it does prepare an architectural student for practice, as essentially you are expected to work within a team to create an end goal.

Architectural education currently runs rather ‘individually’ from a student perspective. All of the tasks focus the student to create for themselves, use their own ideas and ego to come up with a solution. Involvement of group decision making and solution solving is rather lacking, possibly an outdated element in the world of architecture. Architectural Education is rather out of touch from the real architectural world. Its goals seem flawed from focusing on creating good architects, but focusing on creating good designers. Once out of the realm of education the architectural world is vastly different, it is based on groups in practices making decisions and performing tasks, not one sole person to cover everything. In this sense Live Projects allow for a more ‘real world’ view into architecture than current architectural education.
5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
Communication was and is the most important element in architecture. It’s not all about the pretty renders; it’s about getting your idea across to people outside the architectural realm, real people, people who at the end of the day are those who will spend the majority of the time within and looking at the project. Live Projects allowed students from the rather egotistical, self focused world of architectural education, to step into the position of the architect, and work with real clients to communicate their ideas and understand other viewpoints, to reach a balanced and common goal.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Yes, working in the studio is a bubble. We are only ever producing things for ourselves, to achieve personal goals and praise. This is something that is vastly opposed from the real architectural world and role of the architect. It helps provide a grounding element of reality, which gives students useful skills and preparation for the real architectural world.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths
- It does allow people to push for their own aspirations and creates individual inspiration.
- Allows people to find themselves and follow interests within architecture.
- It can forward ideas and thoughts of the architectural realm through exploration and personal drive.

Weaknesses
- Self motivated and doesn’t foster group communication.
- Does not fully prepare students for the real architectural world, it prepares designers not architects.
- Excludes real world constraints and issues from design implementations.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
Strengths
- Allows for group cooperation and idea exchange.
- Involves real clients and people outside the architectural education bubble, which allows students to interact and experience things from a different perspective; as well as developing communication skills with different people and other professionals, helping to reach a common goal.
- Live projects usually have real cost and constraint implications, something which is never experienced in normal architectural education. A live project has to be feasible and manageable, a great opportunity for students to experience.

Weaknesses
- Some people are rather dominating in such situation, which allows for more placid people or unconfident people to slip aside. These dominant characters tend to be blindsided by their own opinions and thoughts, not allowing others to have input. It is a hard element to control educationally, and some would see it as the ‘strongest wins’ situation. However is doesn’t allow for everyone to develop equally or individually.
- Not everyone is involved in a physical construction projects as different solutions to a live project may not allow for all students to have the same experience, unless controlled or created.
- Tasks cannot always be divided evenly throughout the projects running period, and if a live project contains lots of clients or students, it may not allow for everyone to develop or experience things in the same way.

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
No, live projects are a great opportunity for students to get involved with while in architectural education. I believe it should have a larger part in the education system from early stages in the process of becoming an architect. Within the later stages live projects should become something that pushes a student to develop an ability to communicate ideas and work within a team, allowing them to monitor, assess and evaluate the process. It may be useful to see what the other side of the live project think of the experience and how students could improve, allowing for a more cooperative education.

It is important to gain an insight into the process of taking a design from inception to completion, no matter what the end result is, built or paper based, it is important for students to see the process.
10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
This is hard to say, I feel what I learnt while on live projects has helped me develop new skills which may have made me more employable. There are certain people within specific architectural circles that will see this as a huge bonus for employment and others who see it as an architectural ‘jolly’ you do at university. In time I personally feel it should become more important in the education of architects, giving a brief view into their profession, and eventually making them more employable.

From a personal view, those I know who have been involved in live projects are more developed and interesting people, and consequently are those who have got work in such hard economic times (mostly). I think it is important to learn from a live project and see the benefits and negatives of your individual experience, bringing a new insight that could possibly make you a more employable asset.

12. Any other comments?
I must say that my view on live projects is mixed. I feel they are rather gimmicky at the moment, allowing students to have ‘token’ involvement and to complete ‘their bit for society’. However, I do see the benefits it gives students and the experience they are involved with. I have had friends where live projects are a large part of their architectural education and it has been a great experience for them. It is about getting the right control of the live project, tutors need to manage a strategic educational outcome that students need to self assess upon, but give the flexibility and freedom that a project needs to develop. It is paramount that it can progress for a long period of time, possibly to a built element if a live project is a key element in education. Although smaller, low level, grass roots, live projects may allow for more hands on, even charitable outcomes.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
If yes, what changes?
Yes. It seems like an architect needs to have a more diverse range of skills as they pick up projects that would have traditionally been designed by another specialist such as interior, urban, graphic or even set design.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes how, if no why not?
Yes. Architecture schools run projects that teach students how to design in relation to physical and cultural context. This doesn’t have to be limited to designing a building and often schools run projects as community events, or have students spend half a term designing a human scale product.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
It exists outside of the studio. A live project has a real site, and results in something being made for an end user. Sometimes they have a real client and are usually completed in a team rather than individually.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
Yes, they can give experience of working with people in communities, but only if the project actively engages with community, live projects can also happen in their own bubble. I think it’s a positive thing when a live project asks for the student to talk to people... They also force students to learn about how to get their design built in a short space of time, and this often means sourcing materials and learning how to design in a team that includes people other than architects. These skills are useful in practice.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
Working with materials directly.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Yes, live projects are a lot more hands on.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths:
The encouragement of creativity and original thought.
The competitive atmosphere, making people spend a lot of time on their projects.
An emphasis on communication – as in communicating your project to tutors, or by using your portfolio to communicate your project.
Weaknesses:
Briefs that are detached from society.
A bias towards the ‘killer drawing’, which may make a project look nice, but doesn’t make the architecture more successful.
The competitive atmosphere, which means people don’t work together but against each other. (its both a strength and a weakness)

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
Strengths.
Designing in a group.
Working directly with materials, learning what they feel like and how they act. An emphasis on the haptic over the optical.
Seeing your design realised, which is a really exciting thing.
Weaknesses:
Usually only happen at a small scale which means you don’t learn skills relevant to larger scale construction. They sometimes result in one design winning out over another (as obviously they result in one final product) which means people can feel left out of the design process.
They don’t indulge your fantasies as much as an individual studio project which are a better release of individual creative output.
9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio? If yes, why?
   Not completely replace, but they should happen a lot more. Because you usually get to actually make something at a real scale, this is very fulfilling. They are more fun. It would be good to see more live projects on a larger scale, like the Rural Studio, that create something more permanent, or similarly the AA Design & Make studio at Hooke Park.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
    If yes, how, if no, why not?
    Yes, if not only because they’ve made my portfolio stand out. And because of the three strengths given above.

11. (Part 1 students) Would you like to see ‘live projects’ as part of your Part 2 course? Would this influence your decision in choosing a particular school?
    If yes, why, if no, why not?
    Yes definitely, I enjoy these types of projects a lot more, and I’d like to be designing and making things for a long time and I think a studio that runs live projects would help a lot with this.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education? If yes, what changes?
Many practices have changed, yes; many also are far more cemented as ‘architects’ traditionally ensuring a more professional and thorough service in regards to what people would assume an architect has been traditionally – Other, younger and more innovative architects lean toward design and problem solving for society rather than a more inherent singular client.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes? If yes how, if no why not?
Education absolutely encourages society and the coined phrase ‘glocalism’. Thinking outside the ‘red planning line’ but rather thinking to innovate not only the architecture but also the ways of life the project might have on those around.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A project which has every educational aspect of an in house fantastical project but with every repercussion of it having to ‘survive’ in the real world; that is, having the aspect of planning law, building regulations et al, but having to find interesting and innovative ideas with which to overcome those challenges.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities? If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
Absolutely; live projects help to generate interesting projects and architecture with the range of skills and expertise that university has to offer, within a secure environment but with every aspect of the real world. The challenge is where the real and fantastical meet – and both have to be embraced.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in? Without a doubt; people and group skills. Trying to manage strong minds and opinions as well as three very different cultures of people was a huge challenge

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio? Yes. Group skills with like minded people; where everyone knows each others niches and expertise is relatively easy in comparison to the three different groups that came together during this particular live project.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio? Strengths; artistic and creative design; strong sense of ambition; Multidisciplinary teaching Weaknesses; sense of arrogance with design; lack of teaching toward that understanding of the arrogance; lack of ‘real world’ teaching

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’? Strengths; artistic and creative innovation; strong team building; integral gaining of knowledge of ‘real world’ Weaknesses; lack of ‘real world’ embracing conceptual design; lack of time or the lack of commitment those within can provide toward the currently ‘extra curricularity’ of the project; .............?

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio? If yes, why?
I don’t think so, I feel that every project within the design studio should have an aspect of a live project, but not solely be in the style of the live project. Live projects offer ‘real world’ experience, but inevitably that removes (or those involved find difficult) a clear sense of design imagination and innovation.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable? If yes, how, if no, why not? Not necessarily. Practises do not yet understand the implications of live projects and its benefits.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
If yes, what changes?
Yes, I believe that the architect has always had to consider the clients needs and desires, however this is becoming a more important aspect in design today. The architect must work and communicate more closely with their clients in order to inform the design.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes how, if no why not?
In some areas I have seen work that

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A live project in my own experience, is working in a team from conceptualization to the production of a final design.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
Having done neither of these two after my experiences in live projects my guess would be that it largely contributes to your awareness of the architect profession. During the projects you can appreciate more substantially the significance/importance of each stage in the design process. More importantly it helps give you an idea of working in a team from start to end: problem solving, coming to agreements and very importantly communication.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
The importance to allow the client to make, change and destroy ideas along the process.
Becoming more aware of attention to detail, in terms of connections, materiality and finishes.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio? Yes.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths –
finding your own style and objective in architecture
Learning from each other in the studio,
Being in a creative environment

Weaknesses, Lack of working in a team
Not as much attention to details
Lack of consideration for users.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
Learn a lot very quickly.
More passionate about projects that will be built.
Eye opening to the reality of architecture, i.e restrictions,
Can become competitive and selfish within the team due to egos, misunderstandings, miscommunications.

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
No, but I think that they should be included into the traditional design studio for the same reasons I have mentioned above

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable? If yes, how, if no, why not?
I hope soo. I have yet to see.

11. (Part 1 students) Would you like to see ‘live projects’ as part of your Part 2 course? Would this influence your decision in choosing a particular school?
If yes, why, if no, why not?
I had not considered this before, but yes, I would enjoy a my part 2 more if I new I would be involved in ongoing live projects.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
   If yes, what changes?
   I would say that the profession has not changed a great deal from my understanding of it. I have been in contact with architecture from a very young age as I have done bits and pieces at my dad’s office since I was youngish; whether it be to just go in and sit there for the day, work experience or actually working there. However, the way in which architects work has changed. The new programmes being introduced mean that the profession always has to evolve to incorporate the new skills required. However, I would say that generally in designing terms these technologies have not changed the initial stages massively.

Another aspect of change has come about through the reduction of responsibility brought about by the ‘invention’ of jobs such as project managing and quantity surveying, although this might change with the use of Revit.

In certain aspects I would say that a greater understanding of issues in design surrounding participation when working in ‘poorer’ areas is developing. However, this might just be due to the education I have received and been exposed to.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
   If yes how, if no why not?
   In many ways they are, but not quickly enough. In terms of technology it is often expected that a student should learn these skills on his or her own.

I think that at University, there needs to be more importance put on the technical side of design, after all detailing is what really makes a project.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
   In education I would define a ‘live project’ as a project that enables architectural students to test out further skills that reflect the realities of designs by getting something built.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
   If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
   Yes, there is a big difference in designing something totally conceptual and designing something that has to be built. Most ‘live projects’ are ‘small scale’ so they still allow for a great deal of inventiveness and creativity, whilst incorporating working details. By also getting involved in a more hands on manner, it ensures that one understands not only how details work, but how they are built. After all this is one of the most important aspects of architecture.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
   Hmm, I wasn’t involved in any live projects at university, which I think is a real downfall. I believe that during architectural education this should be a must, as learning the realities of getting something built is extremely important. It puts the significance back on making something real, rather than conceptual.

The only live project I really saw during University was the Ping-Pong Pavilion. This revealed a lot of issues that I would not have thought of before hearing and seeing the troubles that came out of that.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
   Didn’t do any.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
   Strengths:
   It allows you to be very creative, which is important. It is better to have a really strong concept that can be toned down when it comes to creating a final design.

   A studio way of learning allows for ideas to be shared, which is always a great way to learn and find out about precedents, and even learn new techniques, whether they be in terms of programmes or ways of designing.

   Weaknesses:
   In many ways tutors have the final say, and if there is any difference in opinion this can be very difficult to overcome. Sometimes too conceptual and not ‘real’ enough.
8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?

Strengths:
Understanding the realities of getting something built.
Detailing.
Actually building something teaches a lot. I have seen details that work in practice but when taken onto site cannot be built due to issues like accessibility.

Weaknesses:
It is often difficult to find diverse enough projects to enable certain designs.
Can sometimes be too restrictive, I think it is important to have projects that entirely conceptual so one can be as creative as possible. Towards the end of education is when the creativeness has to be honed into something more ‘real’ and ‘buildable’. At the start being as creative as possible should be encouraged, which might often be difficult to allow for with ‘live projects’.

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?

If yes, why?
Not necessarily. I don't think it's as clean cut as that, whilst there are a lot of strengths to live projects, there are certain things that cannot be gained or achieved. It would be ideal if a live project could be incorporated in some way, but this would not always have to replace the final project.

Some kind of mix would work, as one would gain both the creative/conceptual side as well as the more real side.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
If yes, what changes?
I think the traditional architect’s role has been eroded over the years for example there are now many more consultants involved in the process of building – this is not a bad thing but the relevance of the architect’s role has definitely been challenged.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes how, if no why not?
Not currently, we need more specialisations, a shorter course that is also more accessible to students from all backgrounds. In general the nature of education is changing it needs to be disruptive, horizontal full of learning by doing. As a profession we need to be more political and currently this is not being promoted in education apart from through the RIBA which I believe to be quite useless.
Live projects are a good start but they need to be effective – not just a tick box exercise – we need to be better at measuring their impact on the students and their clients.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A process that engages students outside of the design studio to interact in real time and space with a wider community.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
It depends on the type or nature of the live project – it should not be assumed that every live project will give you these skills. However the live projects I have initiated or been part of have definitely had a positive impact on my work in practice and with communities.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
Construction, team work but more important understanding team dynamics and motivation, learning how to work with diverse clients sometimes with conflicting demands, facilitation, action planning.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Yes, but I needed by ‘traditional’ skill set to be able to complete these projects...

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths; space to explore ideas without creative restraints, time to develop and hone skills of communication and representation of ideas,
Weaknesses; Unrealistic environment of the studio does not prepare for practice, ‘ego’ culture is quite prevalent,

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
Strengths; Students develop skills in teamwork and construction.
Weaknesses; If there is an awkward client and a student that doesn’t listen and just wants to design their own thing or what ‘they think the client should have’ then live project’s have little impact, if live projects are main-streamed into curriculum then

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
No, I think there is a place for the ‘traditional design studio’ to develop a style and creative practice outside of real life constraints but it should also be complimented by live projects. Additionally lots of live projects don’t work out for a variety of different reasons, this is part of the process and sometimes out of any ones control.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
In some cases yes but it also depends on the type of practice you want to work for
The following questions are aimed at DEP Specialisation students only:

13. What three key skills have you learnt/gained that you don’t think you would have if the specialisation course had not been integrated with students from other disciplines?
   1. Critical reflection.
   2. A process based approach to projects
   3. Deeper insight into development practice in different fields and environments that has been invaluable to my practice.

14. How did the DEP field trip influence your final design project and the process in which you came up with a proposal?
   I think that the field trip gave my design proposal a depth of knowledge and greater understanding of the issues with which I was trying to interact. The workshop was a form of live project however the design proposal was my own – it came out of a perceived need and although there was ‘real clients’ involved my proposal was developed in more of a ‘traditional design studio’ scenario.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
   If yes, what changes?
   I think that the profession is changing with technology but the role of the architect hasn’t changed.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
   If yes, how, if no why not?
   I think it is in the sense that we are learning these new tools but the basic design principles and process is still the basic foundation of how to use these tools.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
   A collaborative process of designing a piece of architecture and realizing it.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
   If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
   Yes. I think that it offers an opportunity to work and collaborate with other people. It also offers an opportunity to build something at a scale and at a level of detail that is not part of other studios.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
   Learning how to problem solve in a more applicable, tangible way. There are always unforeseen things that are going to come up and learning how to deal with those is something that you don’t quite get in other studios.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
   Yes. In a traditional design studio we usually worked individually and didn’t get into the detail needed to build something full scale.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
   Strengths: no limits, you don’t have to compromise with others, you can be much more conceptual
   Weaknesses: you don’t understand the materials you are using, you don’t think as much about connections and details, you don’t get the experience of working with others.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
   Strengths: you get to understand the building process on a deeper level, learning to collaborate with others, understanding details in construction
   Weaknesses: design process is a bit rushed (or maybe that was just part of the Ping Pong Pavilion...), budget limitations, ?

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
   If yes, why?
   I think that everyone should at least have one live project. I think that traditional design studios are also beneficial.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
    If yes, how, if no, why not?
    I think that it gave me skills and experience that made me more employable.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
If yes, what changes?
Yes significantly. Having graduated from part 1 into the recession, I think there was (and has continued to be) a shift in architects becoming more proactive in acquiring work in comparison to previously where work was in abundance. This has led to architects becoming more collaborative with other professions in gaining work during the difficult period.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes how, if no why not?
I feel architectural education is responding to these changes— but it is not happening in all universities. I completed my part 1 undergrad at Sheffield which has centred its part 2 course on live projects— although we as part 1’s didn’t fully participate in these, we still experienced them in workshops during “live project week”. This focused on the issue of collaborative work with the local community regarding regeneration at varying scales, which I think provides key skills to students in how to engage with communities and “the client”. This experience needs to be encouraged at more architecture schools for students to gain valuable skills in participating with other professions and not operating in a vacuum— which has often been the case before.

However, simultaneously it is important for architecture schools to not just simply recreate scenarios that are experienced in practice because I think this would create stale design. Therefore I am in favour of the standard design studio projects that centre on freedom to choose a site and allocate a brief to the project. This makes students question the viability of a site and how it could be appropriated with a particular function which is suitable for its context. These are skills that will be especially useful now (in a recession), as the architect cannot always depend on a rich client to fund their ideas! I think architects in a recession need to be creative in getting jobs— for example by putting their proposal forward for a potential site to their local council and then acquiring funding.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
The opportunity to engage with a client (eg. community, organisation…) on a project that can be built together—through sharing of skills

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
Yes as mentioned before it provides the skills needed in communicating design ideas to people other than architects— jargon free and simple translation of design. It also proposes the realism in challenges faced in both designing and building, with regards to cost and funding.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
Issue of how you manage expectation of what can be realistically achieved both within the time frame available and budget.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Yes, these skills felt more practical whereas studio skills are often theoretically based— you work in a vacuum without any other professions other than architect’s.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths— as mentioned before it allows for skills to develop in how the architect can become creative in looking for jobs rather than waiting for the “rich client. This is achieved with the design studio project where the student has freedom in choosing the site and building function for the project.

Weakness is a lack of opportunity to collaborate with other professions, you often only work with other architects in group work during architectural education and you also present during crits to other architects. You end up designing in a vacuum— not responsive to outside needs.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
It allows for a sense of realism to be applied to architectural education. Practical skills are gained in communicating with other professionals as well as team management and issues with funding.
Weakness would be if it dominated architectural education then it could limit creative thinking as the realistic aspects can overrun this process as a student.

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
No as mentioned above, a balance needs to be maintained in providing practical skills through live projects but avoid overbearing the practical issues (such as having to stick to strict budget) at this early stage of architectural education- this could limit creative thinking early on.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
Yes through the experience of communicating with clients and collaborative working.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
If yes, what changes?
Yes. The architect today has more “responsibility”. (S)he not only responds to and solves problems in design process, but also to broader problems in the building process.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes how, if no why not?
Not enough. I think project management and construction/management needs to be integrated within architectural education.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A project in which the designer engages with the client and main end user throughout the design and build process.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
Yes. Working on ‘live projects’ I have become research-analysis minded, adaptable, and tactful. I have gained the ability to analyse and understand clients/user needs or ideas and developing them into built form.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
Resourcefulness- ability to deliver the best (creative, profitable, sustainable) solutions for the client and end user with limited resources.
Communication- ability to communicate with all designers involved the project (civil, structural, mechanical, electrical engineers, CM, stakeholders, etc.)

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Yes. The design studio prepares and teaches the student to be fluent with the various programs used in the profession, teaches design principles and process, but fails to provide the student with the ability to communicate and understand the various other (civil, structural, mechanical, electrical engineers, CM, stakeholders, etc.) designers in the project.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths: Design+research+medium freedom, ability to test innovate ideas without real repercussions, camaraderie and teamwork,
Weaknesses: Fictional projects, not enough exposure to the technical or professional side of architecture

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
Strengths: Civic engagement, exposure to other discipline knowledge and role in the building process, professional networking
Weaknesses: Specialisation, project may never be built

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
Yes. The current situation of the economy has left many graduates unemployed and inexperienced in the profession. A ‘Live projects’ studio would allow students to gain real world experience (graduate with a professional portfolio) and to understand the real role of the architect and other professionals (engineers, CM, etc) in the design/building process.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
Yes, the experience and time working a firm has made me more employable. Most firms require 2-5 years work of experience, which leaves many graduates unemployable of out school due to the lack of experience in the profession.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
If yes, what changes?
This is difficult to know, having not known a huge amount about the profession prior to starting my architectural education or throughout my undergraduate degree. However the profession is certainly adapting to changes forced upon them by the economic climate in the last 4/5 years. Depending on the type of practice you work for the changes in the profession will have been more pronounced. Those setting out early in their career are looking for new niches in the market, exploring to further expand the architects role.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
If yes how, if no why not?
No, not really. Architecture is a very insular profession, which has views of how it should run and work, which it holds dear and does not particularly want to change. It’s opinion of itself is very high, I think largely seeing itself as form of art ahead of a social enabler or client service. Additionally the architectural education system is a huge beast which can not be changed over night, especially as any change in the architectural education appears to come from innovators at the bottom and will take its time to work its way up to the top of the profession and decision makers on education.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A project which sees a collaboration between people to design and build/make something which effects or can be put in the public realm.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how, if no why not?
Yes, firstly they enable collaboration, whether that be between architecture students only or with members of the public or other professions (vital to working in a busy practice or within the community where collaboration between employees, clients and other members of the design team is vital).
They can teach you to understand the process of selecting materials, the importance of forward planning and the effects delayed decisions and awaiting materials can have on a schedule.
They can teach you to adapt to unexpected consequences or unfamiliar problems, teaching you to solve problems on a real life timescale.
Finally they can teach you practical building methods and techniques which you can pass on to the community or use to inform decision making on methods of construction in practice.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
Social skills, dealing with different types of people, time management, cost management - all also relevant to the previous question.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Yes/no. I felt skills learnt in the design studio helped inform the live project and without the time in the design studio, the clarity of the design process may have been lost. However many of the skills noted previously are unique to the live projects.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths
- improving self awareness/confidence/self criticism in the design process and presentation of those designs.
- exploration into detailed design projects through research into specific areas relevant to the programme or design brief and working them up to a high level of design detail
- presentation skills, learning a way of presenting your ideas so others can clearly understand your intentions, aims and reasons for decisions.
Weaknesses
- lack of real client interaction
- lack of collaboration between people or professions
- lack of practical skills in terms of how the project might be constructed
8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?

Strengths
- Time management - normally you have a specific deadline to work too. Unlike the design studio, you are dealing with real life time factors, such as ordering materials or constructing the project which you do not know exactly how long it will take. Thus forward planning is vital for a successful project.
- Practical building skills - working with different materials to understand their different qualities, how best to join them, what works and what does not in reality.
- Real time problem solving - when something goes wrong on the project you can not go back, undo or erase what you have already done. You have to adapt your design, or construction method, or find a solution which will work in real life.

Weaknesses
- Unpredictable feasibility/outcome. The feasibility of the projects need to be well researched before being carried out to ensure something is achievable for the students. Some projects may never get off the ground due to school politics, planning law, building regulations etc.
- Cost - the live projects require funding from somewhere.
- Reliability of others - when working in a group of students you are reliant on others. While this is true of the real world, unlike the real world people are not made to do it by their boss or being paid to do it, subs your project can suffer if other group members do not pull their wait.

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
   If yes, why?
   No. It should run along side them, each student having to complete both a traditional design project and a live project in collaboration with others.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
    If yes, how, if no, why not?
    Yes, better team player able to collaborate confidently with others. Employers recognise doing a physical project which can involve an end purpose or end user is directly applicable to working in practice.

12. Any other comments?
    To can imagine the marking scheme for a live project would be very difficult to produce and implement. As previously mentioned, working in groups as a student can be a nightmare and as ultimately your result after uni is as an individual, becoming reliant on others is difficult. Additionally live projects vary greatly so measuring whether the project was successful compared to others could become very difficult.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
   If yes, what changes?
   Yes. I have seen the traditional lead role of the architect decrease with the increase in Design and Build projects. I have also seen how the implementation of BIM has changed the responsibilities of different consultants within the design team.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
   If yes how, if no why not?
   No. I don’t think that current architectural education prepares students well enough for practice. With the increasing importance of BIM, I believe that it should be an essential component of the course. Collaboration is not always encouraged in university, but in practice architects will always need to work with others, whether it be with other disciplines, professions or consultants. There is also very little engagement with real clients, or end users. A lot of student design projects are too ‘detached’ from the real world.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
   A project which is carried out by university students in which they engage with real people outside their normal architectural education.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
   If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
   Yes. Live projects give students the opportunity to work with real people, an essential competence for working in practice. They may also give more responsibility to students, for example in the management, running and financial planning of projects.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
   In Tamil Nadu in India, I learnt the skills of Participatory Rapid Appraisal, which involved using creative tools and techniques to consult with post-disaster rural communities on how they saw their current and future situations. This involved working collectively with other students to decide on the most appropriate tools to use with the community to find out the answers to our research questions. We learnt how to plan, prepare and carry out these engagement techniques in a different culture to our own, which brought about certain challenges. In addition, our communication skills were put to the test, when trying to communicate with people who spoke a different language, through the aids of a translator and visual methods.
   In Blackbird Leys, I was able to put the skills which I had learnt in India to practice in a culture and environment I was more familiar with. Within this role, my project management skills were vastly improved. I had to learn how to plan my time, recruit and train up team members, delegate roles and responsibilities, work to a real budget, and achieve specific goals.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
   Yes. Many of these skills, if not all of them, were very different to the skills I have gained from working in a design studio environment.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
   Strengths: 1) Freedom of creativity 2) Access to research and theoretical knowledge 3) Pushing the boundaries of design
   Weaknesses: 1) No contact with real clients. 2) Projects are too often entirely fictional and would never be built in practice. 3) No willingness from studio tutors to engage with communities or encourage participatory design.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
   Strengths: 1) Attainment of skills relevant to practice 2) Engagement with real issues 3) Collaborative working
   Weaknesses: 1) May give students an illusion of what all projects are like in practice 2) May only allow students to work on a small scale 3) Students may not be pushed as creatively as a design studio.
9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
   If yes, why?
   No, I think there should be a balance between the two. But I do think that live projects should be an essential component of the design studio.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
   If yes, how, if no, why not?
   Yes. I have gained project management skills, worked with diverse communities, increased my competencies and I have widened my experience beyond the traditional architectural education.

The following questions are aimed at DEP Specialisation students only:

13. What three key skills have you learnt/gained that you don’t think you would have if the specialisation course had not been integrated with students from other disciplines?
   1. Multi-disciplinary working
   2. Improved written and research skills
   3. Effective and clear communication skills

14. How did the DEP field trip influence your final design project and the process in which you came up with a proposal?
   The brief development process was entirely driven by the needs of the local community. I was able to engage with relevant stakeholders and community groups to understand the issues, and agree on what would be the most suitable proposal to put forward.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?

If yes, what changes?

Yes, it is becoming more interdisciplinary with the role of architect as leading consultant diminishing. Practices are becoming polarised, with few large multi-disciplinary practices taking the majority of large projects, and many small practices (of less than 10 people or sole traders) taking the rest.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?

If yes how, if no why not?

To an extent. Students are encouraged to think in a more interdisciplinary manner, with greater emphasis placed upon collaboration with the design team and stakeholders. Some studios encourage group working, however, ultimately work is assessed on an individual basis. Still, architectural education continues to exist in a somewhat self-referential realm where students are encouraged to look at architectural precedents over engaging with other aspects of society.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?

A ‘live architectural project’ is one in which as part of an architectural design process, the designed product is constructed, in whole or in part, within a public site (i.e. not within the design studios). A ‘live project’ may not involve such construction but should involve significant discussion with stakeholders within a specific context, and the implementation of a project of some description, be it educational, awareness, advocacy etc.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?

If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?

Yes, they involve far greater communication with local stakeholders, consideration of cost and time, sourcing of information and materials. They definitely set you up for further work in the field.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?

I have been involved in a number of live projects. The DEP field trip to families affected by the 2004 Tsunami in Tamil Nadu, India involved thinking of innovative methods of obtaining information, from mapping everyday activities and enabling people to depict their aspirations. I was able to interact with the local community through a translator, asking often very difficult questions about their lives. This required a level of empathy, cultural sensitivity and tact. The Live Project for DS4 involved the construction of a number of elements, such as a rammed earth wall and water filtration device in the West Bank, Palestine. This involved material sourcing, time scheduling, cost estimations, a lot of improvisation with the available materials, as well as a fair degree of interaction with the local community in instructing them in assisting and demonstration of the devices.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?

Yes, definitely. Live projects demand a level of pragmatic thinking that it is often not demanded within traditional design projects. They require one to consider how to actually construct or enable the project to occur, and how it may be used afterwards. Furthermore, the output must be far more tailored to the local context (culture, environment etc.) to ensure it makes meaningful impact.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?

The strengths of studio are that it facilitates a level of creativity that is sometimes not achieved within live projects. It enables you to spend a great deal of time resolving a design thoroughly. Work can be compared to other students within the year.

The weaknesses are that it is often very disconnected from the reality of architecture. It is quite self referential with students often asked to look (and mimic) other students’ work. It does not engage with those who may be affected by such proposals.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?

Strengths: greater interaction with stakeholders affected by proposals, greater understanding of how proposals are actually utilised, cost and time management.

Weaknesses: often expensive for a student, not long enough to resolve designs sufficiently, limited in their design scope.
9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
They should form an element but not replace studios entirely. Studios, in their traditional sense, do still have value, and facilitate skills different to those obtained during a live project. This year we completed a design studio in the first semester, with a live outcome in January and a final design project in the second semester. So far this has worked well, giving us the benefit of both.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
Yes I believe so, although this has yet to be tested. I hope employers would value the skills obtained through live projects and see their applicability to their working patterns.

The following questions are aimed at DEP Specialisation students only:

13. What three key skills have you learnt/gained that you don’t think you would have if the specialisation course had not been integrated with students from other disciplines?
1. Greater appreciation of different cultures and practices from people who have experience in a variety of contexts.
2. Practical planning of projects from experience in this field.
3. Critical appreciation of the role of the architect in the wider world, and the notion that architects are not always required to design built projects.

14. How did the DEP field trip influence your final design project and the process in which you came up with a proposal?
The DEP field trip enabled me to consider how proposals (such as the ones we saw in India) were utilised and perceived by local residents. When designing this year I was more aware of how our interventions would be adopted by the locals and used.
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
Yes, I feel there has been more emphasis on place making, the notion of architecture as event and especially more stress on working methodologies associated with collaboration and multidisciplinary endeavour.

Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
Yes, I think that architectural students are strongly encouraged to collaborate with students and professionals from other disciplines. There is also more pressure to engage in a real way with sites and their communities, regardless of whether a student project is purely academic or will in some way take form in the real world.

2. How would you define a ‘live project’?
A live project is an intervention that can be engaged with in some way by the public.

3. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
Yes, I think ‘live projects’ provide the skills to work in practice — particularly in practices that engage with communities and invite public participation. Live projects can often impart knowledge of costing, construction and an understanding of issues of temporality/legacy.

4. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
A far greater understanding of the various ‘actors’ involved in the project and a more in depth understanding of its place.

5. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
Yes

6. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
Strengths:
Drawing/Modelmaking as ways of thinking
Representation as a mode of communication
The ability to hypothesize, to ‘test’
Weaknesses:
Lack of engagement at 1:1 scale

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
Strengths:
Developing an understanding of cost, construction and the value of a team
Weaknesses:
Inability to take as many risks

8. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
If yes, why?
No

9. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
If yes, how, if no, why not?
Yes — by demonstrating the ability to work in the context of a broader team and to realise a design.

10. (Part 1 students) Would you like to see ‘live projects’ as part of your Part 2 course? Would this influence your decision in choosing a particular school?
If yes, why, if no, why not?
Yes, I think that both ‘live’ and ‘paper’ projects are essential to provide the skills required for architects to thrive in our current climate.

11. Any other comments?
See new RCA course (MA) – first years work through ‘live projects.’
1. Have you seen the architectural profession and the role of the architect change during your architectural education?
   If yes, what changes?
   I used to think that the architect was responsible for just the design, but after helping with the Ping Pong Pavilion, I now feel as though the architect is more than just a designer. An architect must be able to fully examine the construction of a project, and be able to explain the slightest details while also being able to construct the project as a whole.

2. Do you think architectural education is responding to these changes?
   If yes how, if no why not?
   I do believe so, because our education here at MSU begins with design and abstraction, and begins to mix the actual construction and specifications into our skillset. The live projects are what really helps though, as one can actual realise how much thought must go into the construction side of a design.

3. How would you define a ‘live project’?
   I think that a live project, or a design-build, is a project where students and professors are able to take on a small project throughout more than one phase, i.e. more than just the design or concept. It allows students to fully understand what it takes to go from an idea to a reality.

4. Do you think ‘live projects’ offer you the skills to work in practice or working with communities?
   If yes how and what skills, if no, why not?
   Yes, live projects provide extremely useful experience and can show that one is able to not only generate interesting concepts, but also bring them to life, while overcoming the problems associated with the actual construction.

5. What other skills did you gain during the ‘live project’ you were involved in?
   I think that, besides the whole experience of design to construction, one can gain useful teamwork skills, such as being able to explain ideas more clearly and being able to understand each other.

6. Where these skills different to skills you have learnt in a traditional design studio?
   Somewhat, because we never did large group assignments in our studios. We have only really designed with partners.

7. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of the traditional design studio?
   A studio, for me, is good because allows me to explore in creative new ways, develop my way of reasoning idea, and develops strong skills such as design conception and problem solving throughout the design phase. I think studios are weak in regards to their team working abilities. We have a dozen or so students, but we all work on individual project. Sure we all talk to each other and suggest things to one another, but we don’t all work on one thing together. I can’t really think of anything else.

8. What do you believe are three strengths and weaknesses of a ‘Live Project’?
   I think live projects are helpful because they, in-fact, do develop teamwork skills. They also allow students to see just how intricate a design truly is, even the simple ones. They also give new insights on how to design, i.e. potentially thinking about how it is built first, then going from there. They do lack the studio experience though, because it seems to divide up the work of one project into multiple parts for separate students or sub-groups. And even though everyone is working as a team, you may not be able to explore your own interests and ideas.

9. Do you think ‘Live projects’ should replace the traditional design studio?
   If yes, why?
   No, I do not think they should replace studios, because what we’ve learned from our studios is still extremely important and keeps us in the abstract and unknown, whereas live projects are planned to be built, so there is this constrained sense of creativity. I do think that both live projects and design studios should be incorporated into our school careers, because each has very important ways of learning to both students and professors.

10. Do you think ‘live projects’ have made you more employable?
    If yes, how, if no, why not?
    Yes, because it shows that we have had a bit of the real world. A bit of the problems of a real construction and project, and an ability to think ahead.

12. Any other comments?
    These design-build or live projects, I think, are necessary to get a full understanding of architecture when paired with design studios.