arte polis²
creative communities and the making of place

Parallel Session E
Education & Theoretical Discourse on Creative Communities

BUILDING CREATIVE COMMUNITIES INTELLIGENTLY

DR. Himasari HANAN
Head - Architectural History, Theory and Criticism Research Division, Department of Architecture, Institute of Technology Bandung - INDONESIA
hanan@ar.itb.ac.id

ABSTRACT

It started from the recognition that the economy of the city and the welfare of the people must grow, and to accomplish this the city must drive its economic potentials and opportunities through having great understanding of its position and branding itself in the competitive new economy. Referring to the argument of Richard Florida that the city's economic growth is contributed by the more creative people who come, live, and work in the city, the paper discusses the strategy and attempt of ascending the so-called creative communities of the city.

The future city needs individuals and community who have the ability to read, understand and find the significance of diverse cultures/subcultures, and make innovation through varied cultures/subcultures that are interwoven in a place. One notable initiative to provide a valuable stepping stone to entry into the creative economy is investment in the creative education and learning process, which remarkably fast track new arrivals into skills and jobs in creative industries. Formal education is, of course, only one aspect of intellectual and cultural upbringing, but it becomes a vital one and have a profound effect upon an individual's as well as a group's capacity in the knowledge-based new economy. Creativity and innovation lie at the heart of building educational thinking. Learning process will be dedicated to communication and understanding special needs, and will be networked across many cultures. The future education will be dealing with difference and interaction as the implication of the need for innovators who carve paths not explored before or create something new as a consequence of the mixing of two or more cultures.

Keywords: *creative communities, creativity, inter-cultural, diversity*

INTRODUCTION

One aspect of the knowledge-based economy that is not often mentioned in policy discourse is the extent of its reliance on education. Internally, universities are now grappling with the question of whether and how they can proceed with the education for the new economy. There is a definite need for a shift in the education program, from the traditional teaching methods which are based on standardized model of industrial production system, toward a new model of teaching creative personnel who are ready to work in a very dynamic environment. The creative people who are involved in the new economy undoubtedly must be an eager lifelong learner since they must navigate their career as self-employer, freelancer, part-timer, or casual projects undertaker with multiple partners who change over time. The education for these creative people is much to develop in addition to nurturing and training individual talent, because they are likely not to work with a single employer or even the same industry for life.

A creative community is invigorated by the interaction of its member: the creative people, and its growth and continuation depend largely on its interaction with the ever-changing context and environment. The creative potential of a community is much greater than the sum of individual capacity of each creative member; in fact, the individual creative people will only be identifiable in its relation to each other in the community. In other words, although there are various features in the community which may be separated out, nevertheless the members are continuously interacting and relating to each other to retain their potential. The people affect and are affected by each other. It is out of the relationship between people that the creativity of the community as such arises. Without such interaction the existence of the creative community will soon become dormant and not sustain.

A creative community can reinforce its encouragement of creativity through a commitment to providing appropriate learning opportunities for its members. This occurs through the communication and interaction between members as well as in formal education and in experiential activities. The learning process may happen in an evolutionary process and quite often it is undergoing in a slow process, which needs adequate space and time to be given within a community. As a matter of fact, each member of the community have their own ideas about their creative potential and levels of creative abilities that have formed through previous work experiences and have evolved over years. The people who will undergo the learning opportunities must unlearn the inappropriate habits that may have carried with them since childhood. They may need encouragement to be creative as well as positive reinforcement of their creativity for new challenge.

Universities and other formal education in this sense will be as important as an investment in building the better future communities as they are both directly producing creative personnel, products and services and indirectly providing employment in a multitude of different fields. Today, the demand of education for building up creativity has outpaced the ability of most nations to produce enough creative personnel to meet their needs in the future. When the new economy demands such creative people and leaders, what do universities need to do to prepare the next generation of creative personnel? So far educational institutions are excluded from the discourse of the new economy because they are not understood as creative industry partners, although they contribute substantially to the revenues of a city.

TEACHING FOR LEARNING CAPABILITIES

Different people learn in different ways. Some people find that an inspirational teacher or mentor at work makes them realize that they are creative, but for some others, a particular challenge that allows them to prove their creativity to themselves. The way a student learns is varied and context-dependent. One student might focus on merely reproducing facts in one context, but other student might thoroughly comprehend the subject material. On one hand, interaction, cooperation and peer feedback within a team is motivating and helping students to learn creatively. On the other hand, good teaching is apprehended to engage the audience's interest and to stimulate student thinking and desire in finding out more about a subject. Education, for the sake of this reality, is to help realizing one's creative potential rather than looking ways of developing one's creative abilities. Higher education learning is expected to give opportunities to students to adopt different approaches in differently perceived circumstances.

Charles Leadbeater [1], a leading authority on innovation and creativity, appeals that education should inspire a yearning for learning. The most important goals in education, which the traditional education is worst at creating, is the ability and yearning to carry on learning. Most of the higher education in Indonesia at the moment focuses more on methods of teaching and assessing the result of it, rather than on the student experiences of how they learn the subject matter. The content of the lectures and the student remain in the background in most treatments of university teaching; questions such as whether lectures are more effective than independent study, or whether students prefer online learning to textbooks is the major concern.

The thinking about teaching people to be creative is in fact not at all about the methods of teaching. Teaching people to be creative preconceived the understanding that teaching process

must encourage students to experience dynamic and responsible learning within a cooperative, clearly structured and accommodating environment. The conventional lecture practiced in most universities frequently represents a rigidly teacher-centered conception of teaching and learning. Many of its adherents see teaching as a way of transmitting information at a relatively low cost. Knowledge is seen as merely information, and information is a product that has to be delivered to the student. Getting information into students' memories' seems rather old fashioned for the building up of the coming generation of creative communities. More modern approaches which will be more thriving are defining the problem of teaching as how to motivate students to learn by transmission of knowledge that is combined with getting them to do things.

There have been many methods and thinking being developed to gain successful education experiences, all of them have in common consideration for improvement of not how to lecture but how to help students to learn what they are expected to learn. Teaching activities are not developed as to brainwash the student with body of knowledge, but as to build up capabilities to act responsibly towards others, to take initiative and to work creatively and collaboratively. In general, the teaching method being used should be based on the attempt to understand the way a student learns and focused on the relation between students' experiences and the subject content to be learned. The choice of any particular method, and the way it is applied is based on positive answers to the question of whether these principles are maintained: student responsibility for learning, the teacher's concern for student understanding, and the cultivation of student interest in the subject matter.

Students see learning as an increase in the amount of knowledge they possesses. The teacher must not attempt, even for the sake of logical consistency, to adhere too rigidly to a series of formal questions, nor refuse to notice any new fact or inquiry which seems to spring naturally out of the subject. Lectures can be a particularly useful way to introduce a new topic and provide an overview of the relation between topics. It ought to set the learners thinking, to promote activity and energy on the learners, and to arouse the whole mental activities into action, instead of blindly cultivating the memory at the expense of the higher intellectual powers. The best stimulates action of the lecturers is when it gives the student a habit of thinking and inquiring for himself, which tends in a great measure to render him independent of his teacher. The students should grow to be rather a skilful finder than a patient receiver of truth. Moreover, a university lecturer should be capable of using lectures to inspire his or her students through linking personal insights from research and the excitements of scholarship to the process of learning.

When students are given freedom to work through the learning material in their preferred way, they may take a wide range of routes. Some begin by looking at what they already know and others start with the least familiar topics. Some work through systematically, and others leave an exercise to look at another section before returning back to the first exercise. A single path imposed by the lecturer considering perhaps that he or she knew best about how students should learn, would seriously inhibit students' access to the content and the potential for understanding it. Excellence in education demands unremitting attention to how the subject is comprehended by students and what changes in understanding has occurred. The learning process is taking place through a shift from a simple way of understanding to a complex, relativistic and dynamic one. The good teaching involves an equivalent process of change, that is - from simple to complex, from absolute to relative, from the unquestioning acceptance of authority to a search for personal meaning, from discrete techniques and right answers to the expression of skills within an ordered but provisional system.

TEACHING FOR CHANGES IN UNDERSTANDING

The first time a student is encountering the teaching and learning environment in higher education, he/she will be surprised at the extraordinary freedom of the learning experiences afforded. For many students these experiences are utterly confusing, and causing disorientation for what they want to learn. Many students even fail to perceive the links between the knowledge they have acquired in school and the academic environment they have at the university. Therefore the first issue to be forwarded in formulating teaching strategy should be answering the question "What do actually the students want to learn?" How can the requirements of

dynamic setting of the working challenge be expressed to the students? To find a successful teaching strategy the lecturer should make the expectation of the learning process very clear by providing an explicit set of constraints which is gradually can be more relaxed as students gain more experience. Highly structured initial experiences provide students with confidence and a sense of purpose, so that the learning process will make subsequent freedoms all the more fruitful and exciting experiences. The desirable environment for learning creatively is where most teachers experiment with new ideas and subsequently they want to share these experiences with their colleagues. The teaching and learning activities will then be as an imaginative, arduous, but pleasurable process. Indeed, excellent teaching or learning demands the delight of the teacher and the student in what they are doing.

The common conception of course design perceived in education is that the lecturers are able to explain in detail about the discipline of a particular subject and its relationship to the affiliated industry or profession. However, the lectures do not link the knowledge and skills gained by students to the aims of the entire program in the industry and profession. It is only by assumption that to specify the content being taught in each area will automatically imply its contribution to the general aim. What changes in understanding are expected of the students to undergo as a result of experiencing a course? What will students be able to do after they complete the course that they could not do before? These are important aspects to be well thought in a course design.

The goal of teaching and learning in higher education should be: the understanding of the subject matter rather than merely knowing, and the active process of learning of the student rather than passive factual acquisition. To design an effective course is hence to have learning material arranged in such a way that the issues addressed generate confidence and interest in students. Developing the confidence in one's ability to learn a subject is essential to the success in the future working environment. At the start of a course a student should be given a few tasks to perform at which they can succeed quickly, because they should feel they could gain some new knowledge simply by linking it to what they are already confident about. Revision of what is known in a helpful environment and going a tiny bit beyond what is known helps to give a sense of assurance of one's own capacities. Without a feeling of security that the next step will be achievable, learning anything is just a trial and error process and is often will be a failure.

The university lecturer has the main tasks to engage students responsibly and dynamically with the subject matter and to abandon all attempts to devalue students' tentative steps towards understanding. There are several ways in which such attempts can be made:
◆ Helping students to become aware of their current conceptions, so that they become conscious of the fact that there are different conceptions of the phenomenon in question
◆ Highlighting inconsistencies in learners' conceptions and their consequences in real situations
◆ Focusing on central issues that are most problematic for students
◆ Finding ways of integrating the 'knowing how' of a subject with the 'knowing what'

LEARNING FOR INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION

"The world is flat", argues Thomas L Friedman [2]. More and more work will be done collaboratively across the world, where people may collaborate with others somewhere else around the globe, who never been known and seen before. People are compelled for being able to work with people from a wide array of backgrounds and languages interactively.

First of all, learning process is profoundly to encourage students to confront different conceptions and to practice making sense for themselves. The learning process is supposed to nurturing the student that they have an active role in taking part of the interacting processes. Learning process is to promote active participation and energy management on the part of the student, whether this involves cooperation with other students or direct contact with the lecturer. Teaching properly implies the process of listening to the student and using the information gathered to help them understand what to pursue in learning. The lecturer must show true interest in all student responses and to move students towards understanding rather than just

eliciting right answers. Learning is a sort of conversation where listening and talking are equally important. People like to talk to other people who are responsive and inquisitive about one's ideas. People do not feel like talking freely to people who dismiss them or who seem unsympathetic. The lecturer should have a nice sense of the social and psychological climate of the learning environment in order to get students working, nevertheless provide absolutely clear expectations and standards of learning output without inhibiting the freedom of students.

The principles of interactive learning may be extended to the application of peer learning, which is being correctly applied will contribute to an extremely powerful method involving students teaching each other. Reflection or discussion with peer students may serve the purpose of correcting errors much better as well as fostering the independence of thought of the student. Peer and self-directed learning challenge the student to integrate generic skills, technical knowledge and professional development through issues-based and problem-based learning.

In fact, the general trend of the learning process is now moving away from the search for right and wrong answers towards an understanding and acceptance of the necessary tension of opposites, and recognition that knowledge. The line of progress in learning is moving from simple to complex, from black-and-white to shades of grey, from simply accepting what authorities say to questioning and making personal sense, from separate parts to the articulation of parts within system. Relational responses differ from multi structural ones in that they imply a bringing together of isolated parts under an overarching system, while extended abstract responses go even further to question the system itself. This art of interactive learning recognizes the understanding that communication encourages creativity and productivity in result. The one working from and with others perspective often come out with strategies that result in an unexpected lively and creative communication between them. This communicative thinking will positively provide enhancement of knowledge and skill to appreciate the links and points of separation between people and culture.

LEARNING FOR DIVERSITY

One other important subject to be thought of is how the tolerance and diversity of the society can support the creativity. Diversity is not merely to be tolerated because this is the right thing to do or because lives will be less troublesome, but because therein lies the opportunities, resources and advantage for creativity. Diversity within the community provides an environment for creative 'sparks' by bringing together different ways of thinking. People learn more in a few minutes in someone else's place than being taught in a whole day's conference or lectures. When people exchange ideas with peers in other disciplines or cultures, they often return to their own area with new and innovative approaches.

It is to acknowledge that creativity often depends upon interdisciplinary curiosity and stimulation, yet conventional learning promotes more the insularity of disciplinary streams. Informal interdisciplinary learning opportunities can be just as beneficial as it offers:
■ encouraging an understanding and appreciation for different approaches across the discipline
■ improving cross-discipline communication
■ providing a newly found perspective on the activity
■ promoting creativity

Creativity is more likely to emerge when relations between people are positive and there is a good mix of competition and collaboration in the dissemination of ideas. Too much anxiety or threats to personal identity can inhibit creativity. A clear sense of purpose for collaboration increases the chances of creativity to occur.

In order to participate in intercultural exchange and to draw creativity and innovation from the intercultural encounter, there needs to be a sense of self-worth in each individual. Students need to find their own identity first, hence to renegotiate what their culture means in the new environment while maintaining their specialty. Education is dedicated to explore a heightened

cultural literacy among students, that is -the ability to read, understand and find the significance of diverse cultures. As a consequence of it, the students have to be able to evaluate, compare and decode the varied cultures that are interwoven in a place.

The intercultural approach of education can assist the enhancement of social cohesion and the strengthening of open and inclusive communities through the increased cultural awareness and understanding of others. The conception of social mixing and living together are not only good for the physical environment but also critical for bringing a creative environment where exchange, cooperation and differences endorse creativity. When there is not enough diversity in the communities, different ideas and patterns will be hard to emerge. In communities where the links between groups or people are missing, it is very difficult to get fresh ideas to spread and the cross-fertilization to occur. The cultural advances, in fact, result from the cross-fertilization between groups of people and the society, indeed, matures from a certain amount of social disharmony.

THE CREATIVE ARCHITECTURE COMMUNITIES IN THE MAKING

The profession of architect as a whole must respond more quickly and responsibly to the needs of clients, society, environment, and global responsibilities. There are countless issues that are important for the architecture communities, such as matters of health, safety, welfare and happiness in the task of building communities and making of place. Particularly, architects are expected to create enriching places and values to the quality of life and economic productivity in the global communities. In this case, architects have a great role in leading and directing the process of conceiving, planning, designing, and constructing new building production approaches, including new building complexes, new city and the systemization of those production. Architects as stewards of natural resources should have to initiate a greater collaborative cooperation with other professionals in responding the challenge of sustainable development.

In order to undertake the leading role in the creation of built environment, the profession of architect must invest heavily in life-long learning, expanding and clarifying the role of architecture, and building a greater sense of respect and need for the profession within the society. Individual architects and the profession as a whole must demonstrate leadership and vision to build better global communities, which will become increasingly diverse and culturally rich. The evolving world is the complex realities that need continuous dynamic interpretations in adapting and responding an open-ended and indeterminate future. The architects must improving themselves as part of a complex mesh of the new creative communities, that is -the emerging interwoven networks of individual people, enterprises, non-profit organizations, local and global institutions, who use their creativity and entrepreneurship to take some concrete steps towards sustainable environment. Moving in this direction, architects have to be able to collaborate with a variety of profession and to put themselves forward as experts but interacting with others in a peer-to-peer mode.

Just being a creative architect and having a new idea is not enough anymore to survive in today's ever changing environment. Creativity itself, as a process that comes up with new ideas, does not involuntary translate directly into practicality, useful or profitable survival or success. Students, faculty and professionals of architecture must keep up with technological and globalization changes as best they can, yet keep sight of the fact that their projects must not only serve but also enhance the lives of the people who use them. Clients are now seldom individual but rather committees or communities that must be led through a complex processes. To a certain extent, it is part of the architects' professional responsibility to educate the public for having a critical eye for architecture, and to bring critical thought on sustainable environment through the making of architecture. No matter what changes accrue to their role, architects must always serve as the conscience of the built environment.

On account of those mentioned above, the architecture education should provide opportunities to rehearse the creative skills of the students in a supportive environment where collaborative

teamwork is encouraged. Some individuals find that an inspirational teacher or mentor at work makes them realize they are creative. For others a particular challenge allows them to prove their creativity to themselves. The education, hence, is supposed to help students realizing that to belief one's own creative potential is more important than to look ways of developing one's creative abilities. Through the belief that he/she is creative, he/she will be prepared to try new activities, to learn through experiences and in the process to expand his/her capabilities. The range of opportunities for learning process related to creativity that may be included is as follows:

■ Learning about creativity such as what it involves, how to develop it, how to contribute to a corporate culture conducive to creativity, and the appropriateness or applicability of creativity to various scenarios.

■ Techniques for generating creativity: ways to develop individual and team creativity, e.g., idea generation, selection and development strategies.

■ Learning creatively, such as managing all learning opportunities in original, creative ways to ensure maximum benefit to participants as well as a sense of enjoyment in creative experiences.

In addition to a vision, creative architects must offer the communities an environment which is conducive to building their commitment to working towards the long-term goals of the society. The open and competitive markets need innovation and creative ideas being able to reach the customers. One can talk about creativity or read a book about it and attend a lecture about it; but he/she would not really know what it is really about until he/she has experienced it. In order to get better at creativity, one must actually do it, practice it and repeat it. The practical way in improving the quality of its output, the education for architects should be oriented to stimulate architecture students to change their view of design from one that focuses on getting information that might be useful in the future, to the one that emphasizes the application of facts and concepts about design to professional practice. Architectural education needs some form of critical analysis process to screen and translate new ideas into practical results that benefit the communities. Good networks and relationships with other communities through a technology exchange such as internet should especially be explored.

The government can help fostering the architecture community that is open to new trends and talent with tolerant responses to various values and development choices. The pleasure and the aesthetics in place making, which must not have any relationship to revenue generation, as the scholars call as positive externalities of creative activities, need supports to the free flow of ideas. As an example to be compared, not every bit of the value created by the world-wide famous writer of Harry Potter, for example, is captured by the economic transactions that relate to her work. The art for art's sake, the culture as societal achievement, and the creativity itself would be universally central to the cultural lives.

CLOSING REMARKS

In general, the education of architects is to begin with a framework for developing personal consciousness that is, an avenue for instilling the value and manifestation of being fully awake and aware as thinking, feeling and contributing member of the evolving world. The enlightened clients of architectural profession seek the conscious architect rather than trained architect in identifying and proposing solutions to the unprecedented conditions of the rapidly changing world. The architect has to understand the forces and conditions evolving the changes of the world around the profession. The broader the understanding of the human experience, the better quality the design will be produced.

Architecture requires the imagination, compassion and capacity to lead. An architect to be should not limit his/her knowledge to the traditional definitions and boundaries of the practice of architecture. He/she must learn to observe and to be a good listener, and presents him/herself open to opportunities. An architect to be must have these attributes:

◆ The ability to deal with ambiguous problems because architectural problems cannot be reduced to a single optimized answer. Architectural problems have many possible solutions and the answer does not lie in finding the right solution but in finding the best solution. One

has to develop an analytical and intellectual capacity for making order out of chaos and ambiguity through order and logic in analysis, order and logic in work process and order and logic in communications.

◆ Curiosity. To be a successful architect, especially in this age of rapid change, one must acquire new knowledge and skills nearly every day. To do this, one needs insatiable curiosity that drives to know more and to continue a process of life long learning.

◆ The ability to read and interpret diverse and disparate cultures is becoming ever more essentials to peace and prosperity in a sustainable world. To be an architect, one has to expand both personal and intellectual experiences and to familiarize with conditions and histories of world cultures foreign to one's own.

ENDNOTES

[1] Writer of the book We-think: the power of mass creativity, which charts the rise of mass, participative approaches to innovation from science and open source software, to computer games and political campaigning.

[2] The award-winning New York Times columnist, writer of the book The World Is Flat, A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Florida, Richard, *(2005). The Flight of The Creative Class,* Harper Collins Publisher, NY.

Florida, Richard,*(2008). Who's Your City,* Basic Books, NY.

http://hua.umf.maine.edu/creativity/creativity_questions.pdf

http://www.cci.edu.au/publications/the-creative-application-knowledge-university-education-a-case-study.

http://www.cdu.edu.au/newsroom/origins/edition2-2006/origins-creative-citizenship.pdf.

Ramsden, *Paul,(2003). Learning to Teach in Higher Education,* Routledge, NY*.*

Waldrep, Lee W, *(2006). Becoming an Architect,* Wiley & Sons, New Jersey.

Wood, Phil & Landry, Charles, (2008). *The Intercultural City,* Earthscan, UK*.*