Chapter 2

Using a Value Cycle Framework to Analyze Teamwork Capability as a Learning Outcome in Interior Design Studio Courses

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ABSTRACT

Previous research on teaching and learning in the design disciplines has demonstrated the complex set of factors which need to be aligned in order for our students to be prepared for professional practice in teamwork. This chapter reports on ongoing work to extend this previous research, including integration with an institutional learning outcomes framework, incorporation of insights from beyond the design disciplines to engage student motivation in capability development, and a specific interest in the ways team teaching in design studios can contribute to the development of students’ teamwork capability (in addition to advancing their development of design capability).

INTRODUCTION

Teamwork skills are important for all higher education stakeholders. Superior teamwork skills enhance student employability and competitive edge for jobs in the design professions because teamwork is crucial for contemporary design practice. (Tucker et al., 2014, p.25)

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Developing teamwork capabilities in design students is predicated on the industries’ demand for practitioners to collaborate within interdisciplinary teams to achieve their project goals. This notion is specifically evidenced in the interior design associations’ (e.g., Interior Designers of Canada [IDC], American Society of Interior Designers [ASID], Council for Interior Design Qualification [CIDQ]) definition and scope of interior designers which explicitly expresses collaboration with other practitioners (ASID, 2015; CIDQ, 2004; IDC, 2013). ASID extends the discussion beyond collaboration identifying that successful interior designers should be “good team leaders and good team players” with the ability to “negotiate and mediate when necessary” (ASID, 2015, para. 5).

Components of teamwork are acknowledged in five out of the 65 knowledge areas in the Interior Design Profession’s Body of Knowledge conveyed as communication, critical listening, design communication methods, consultations with consultants, and multi-disciplinary collaboration (Guerin & Martin, 2010). Additionally, the 2017 professional standards of the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) dictate student and program expectations of which six of the 123 standards (5a-5f) present specific teamwork outcomes (CIDA, 2015). In fact, CIDA standard number five describes collaboration as an intention to prepare students “to work effectively in teams and in leadership roles across disciplines” (CIDA, 2015, p. 17).

It is important that we not assume the mere occurrence of teamwork opportunities in our programs will assure successful development of the important knowledge, skills and attitudes comprising capability for effective teamwork. Teamwork experiences for students will only meet our expectations for development of teamwork capability when there is a constructive alignment of multiple instructional components working together.

For example, exposure to teamwork experiences does not guarantee student knowledge about effective teamwork practices. In fact, students did not perceive they had received teamwork instruction in several areas even though the faculty believed they had incorporated instruction (Webb & Miller, 2006).

Similarly, a study with interior design students by Gale et al. (2014) found that students’ design studio experiences had led to less favourable attitudes toward teamwork over the course of their program:

> Perhaps, the most interesting finding of this study was the . . . upper-division students reporting a more negative attitude toward collaborative learning than their lower-division peers . . . This presents an interesting dilemma to the interior design educator striving to prepare students to enter the profession with the desired competency of the ability to work collaboratively. This finding is perhaps even more troubling when considering the literature showing that upper-division interior design students have more realistic expectations of the type of work they will perform in the profession. (Gale et al., 2014, p.26)

As recent research with design studio courses has shown (Tucker & Abbasi, 2012, 2014a&b; Tucker et al., 2014, Tucker & Reynolds, 2006), a complex set of factors need to – and can – be aligned in order for our students to be prepared for professional practice in teamwork. This chapter reports on ongoing work to extend this previous research, including integration with an institutional learning outcomes framework, incorporate of insights from beyond the design disciplines to engage student motivation in capability development, and a specific interest on the ways team teaching in design studios can contribute to the development of students’ teamwork capability (in addition to advancing their development of design capability).