Moving from the margins

Embedding inclusive thinking

In design education

Dr Lisa Stafford and Nicholas Loder
“The difference between good and bad architecture is how long you stay in it”

David Chipperfield

“Good design enables honest and effective engagement with the world”

(Robert Grudin 2010)
“If you create buildings that are worse for people to live, work and walk in, [the design] has failed...all projects have to give “that sense of inclusiveness”.

Ian Lomas – Make (UK)
how do designers go about their work?

experience?

compliance?

practice of the practice?
a university education gives you the skills...

to think through problems...

but is it the correct problem*?
“I want our students to learn to solve problems, reframe the questions and ask: ‘Is this what we need to be solving?’”

Helen Lockhead, Dean, UNSW Built Environment
“Good designers never start by trying to solve the problem given to them; they start by trying to understand what the real issues are...human-centred design (is used) to ensure that the results fits the human desires, needs and capabilities.” (Norman, 2013, 218–219)
“Despite many years of campaigning and design effort, the built environment continues to be often inaccessible to disabled people ... the result of the underlying commonsense conceptual frameworks we all use to think about disability, ability, occupancies and material space.”

(Boys, 2014, p. 3)
Design Curriculum Shortfalls

Design education about disability is often taught as accessibility and access compliance.

Boys, 2014; Geoghegan, 2015, Harrison et al, 2015

Studies have found that when Universal Design principles or inclusive attitudes are taught, they are not well embedded within full degree courses.

Harrison et al., 2015
One approach to change design thinking...

Spatial Justice
“spatial (in)justice refers to an intentional and focused emphasis on the spatial or geographical aspects of justice and injustice. As a starting point, this involves the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them (Soja, 2009, p. 2)”
Critical Spatial Thinking of Justice

Led by scholars, such as Henry Lefebvre, David Harvey and Edward Soja

Soja’s (2009,2)

3 Ontological Principles:

- Ontological spatiality of being
- Social Production of Spatiality
- The socio-spatial dialect
Changing Attitudes and behaviour(s)...

...starts with awareness raising...

so the project surveyed student’s thoughts and experiences of UD and spatial justice after six weeks of awareness raising learning and exercises.
"Spatial justice is a **vital** contributor to human rights and dignity. Without a clear understanding of this **equality is not reached**." 

"(UD) this topic should be **tightly woven** into design subjects during university." 

"(UD is) **less of an after thought** – I consider universal design throughout the design and not just checking spaces are fair at the end of the project."

"...I would now consider designing more **holistically** for users, rather than simply catering for all users... There is a difference in my mind!"
student responses from Turkey... (Afacan 2016.)

“If the designer does not design according to UD, it is not a design.”

“UD improves and enables (the designer) to look/see from a huge perspective”

“Well designed (spaces) and social life go together.”

“I had a more sensible approach to design via UD”
“once the sum of people worldwide included in the six priority areas for design have been added together we find that we have designed for the majority after all”

Papanek (cited in Whiteley, 1997, p. 103)
What needs to happen?

Change education practice – curriculum!

Challenge attitudes and Behaviours!

Embed awareness!

Design for Dignity
thinking
living
beyond

DOC
ESD
POE
"Designing is not a profession but an attitude."

László Moholy-Nagy 1947
References


