

Strategic Design and Entrepreneurship

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Strategic Design and Entrepre- neurship

Rapport 2020



The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts,
Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation
School of Design

CBS  **COPENHAGEN
BUSINESS SCHOOL**

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Introduction

This report on student perceptions of the educational value of the MA programme *Strategic Design and Entrepreneurship* has been made possible by a generous grant from The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship.

Strategic Design and Entrepreneurship at a glance

The MA programme Strategic Design & Entrepreneurship (SDE), which was launched in 2018, is a collaboration between the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Design and Architecture (KADK) and Copenhagen Business School (CBS).

It is an explicit commitment of the SDE programme that contemporary societal, environmental and industrial problematics within the design and business fields call for interdisciplinary solutions. Indeed, many of these problems emerge because of repeated recourse to isolated, disciplinary-bound worldviews. At SDE, design and architecture are understood in a societal, environmental and commercial context, and business as ethical and aesthetic, as well as economic, in form: hence the coming together of strategy, architecture, design and entrepreneurship.

As follows, the overall aim of SDE is for its students to gain new knowledge, skills and competencies in strategic design and entrepreneurship, which will qualify them for future work at the intersection of design and business as entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs or other.

The SDE programme has integrated interdisciplinarity at the institutional level to a degree that distinguishes the programme in the landscape of higher education in Denmark. In particular, SDE is the result of an equal and continuous collaboration between KADK and CBS. In terms of curriculum, CBS is in charge of offering teaching within the fields of business and social science, while KADK offers teaching that lies within the fields of design, architecture and sustainability. Students enrolled in the programme are divided between the two institutions, with half of them being enrolled at KADK and the other half enrolled at CBS. However, in the day-to-day workings of the programme, the total cohort of students in the SDE programme are jointly engaged in a wide range of activities and practices across the two institutions, including classes, supervision, exams, project work, workshops and more.

Evaluation of the SDE programme

Providing insights into how students perceive and experience the relevance and coherence of curricular activities and practices has been the purpose of this evaluation, which is based on (1) survey, (2) student-generated concept maps, (3) interviews with individual students, and (4) focus group interviews with students. By this means, the evaluation investigates students' perceptions of how activities and practices interrelate with the principal subject areas of strategic design and entrepreneurship. It should be noted that the student cohort is very international. The teaching language is English, but only a minority of the students speak English as their first language.

As a point of departure, the evaluation team has conceptualised the programme as illustrated by the heuristic model below (fig. 1).

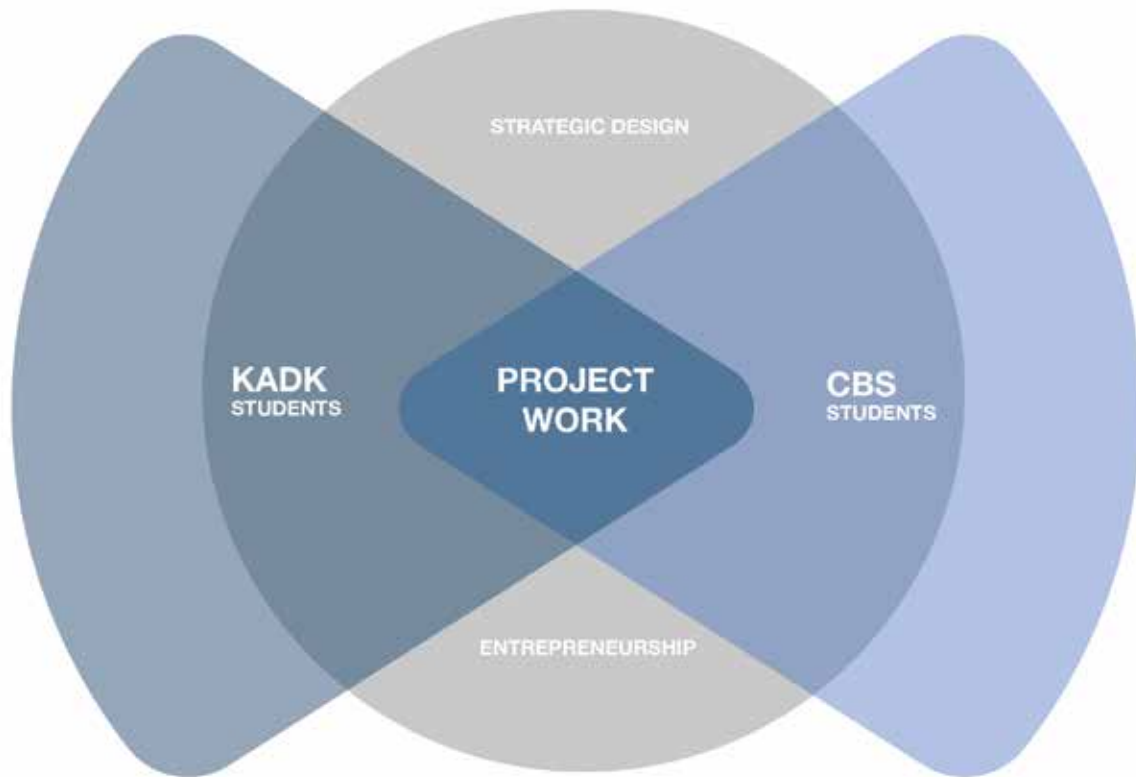


Figure 1

Figure 1 illustrates the collaboration between CBS and KADK upon which the SDE programme is built. CBS and its related disciplines (social science, business) are marked to the right, while KADK and its related disciplines (architecture, design) are marked to the left. The fields of strategic design and entrepreneurship emerge as an interdisciplinary common ground. The common ground is an educational and social arena in which students work together across disciplines with the purpose of interdisciplinary problem-solving: integrating theory, methods, data, tools and perspectives from the diverse disciplines.

The purpose of the evaluation is to shed light on the particular educational value offered by the SDE programme: how it manifests itself and how it plays out in the view of the students enrolled in the programme. How do they perceive their own roles and competencies within the course work? And how do they perceive the roles and competencies of others? How do the wide range of activities and practices in the SDE curriculum interrelate with, feed into and shape the educational arena for interdisciplinarity? More specifically, what are the drivers and barriers for the emergence and retention of a successful interdisciplinary education for SDE students?

The particular focus of this evaluation on interdisciplinarity within the SDE programme results from two factors. Firstly, the empirical data has led the study in that direction: SDE students themselves strongly associate interdisciplinary skills and knowledge with their course of study. Secondly, enhancing the benefits of the interdisciplinary approach to strategic design and entrepreneurship is a key strategic goal and differentiator for the SDE programme. Pinpointing and demonstrating the educational value of the interdisciplinary approach of the SDE programme aids the advancement thereof.

Outline of the presentation of findings

The presentation of findings is organised as follows:

-The **first** section presents findings related to the focal point of strategic design. Statements, observations and viewpoints presented by students are divided into the categories of drivers and barriers for learning practices in relation to strategic design.

-The **second** section presents findings related to the focal point of entrepreneurship. Statements, observations and viewpoints presented by students are divided into the categories of drivers and barriers for learning practices in relation to entrepreneurship.

-The **third** section summarises the insights gained about the interdisciplinary approach to strategic design and entrepreneurship. It summarises insights by expanding and nuancing the heuristic model included above (fig. 1).

-The **fourth** section lists our recommendations on two issues. Firstly, we list a number of best practices and adjustments to the programme that would strengthen the interdisciplinary common ground of strategic design and entrepreneurship. Secondly, we propose a narrative that may contribute to a sharpening of the profile of the SDE programme and its interdisciplinary approach to strategic design and entrepreneurship.

Principal findings

Strategic design in the SDE curriculum

Strategic design, as a subject area and a practice, is included in the curriculum of the SDE programme through taught courses and project work. In the second semester, the class 'Strategic Design and Project Management' offers a wider conceptual framework along with practical experience of strategic design through project work in collaboration with industry partners. The second-semester class 'Design Business in Society' provides theoretical and legal perspectives on strategic design as a commercial and social practice. For CBS-enrolled students, the undertaking of internships and electives during the third semester and thesis writing in the fourth semester further contributes to theoretical insight and practical experience of strategic design.

Learning practices regarding strategic design: drivers

From the data collected, three major elements can be seen to have served as the drivers of successful learning practices in relation to strategic design: reflexivity, communication and synergies. In other words, for students who have made particular efforts to approach their learning in reflective, communicative and synergetic ways, this approach has been a lever for successfully mastering strategic design. In the following, excerpts from interviews serve to illustrate this mechanism.

Reflexivity: seeing yourself by seeing the other

In a nutshell, the benefits of gaining a reflective understanding of the skills, competences and knowledge of oneself as well as of others is something that numerous students have referred to in individual and in focus group interviews. Thus, a CBS-enrolled student points out that acquiring an understanding of the ways in which designers work was essential for collaborating on strategic designs, and therefore:

one of the most important things that I have learned in the programme is [...] seeing how they work at KADK in comparison with what I am used to.

A fellow CBS student specifies that a major difference between the ways in which CBS and KADK students work has to do with the planning of work processes in the design projects, and that familiarity with other ways of working has been a major take-home:

just being in the unknown for so long makes you almost feel comfortable, like you have to, without panicking, like ohh we don't have anything, but actually we're building it up, and we've got nothing tangible but we've actually got a lot. We've already built a big amount of knowledge even though we haven't created anything yet. So, being happy in the unknown.

In a similar vein, a KADK-enrolled student remarks on the ways in which first-hand experiences of other approaches to problem-solving is useful for building successful design solutions:

I still think that it's really nice to work so close together with the CBS students, because before I didn't put that much into being good at writing a text, and I was like: yeah, okay, you can write a text, and I can write a text, but I can really see what it does when you're good at formulating yourself at one text, and you are good at analysing things.

Another KADK student provides further details about how CBS and KADK have learned from each other by gaining a reflective understanding of themselves and others:

a way of working is something that I kinda experienced, a more structured approach. An approach that can be seen as more logical, can also be beneficial for architect and designer in a way to structure things. I think that sort of education is...shape them in that way to be more rigid [...] I think from both sides the designer is more fluid and flexible, but I think you can learn from each other, so the designer and architect can be more rigid and be able to be more structured, I would say, so that the other side would understand. And also for the business side to be a bit more flexible in their approach for the designer to understand... kinda like balancing out the process of working to complement the other side.

A third KADK student emphasises the mutual understanding between designers and businesspeople as:

one of the reason I applied to this programme, because I want to understand how these fields are highly important to each other, and how an understanding ... like, 'cos I come from an architecture background, and I feel a big need to understand the business aspect of the architectural field to be able to come up with good solutions.

Communication

Students who have made a focused effort to learn to communicate across disciplines have benefitted greatly in terms of picking up the SDE curriculum. Moreover, students who are vocal in interviews about the communications skills they have acquired also express more satisfaction with the results of their design projects and the course in general. Thus, a KADK student remarks that a main point of learning amounts to:

being aware of the differences, and then, yeah, being in a position to also communicate, so I think it's a lot about being transparent and it's not making assumptions and talking openly about it. But, also, wanting to learn from each other. And, and yeah, trying to understand their way of thinking. And also one's own one, so I think it's also about reflecting on one's own process.

Another KADK student makes the observation that:

there is a particular language here. Thus, in the encounter with outsiders, things have to be framed differently. This again implies that you have to reflect on your own language, method of working and creativity.

Yet another KADK student further points out that when working on a strategic design you are, for example, negotiating aesthetics, selection of materials, financing and more; ultimately, there has to be a balance, and this requires a common ground of communication:

when you're communicating, especially as a designer, you're also communicating in a designerly sort of way, with specific sort of vocabulary and that might not translate to someone else that hasn't got experience or knowledge of what you're necessarily talking about. So, I think, in a way, it's about being able to communicate and communicate in a way where someone can understand what you're saying without having the [expert] knowledge.

A CBS student expresses a growing sensitivity to the fact that communication must be adapted to its particular contexts and people in order to advance successful collaboration, observing that if you speak to businesspeople you can be blunt and say that:

this trash you just made – go and redo it. Whereas, if you say that to a designer, [he or she] would be short-circuited. At least that's what I believe – that is the feeling that I get.

A fellow CBS student emphasises that the acquisition of skills in cross-disciplinary communication is at the heart of the SDE programme, adding that further formal training of communication skills may be an advantage:

to learn how to actually work, because this is one of the things that I was saying earlier – that I think the main takeaway from this course, the entire masters, is the fact that we're working with very different-minded people. But we're not learning to work with them, we just have to figure out how to work with them on our own. And it would be good, because I think it's something you can use later on in any industry, how to communicate with people, and in this case it would be designers and architects, so if they're more visual why don't we learn and maybe they can learn to talk to you.

By the same token, a KADK student highlights cross-disciplinary communication skills as a major positive outcome of the SDE programme. This student does not request additional formal training:

I think it's easier to communicate now. I think, already on the first semester, you get to know each other better and you see the business side, and they saw the design side and it was much easier to talk about what was going on and the process. And I think that's a big output of this programme.

Synergies

Students describe how synergy effects of deeper insights into the multifacetedness of strategic design are achieved by consistently working closely together and by working in iterations. Synergies appear between coursework and projects, between students with a background in design and a background in business, and between students and industry partners. A KADK student describes the process in this way:

We started like totally together, sitting in the same room every day, discussing a lot. So, every day, many times every day, we catch up, like: “I found this information”, “I found this information”. So, we tried to be aligned with the same amount of research, and [ensuring] that we know the same thing as each other. So, it was not a ‘business research’ and a ‘design research’.

Another KADK student adds how discussions on different aspects of a strategic design from points of view across the disciplines would enable a shared and deeper understanding thereof; for example, students would discuss:

so what is the pricing, and what about the colour and the form, and it combines each other very well so it makes sense to do it all together to get the same understanding of the market.

A CBS student adds to the picture of synergising effects coming out of collaborating across the disciplines and emphasises how:

these iterations and coming together and talking to each other and updating each other, this was very important throughout the whole thing.

Another CBS student elaborates on how the iterative process exposed the many differences in viewpoints, which enabled a negotiation that worked to create a common ground, which in turn leveraged a better design solution. This only became apparent to the group of students in hindsight:

I think that, in the beginning, it was bit chaotic. We just tried to do a lot of research at the same time and we didn’t feel like a lot of progression, but that period was super-important because it made a lot of conversation about how are we dealing with this, and what’s the actual problem and who are we designing for and all of these things created the foundation of the further process. So, like, being in it, it was kinda like, okay, now we’re meeting up again just talking about the same things. But looking back at it retrospectively, it makes a lot of sense that we had a long period of research and discussions, and not feeling like we were going anywhere, because now we, like, have had all these discussions and now we can move forward [...] It gave us a lot of energy, because we had felt like we had the same way of seeing the problem, but, once we started making the prototypes, it came clear that everyone of us had different ideas of how we should make the solution for these problems that we found.

A third CBS student shines a further light on how synergies came out of a creative back-and-forth between disciplines and industry partners, and by continuously adopting the diverse perspectives:

we have questioned: who are we designing for, and to whom are we selling the product, all the time, and trying to make sure that these two things are aligned. Otherwise the product will be a product design and not a strategic design. So without this broader context to it, it would not have the same value as it will now, because we have made iterations between the company, but also taking things that we came up with together with the company, presented it for you, the designers, and then you have reflected: okay, no, this is not right, we cannot make a product that will be a part of this strategy. And then we would go back and make another iteration to the business model. So all the way through we've had these conversations between the design part and the business part.

A KADK student summarises the successful experience of students in the process of working consistently across disciplines in the following way:

It's kinda like we create a pair of glasses and we look...and we have one glass with design and one glass with business, and we try to look at the same thing together in the same room. It was very important, I think, for us to stay together in the same room, around the same table.

Importantly, a KADK student observes that the synergy effects resulting from the encounter between business and design students could be further enhanced if classes and project were more connected:

I think there needs to be more contact between... if we need to take course at CBS, this should somehow feed into the project as well, and right now they don't even know what we are taught at CBS. That's my impression.



Learning practices in relation to strategic design: barriers

In the interviews, students singled out three major barriers for learning in relation to strategic design. Perceived barriers included the different assessment and exam systems of, respectively, KADK and CBS, diverse study cultures and a tendency to adhere to a practice of labour division in the project work when groups were under the pressure of deadlines.

Different assessments and exam systems

A CBS student pinpoints the systemic nature of the ways in which the difference in exam systems affects learning, stating that:

I think it's actually a bit problematic that we have to work on something together but then we're assessed differently in the end.

Another CBS student elaborates on how the exam system was seen as hindering reward of successful integration of business and design in projects:

And it was also of course about collaboration, but then we had some, we looked at design models, like the double diamond and things like that, tools that we could apply to our projects, whereas, and I think maybe there it almost made more sense, that the KADK students worked on their project and then we weren't assessed on that. But, on this, it really, to me it doesn't really make sense, because the whole course, project management, is actually about business and design. And so we are not assessed equally. And I think, for a course like this, it would be nice, it would be more motivating, more stimulating, to work all together and all be assessed and then have a final presentation, where it's all of us on whatever the form, rather than just a report. Because we want to learn about design as well. That's why I'm here.

A KADK student suggests that the different exam forms constituted a challenge for collaboration in the groups:

I think that was also, like, because the projects were divided, like you guys weren't assessed on the project proposal, and yet you were supposed to kind of collaborate but it wasn't a fair collaboration, because they're not being assessed on it, so some group members weren't present maybe and others were, I don't know, because in our group it was a little bit difficult as well. But I think the whole grounds for writing a report on collaboration should be then like a collaborative process and not just a design process that then has the assistance of business students once in a while. Because that's not a true collaboration, I don't think. I guess it should be a whole project.

Diverse study cultures

Differences in study cultures are also identified by some students as an educational disability. For example, it is an integrated part of CBS study culture that students manage their time individually (which allows them, for example, to have student jobs during term), while at KADK it is the norm to be present at the School every day, full-time. Thus, a KADK student explains that:

I think that was also, like, because the projects were divided, like you guys weren't assessed on the project proposal, and yet you were supposed to kind of collaborate but it wasn't a fair collaboration, because they're not being assessed on it, so some group members weren't present maybe and others were, I don't know, because in our group it was a little bit difficult as well. But I think the whole grounds for writing a report on collaboration should be then like a collaborative process and not just a design process that then has the assistance of business students once in a while. Because that's not a true collaboration, I don't think. I guess it should be a whole project.

A CBS student expresses a further difference in study culture between Danes and non-Danes:

from the CBS side, it was not clear at all that it's that demanding. But I mean, like, for example, I come from Italy, and in Italy it's normal that you are full-time student, so you don't even think about it. But if you're in a country in which it's super-normal, and at CBS students have jobs too, then it should be a bit more clear that you're gonna go full-time in this master course. Because you cannot expect people to leave their jobs once they are committed, that's not really fair.



Division of labour

Interdisciplinarity can be undermined if students stick to their original disciplines and this appears to happen sometimes, either when students have a hard time defining a new role or, if under time pressure, roles are allocated pragmatically. A student from CBS notes that:

I think that in our group, it's been difficult to allocate our roles. Because the designers really wanna design and of course we wanna do strategy, because that's what the course is about. But it has been sort of difficult to get all onboard on the strategy and all onboard on the design at the same time, because we know that, well, I'm mostly responsible for strategy because that's what I'm gonna be assessed on. And also, like, the whole nature of the course that we have the same syllabus, but then CBS students are sort of expected to use it more than the design students, so we're supposed to know it better, even though it's like a combined course both [with] design students and CBS students [...] I think also, in the last project, our roles as CBS student was mainly to support the designers, so we were sort of...I don't know if you can say undermined, but it was just like... we're here to support the project that they are doing.

Another CBS student makes the observation that division of labour happens when students are busy with exams:

groups I have worked in have been very pragmatic. When KADK students have exams and CBS students have exams, suddenly you find yourselves very busy and then things just have to get done.

A KADK student expresses a wish for more connectedness between entrepreneurship elements and the design projects and learning across the disciplines:

I think we want to learn about business as well. Like, we've only had entrepreneurship courses, which I guess is also part of the whole course, but they're not really related to the design projects that we then do, because we're not working with any entrepreneurial companies. We're working with well-established companies, I guess, most of us. So it's a different kind of...I mean, still there's similar things of course in terms of the business stuff, but it's still, like, there's not really cohesion between the design projects and then the business part of it. So I think there's too much focus on separating us instead of like, yeah, making a more wholesome project that combines both elements in one.

Entrepreneurship in the SDE curriculum

Entrepreneurship, as a subject area and a practice, is included in the curriculum of the SDE programme in the first-semester class 'Entrepreneurship and the Creation of new Forms' and the second-semester class 'Entrepreneurship Theory and Finance'. Project work in collaboration with industry partners offers practical experience, as does undertaking a third-semester internship with the Copenhagen School of Entrepreneurship.

Learning practices in relation to entrepreneurship: drivers

In the concept mappings carried out as part of the evaluation, the typical connotations that SDE students associated with the concept of entrepreneurship amounted to: 'change and improve the world', 'passion', 'social contribution', 'start-up' and 'strategy'. In individual interviews, students identified SDE practices that worked to drive and support the learning of entrepreneurship knowledge, skills and competences as: coursework, project work and peer learning.

Course work

A CBS student identifies the usefulness of the first-semester class 'Entrepreneurship and the Creation of new Forms' in helping SDE students learn entrepreneurship:

With regards to if SDE is helping us, I think yeah, I do. I think it's especially in the first course that we had with Robin. I think it was very...because it was the mindset, more like the philosophical approach or attitude towards what is and why does the existing have to be the right way.

A KADK student confirms the view that coursework has been useful in this respect:

yeah, definitely specific courses have helped. Mainly being the first entrepreneurship course with Robin and also this course, that we've almost completed now, entrepreneurship theory and finance. I think they are two good contrasting ways to look at entrepreneurship and strategy. One very sort of theoretical way of looking at it and one sort of philosophical way, I would say. And I think I appreciate both and I think there needs to be a blend between those two, so I would definitely say they've kinda informed the way that I think about entrepreneurship and sort of strategy.

Projects and peer learning

Students were pointing to 'passion' as an element of embracing entrepreneurship and a KADK student points out how this can play out in project work:

I would definitely say it's throughout the design project and exploring new ideas. And I think just through that design process you encounter so many things, you think about so many things and that can spark ideas and new interests, and you can discover new things that you want to sort of explore, and I think that's happened to me.

Another KADK student talks about how entrepreneurship learning takes place in design projects because:

here we have been able to define our own tasks. In this way we can chose what we are interested in and, at bottom, that is where passion comes from.

A third KADK student points out the benefits of peer learning in groups, and how this is a lever for learning entrepreneurship skills and competences, including how to collaborate and motivate and also attaining a deeper understanding of what each person has to offer:

I think the group work helps in terms of...personally it helps in terms of getting to know how other people work, and whether you can actually see yourself working with another person. And also being able to see qualities within someone else, that you believe you don't necessarily have, that you could complement each other with. That's the main thing.

A fourth KADK student expands on the positive effects of working across disciplines on the development of entrepreneurial mindsets:

I think that the entrepreneurial mindset is getting more challenged when it's in a mixed group, and I think that we find more positive solutions or interesting concepts [...] I mean the entrepreneurial mindset, where I'm thinking about how you would look at a problem and find a solution by working in different ways. Now we have a group of people who would do that in different ways based on their studies before. So in a team there are more, like, many different ideas about how to do things. So that is challenging how you think about a problem.

A CBS student confirms the view that the learning of entrepreneurship transpires through engaging with peers in the SDE programme; for example, by acquiring networking skills:

the group work totally helps. I think and I...that's also what I really liked when I read about it. This programme. That it's group work. Because for me that's reality, and it's not me sitting and writing something for two weeks alone, because I will not be doing that in the future. So I, like...the setting of the courses are also in a way that is more reflecting reality and I think that helps, because of course when you're in a group you'll talk with people, and you will start to create your little network within the class to see which ones do I, from who can I also gain knowledge, who can help me develop, basically. And from who will I be challenged.

Another CBS student emphasises the benefits of simply belonging to and engaging with other students who have been admitted to the SDE programme:

I think it's a really cool set of people in this class. So I think, I guess, the selection process that they had was interesting. Because I feel like I learn a lot from people and I get passionate by hearing other people being passionate about what they wanna do.

Learning practices in relation to entrepreneurship: barriers

In the interviews, students pointed to two perceived barriers for learning in relation to entrepreneurship. Barriers included a perceived challenge in learning entrepreneurship in a theoretical or 'passive' way; the additional fact that some students have had their own start-ups for years widens the perception of some that entrepreneurship must be learned in practice.

Passive vs active learning

A KADK student calls for more hands-on approaches and active learning from the very beginning of the course:

So, in the first semester I really felt it was just up to us using it. And that was very difficult [...] it's harder if you have a lot of other things to manage at the same time. So, there I didn't feel it was that encouraged. Later on, like in the second semester, yes, like we really tried to implement it. But I think we should have straight from the start tried out the different methods and tools and whatever we read in the theories. And now, this semester, I think it's a lot better that, straight away when we have these like workshop blocks [...] then we do exercises about it, and then it becomes a lot more natural to implement it in our own projects.

A CBS student reflects on whether it is possible to disturb the 'passive' learning of classes:

Yes, I can use [what we learn] but the question remains whether one will use it once [a course] is over [...] Throughout coursework we are taught structures, methods and theories, and then you just learn to game the system. In an odd way, right? Then you just pick up what you think makes sense. And, for me, I think what I pick up is very passive [...] at the exam they test what you learn not what you use.

When students who already had experience as entrepreneurs were questioned about what the SDE programme did for them in terms of learning more about entrepreneurship, some expressed the view that components of entrepreneurship, including, for example, passion and motivation, should probably be present in someone before they enrol in the SDE programme. In this way, a picture is being painted of entrepreneurship as something that needs practical experience to be learned. A student with a few years of experience as an entrepreneur states as follows:

well, I was already operating and I had been for a couple of year before [enrolling] so it was like...I think if one were considering starting as an entrepreneur while being here it might contribute to taking the last step [...] I have not been taught anything about entrepreneurship] that I did not know already.



Interdisciplinarity in the SDE programme

On the basis of what and how students talked, Figure 2 is a depiction of the interrelationships and dynamics between diverse elements of the SDE curriculum:

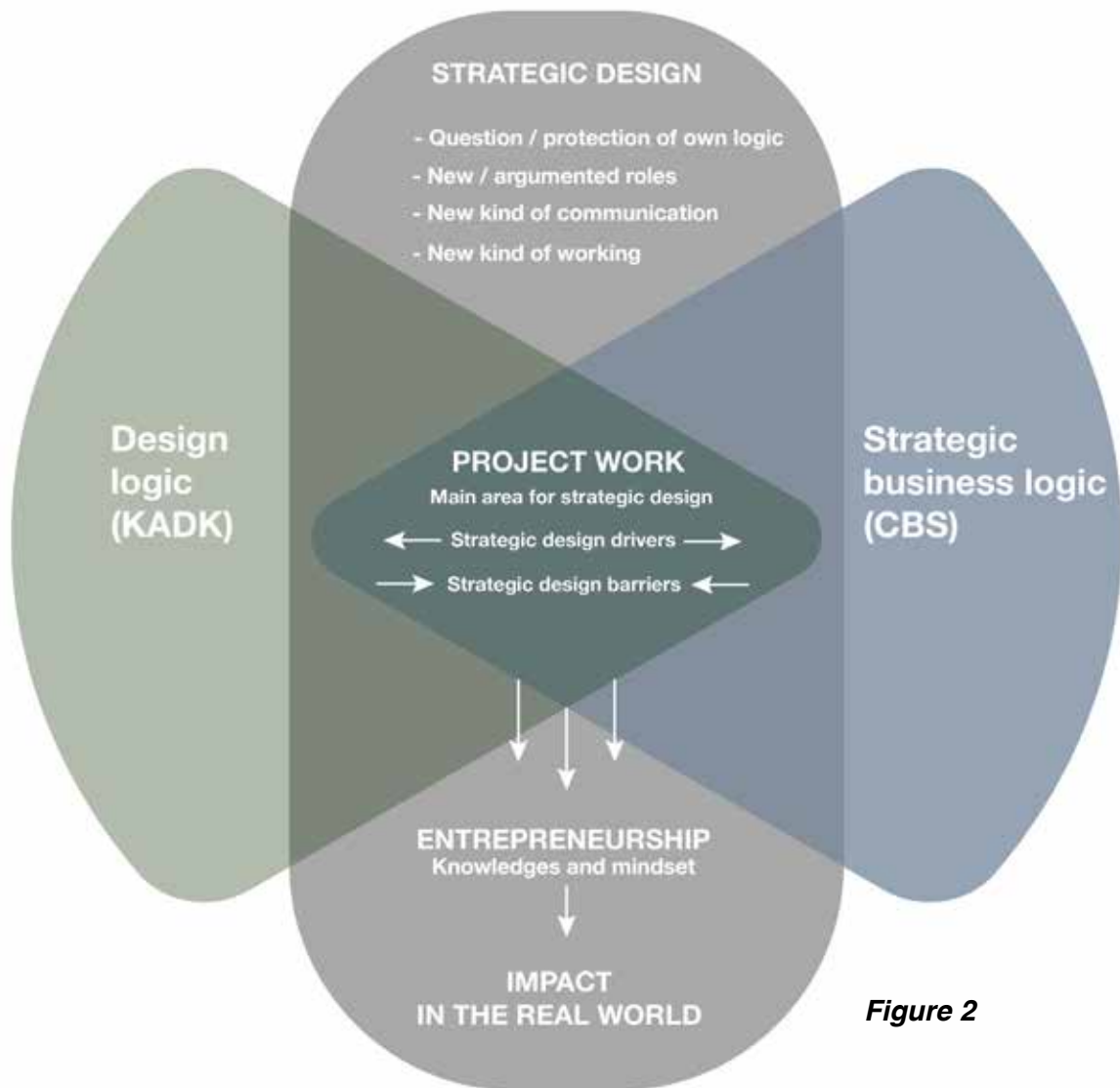


Figure 2

Figure 2 illustrates the way in which the SDE programme is structured around curricular interdisciplinarity between the fields of design, architecture and business. Furthermore, as depicted in the model, the objective of a synthesis and integration of knowledge, skill, and methods – that are culled from the different subject areas – has an ultimate goal of enabling students to become better entrepreneurs by becoming better at strategic design.

Thus, the model represents the entrepreneurship component of the curriculum as a transformer of strategic designs (that balance designerly requirements for aesthetics and function with strategic considerations in terms of commercialisation and relevance for societal challenges) into real-world impact.

Notably, as interviews revealed, it is not the teaching across disciplines alone that accounts for interdisciplinarity: the balanced admission of students from, respectively, architecture, design and business school backgrounds leverages important new knowledge, skills and competences in the cross-field between the fields. Thus, the cross-field defines the interdisciplinary space of 'strategic design'. During the first semester of the SDE programme, the Collaborative Design Processes course provides the students with theory, methods and supervision in cross-disciplinary teamwork. Strategic design materialises in the dynamic interchange between design and business logics where the aim is to pave the way for innovative approaches and solutions that derive from the mixing of perspectives.

The purpose of the SDE programme is not to educate one type of candidate. Rather, it is to prepare unique business and entrepreneurship profiles within design and architecture, and designers and architects who work with an entrepreneurial mindset. Candidates are trained to collaborate, communicate and solve problems across domains and to integrate strategic market insights with sustainable solutions for users and stakeholders in the domains of design, architecture and business.

As excerpts from interviews cited above indicate, optimal success in learning through the SDE programme requires that students bring their previous training into play in innovative ways. For example, project work and the alternating of teaching between different institutional frameworks push students to adapt existing skills to new contexts and to acquire interdisciplinary competencies that bridge the gap between the design and business fields.

New communication skills, the experience of synergy effects that emerge from combining perspectives, and the reflective insights and self-awareness of social roles that evolve from being confronted with different disciplinary sets of approaches, tools and knowledge formations, facilitate the learning of strategic design. By the same token, the combination of coursework, design projects and peer learning facilitates the learning of entrepreneurship.

Based on the drivers and barriers for learning that were identified in interview, the following section will list a number of recommendations and propose a narrative that may serve to sharpen the profile of the SDE programme.

Recommendations

Students' learning of strategic design hinges on their capacity for adopting new cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary communication skills, for contributing to synergy effects, and for reflexivity and self-awareness of social and professional roles that build bridges between the domains of, on the one hand, design and architecture and, on the other hand, business and entrepreneurship. It is recommended that these elements continue to be at the core of the curriculum.

Students' learning of entrepreneurship hinges on their capacity for linking coursework with peer learning in project work. It is recommended that the curricular connection between teaching and design projects is strengthened further.

Diverse exam and assessment systems constitute a challenge to learning, according to some students. For institutional reasons, the systems cannot be made identical: it is recommended that the rationales of the two systems are communicated clearly to the student populations.

Coordination between KADK and CBS is already taking place, it is recommended that careful coordination continues to secure optimal scheduling for students and teachers.

Students' learning increases when coursework is operationalised in project work. This prevents a perceived dichotomy between 'active' and 'passive' learning. It is recommended that teachers continue to point out to students the usefulness of theory and concepts in project work and vice versa.

Finally, it is recommended that the SDE programme adopts a narrative that may serve to profile it in the wider context of higher education but will also serve as a means by which to establish an educational identity for students and staff within the programme. Thus, the following narrative has been proposed:

Strategic Design and Entrepreneurship is an international MA programme jointly offered by The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts – Schools of Design and Architecture (KADK) and Copenhagen Business School (CBS). The programme prepares unique business and entrepreneurship profiles within design and architecture, and designers and architects working with an entrepreneurial mindset.

Societal challenges in a globalised and connected world call for entrepreneurs, designers and architects who are able to collaborate, communicate and solve problems across domains. Our candidates are trained to integrate strategic market insights with sustainable solutions for users and stakeholders across the domains of design, architecture and business.

By means of a cross-disciplinary and inter-institutional curriculum, which combines business strategic skills and design methods within a sustainability framework, the Strategic Design and Entrepreneurship programme offers knowledge, skills and competences for creating innovative and holistic design solutions.

Notes on methods

The objective of the evaluation was to investigate the ways in which students experience, conceptualise and practice the educational contents of the SDE programme. Accordingly, in the course of several iterations of mappings and interviews, students (1) defined the skills and practices that they most associate with the SDE programme, (2) categorised associations to entrepreneurship and the principal skills of the SDE programme in hierarchical networks, (3) explained their understandings of and experience with the learning skills they identified as principal to the SDE programme, (4) explained their understandings of the concept of entrepreneurship, and (5) in groups, explained how skills and social roles play out in the educational practices of the SDE programme.

The evaluation used a funnel approach, gradually narrowing down focal points that came out of the gathered data. In general terms there are three, figuratively speaking, learning sites in the SDE programme: (1) course work, (2) projects, and (3) application of skills from course work in projects and in collaboration with industrial partners. By the conclusion of the collection of data, a crucial point of interest was centred on the ways in which projects work as a catalyst for bringing into play skills and knowledge in what the students labelled 'the cross-field between design and business'. The interviewees' extensive concern with and portrayals of processes, time management, group dynamics, divisions of labour and so forth in the groups, turned out to be a lens through which to gain valuable insights into how the acquisition of strategic design and entrepreneurship knowledge, skills and competencies transpires.



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