

# **Lost in Translation – Accommodating 'the Others' ENHSA Student workshop**

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## **ENHSA Student workshop at Hania, Crete, Greece**

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## Introduction

### *Lost in Translation – accommodating 'the others':*

The ENHSA workshop title is directed towards the circumstance that Europe is in a process of changes affecting the every day life in any spot of the continent. It can be recognized as migration, multi-cultural exchange and demographic changes.

The workshop is taking place in a dense tourist area, in Chania at Crete in the middle of the tourist season. In this context a simplistic view of the concept of accommodation could be to consider it a relatively simple B2B relationship. The public city life appears to be as rich in diversity and composition as in any other spot in Europe. The general pattern of changes can be recognized, but it is influenced by the local conditions preset by the specific history, culture and economy of the place. It is important to stress that the workshop is not focused on developing new tourist concepts or extending tourism. The otherness is not discussed as a simple relationship among local people versus people from outside. Each individual in Chania expresses several layers of "otherness" in their life cycle and social relationships.

Chania is used as a stage for working with *accommodating "the others"* seen from a general perspective. An aim of the ENHSA workshop is to establish a common understanding among the students of the importance of creating conditions for social and cultural sustainability in a future Europe. In this perspective 'accommodating' becomes an individual concern, and is a matter of socialisation. Hopefully the discussion of the idea of accommodating "the others" will affect the future professional focus of the students participating in the workshop.

The idea of the workshop is to establish an architectural focus on this issue of European interest and to demonstrate possible scenarios of an architectural practise. The workshop discusses how architects can combine knowledge and methods from a wide field within the discipline and adopt methods used in other disciplines relevant to an architectural practice. Future design processes will probably be characterised by several levels of collaboration among equal participants. The workshop intends to demonstrate the value of a wide angled approach to the architectural discipline in order to cope with increasing complexity, and a discussion of how this approach will affect the architectural practises is encouraged.

The workshop takes asset of the student's architectural knowledge and combines methods and



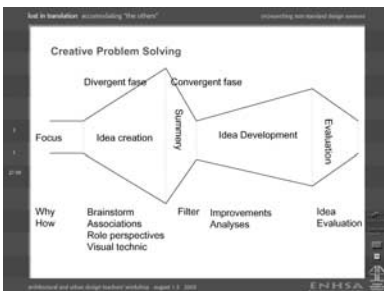
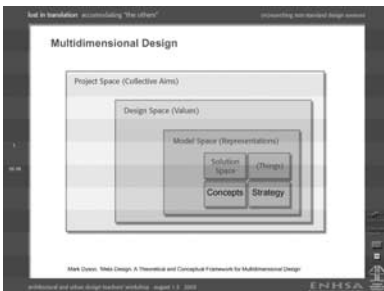
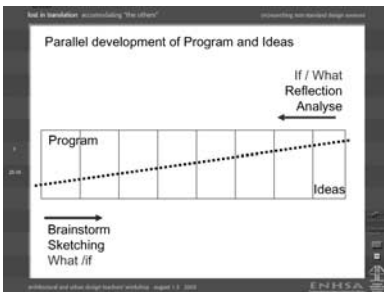
tools from Urban Design and Planning, User Oriented Design and Design Management as a demonstration of a wide angled approach to architecture. Top-down viewing methods are taken from Urban Design and Planning to achieve understanding of the urban fabric. The overview is combined with bottom-up methods developed in User Oriented Design, in order to grasp how the individual reacts to the urban conditions. Another intention of using bottom-up methods is to find unknown and unpredictable practises in every day urban life. The top-down and the bottom-up methods are introduced in the beginning of the workshop to create an overview and a complex understanding of the city in a short time.

Increased collaboration with other groups and professions will lead to a need for explicit declaration of concepts, methods and tools. Being aware of this and being verbal is a way to accommodate "the others" in a team. The workshop intends in any part of the process to clarify the aim and usability of any method being used. The methodological transparency is considered from the top level of the workshop structure down to the introduction of tools and descriptions in every single phase of the workshop.

In order to handle the complexity of the Workshop theme it follows the structure of an Information Management Model gradually unfolding the complexity through entering different information spaces: from a Project space through Design Space and Model Space into a Solution Space. Exchange and processing of information between the various information spaces is discussed in relation to a methodological concept with background in Design Management. The concept is based on parallel design processing and explains how information between the information spaces is developed, exchanged and evaluated in order to generate consistent information. The model is used to demonstrate how development of problem, program and solutions takes place in parallel processes with mutual influence and exchange of information.

The competence developed by using the model is an important component in innovative thinking, and offers ways enabling architects to incorporate their particular competences in a wider range of teamwork and gain the synergy from new constellations of professions. Furthermore it contributes to recognition of the fact that information created by programming can be as valuable as solutions.





## The ENHSA workshop framework

A basic idea of the workshop concept is to make every step of the design process explicit. A verbal explanation and a name for every phase, all methods and tools is a way to achieve this aim. At the workshop two descriptions of the design process were given to explain the meaning of the various steps in the process.

### The Design Management Spaces

The Design Management Space Model identifies constraints of a project and decisions taken at various levels of abstraction while developing a project. The model can be interpreted as a series of spaces in a hierarchy. If read from the top the model serves as a reference to identify where certain decisions should be taken. A reading from the bottom can indicate if the project has underlying assumptions at a higher level that need to be explicit and considered.

The Design Management Space Model has 4 spaces:

- Project Space [Aims]
- Design Space [Values]
- Model Space [Representations]
- Solution Space [Strategies, objects and services]

### Seven Project Phases

The Seven Project Phases describe the process in time and illustrate a possible way through the above described project spaces. In the workshop the seven project phases are executed as loops, in an iterative process going back and forth, to increase the understanding of the information in consideration and the decisions taken in every phase of the design process.

The seven project phases describe a series of activities and the kind of decisions that should be taken by the end of one phase and entering the following. By being conscious of the meaning of each phase to the neighbouring phases, it can be made explicit when particular decisions are taken in the design process and the consequences of changes can be analysed.

The seven phases are named:

1. Reconnaissance
2. Investigation
3. Programming
4. Ideation

- 5. Concept development
- 6. Strategy
- 7. Visualization

## PROJECT SPACE [AIMS]

### 1. Reconnaissance

**AIMS** Introduction to the 6 groups and to group dynamics  
 Knowledge of Chania, the physical context of the projects.  
 Overview of Chania; a top-down approach.

**ACTIVITIES** *Data mining.* Organising information of Chania collected by the participants before joining the workshop. The method is used in urban design. The information was presented in the format of a short PowerPoint Presentation.

*City walks.* A walk of 1 hour in a given direction observing changes of atmosphere from one area to another, and indicating borders in the urban landscape. The division in old and new build structures, the different patterns of use and the multifunctional structure was observed and recorded in various ways. Observations were documented in photographs, and collected items.

*MegaSize Map.* Mapping of city walks on a large map placed on the floor, followed by discussion of observations in the city. The MegaSize Map became the common reference to the understanding of Chania shared by all participants in the workshop.

**FINDINGS** At the end of the first day the workshop participants had developed a common understanding of the city structure. Different patterns in the city fabric were identified and indicated as being related either to the physical structure or to the use of the city.



## DESIGN SPACE [VALUES]

### 2. Investigation

**AIMS** Reflection on ethics and the overall values of the project. Understanding of brainstorm rules and training of brainstorm methods. Knowledge of user-centred research techniques

**ACTIVITIES** *Brainstorm of the overall project theme: "Lost in Translation – Accommodating the Other".* Group discussion of the concept "Accommodating"

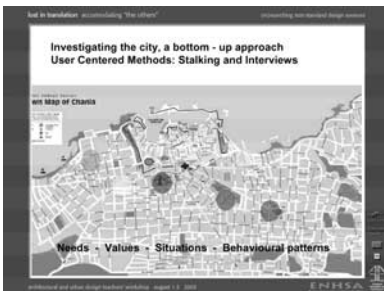
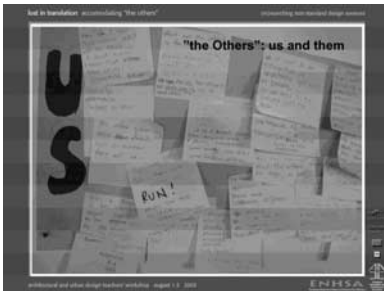
*Group discussions of the concept "the Others".* User Studies in the city. A bottom-up approach. Stalking was introduced as a method of investigating use of the city and to eventually discover unexpected aspects of city life. Interviews were introduced as a method to collect information and a possible way of having assumptions confirmed.

*MegaSize Map.* 'Stalkings' and locations where information was collected were mapped on the MegaSize Map as a way of sharing information collected by the groups. The process of mapping resulted in a general exchange and discussion of information.

*Brainstorm of possible project themes.* A brainstorm involving all students and teachers marked the termination of the investigation phase and start of the programming. Ideas for project themes were generated from city walks and from the discussion of values. All ideas were written on a large board, discussed and elaborated in the forum of students and teachers. Each group ended the session by choosing a theme for further investigation.

**FINDINGS** The discussion of the concepts embedded in the project theme demonstrated significant differences in perceptions of 'otherness' while the perception of accommodating seemed to be shared by all students.

User centred studies were new to almost all students and the information collected through interviews had a great impact on the perception of the use of the city and were referred to during the entire workshop as proof of evidence.



While the shared brainstorm raised many questions and very different suggestions for project themes, the themes chosen by the groups tended to narrow the design space into few topics. The students mainly chose themes related to the use of public space, orientation and the observed division of the city in an old and a new part.

## MODEL SPACE [REPRESENTATIONS]

### 3. Programming

**AIMS** The programming phase concludes the investigation of the project theme with a statement describing the goals of the project in clear and simple terms. A major aim is to achieve transparency in the design process by documenting decisions

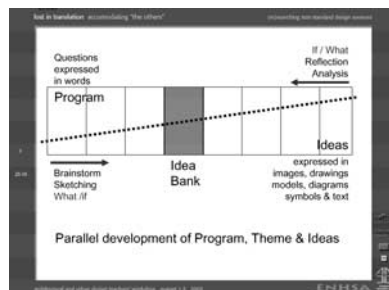
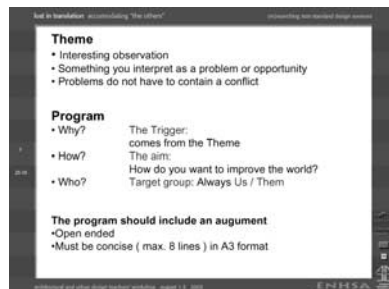
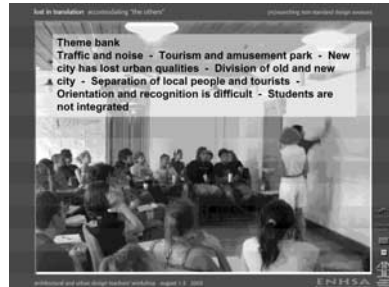
**ACTIVITY** Each group were assigned to investigate their theme and conclude the work by writing a short and concise program in not more than 8 lines. The program should have a descriptive title and tell *what* the group intended to make. It should explain *who* they expected to address and benefit with the project and *why* this was a good idea.

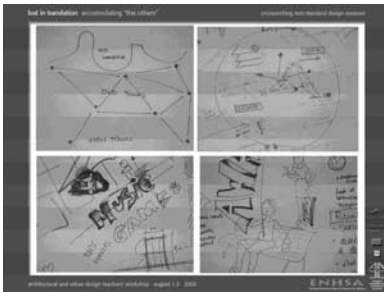
**FINDINGS** By setting up a tight schedule for the programming the students were pushed to converge their ideas and making decisions at a time when they were not quite ready to do so. This was part of the workshop program and gave meaning during the following phase.

### 4. Ideation

**AIMS** The aim of the ideation phase is dual. One aim is to develop ideas that can lead to different concepts. Another aim is to keep the program open, to enrich the approach to the project and at the same time focus the process.

The students were introduced to various methods that could be used to subsequently widen up the discussion of the concepts and to focus and delimit the ideas.





**ACTIVITY** Ideation process techniques were introduced. The groups worked out "a cloud of ideas" - at least 10 - in images, words and diagrams concerning their project and based in the group's program. The ideas were exchanged and summarized by mixing groups during the process. The format was a 10 m's roll of paper and the ideation process was guided by time limits set up during the ideation phase.

Finally all groups were assigned to choose the 3 best ideas for the continuation of their project and present them to the entire workshop group.

**FINDINGS** The paper roll opened up the ideation process and the roll became the shared point of reference in the remaining time of the workshop. The program that came out of the previous phase together with the paper roll documented the process of divergence and convergence.



## SOLUTION SPACE [STRATEGIES, OBJECTS AND SERVICES]

### 5. Concept Development

**AIMS** In the *Project Management Model* the Concept Phase represents the first step into solution space. It is a convergent phase excluding and leaving behind a bunch of ideas, focusing on a single idea with a reflective understanding of its potentials. Concept development is also a particular way of expressing an idea by shaping it in a general and abstract form intended to be explored and concretized in the phases that follow.



**ACTIVITIES** Day long group work terminated by slides presentations and discussion. The format of the presentations was limited

let's translate... accommodating "the others"

# transforming public space

ENHSA

let's translate... accommodating "the others"

## conclusion - Chania's mobile circus

- promotes social interaction
- is flexible
- moves around the town
- during the summer and winter months
- providing different activities
- is a modular system

ENHSA

let's translate... accommodating "the others"

## analysis

Who are the "others" ?  
The "others" are transient people e.g. students, tourists, who do not live in Chania

What is "acomodation" ?  
Social interaction between different groups of people

The Trigger  
Lack of social interaction between the various groups, they do not mix

The Aim  
To provide nodes of social interaction between these people, so that they can "acomodate" each other

The Users  

transient users eg. students, tourists	Permanent users eg. locals
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ENHSA

let's translate... accommodating "the others"

<h3>program</h3> <p>why? to encourage social interaction</p> <p>what? a flexible and movable installation that can host various activities</p> <p>who? permanent + transient users of public space</p>	<h3>idea</h3> <p>what? mobile circus</p> <p>why? social interaction can occur through various gatherings and cultural events</p> <p>how? a structure that can be transformed into a concert stage, screen, installation that can host an exhibition or climbing wall...</p> <p>how? panels and lightweight metal tubes that can be connected in different ways</p> <p>where? different location around the old city and the new part of town</p>
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ENHSA

let's translate... accommodating "the others"

## locations

old city harbour

old city walls

car park

ENHSA

let's translate... accommodating "the others"

## events

party

climbing

climbing with athletic equipment

exhibition

screen audience projection

market/fair

static structure

mobile device

ENHSA

let's translate... accommodating "the others"

## matching events & places

### Disco / Parties / Concerts

The Old Harbour and restaurants provide an audience people passing by will be encouraged to take part & dance this location is not suitable during winter

old harbour

### Cinema / Sports /

walls provide vertical movement and lookback for climbing and a screen screen

old city wall

### Exhibition / Market / Fun Fair

these events will increase the social activity in the area as it is found to be lacking this will provide a node of social interaction in the new part of the city

car park

ENHSA

let's translate... accommodating "the others"

## matching events & device

party

climbing

climbing

exhibition

market/fair

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let's translate... accommodating "the others"

# Solution

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let's translate... accommodating "the others"

## device | typology

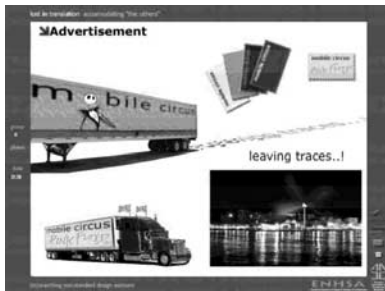
panel

shelter

cube

components

ENHSA



to a short verbal explanation and 5 slides made of the material produced during the day.

**FINDINGS** Students start to take over the project development and make use of their skills and methods brought from the various schools represented. The sampling technique of taking photographs of sketches to be edited in a digital presentation corresponded well to the speed of the working process.

## 6. Scenarios

**AIMS** The projects resulted in services and activities and to a lesser extend in products. A scenario involves a time dimension and is a way to describe what happens with the solution over time, how the service or activity works under shifting circumstances.

**ACTIVITIES** Examples of simple graphic techniques to describe scenarios were introduced and discussed in relation to the various projects.

**FINDINGS** The scenarios offered opportunities to analyze the proposal by making different settings for the activity or service and depicture how it unfolded in the situation. Subsequently the scenarios added information and understanding of the solution and gave inspiration and ideas for further development of the project.

## 7. Visualization

**AIMS** The final presentation of the projects should describe the process as well as the solution and should furthermore include scenarios telling about the project in different places and situations.

**ACTIVITIES** The students were assigned to do digital slides presentations in 7 minutes explaining their work, and the digital format was considered most appropriate to facilitate an immediate distribution of the results among the students. The character of the projects, being services and activities, made the narrative an important part of the presentation,

and the groups were encouraged to make *story boards* to plan their presentation.

**FINDINGS** The groups worked enthusiastically to fulfil the assignment and it was interesting to observe the students' capacity to integrate new methods and techniques.

## Conclusion

Bringing together students from 7 European countries, and expecting them to work in groups for one week being taught new methods of design thinking, is challenging for both students and teachers. When looking back at the workshop I consider it successful in various ways.

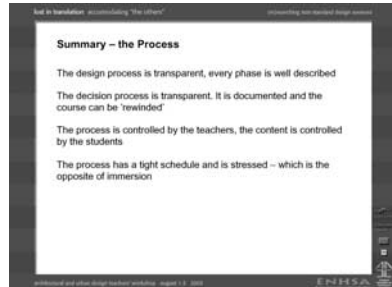
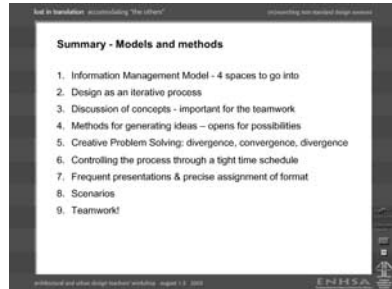
The students overcame language barriers and communicated socially, verbally and by using architectural tools. They came to know and understand cultural differences exposed through the shared discipline of architecture. They learned new ways of working by collaborating with peers in the groups, and were taught methods familiar to some and totally new and even strange to others. They experienced the power of team work and the pride of a joint result.

The most striking and unexpected to the group of teachers were the number of students who had never been introduced to brainstorm techniques or generally speaking, to idea generation techniques. How can a discipline, engaged in educating students who are supposed to entering a profession known for creativity and innovative behaviour, expect their students to develop such skills if they remain part of the tacit knowledge?

## Point of information

The workshop has its own homepage. The six student projects are available at the homepage, as well as the final report of the workshop.

And there is much more. Have a look and enjoy it.  
<http://www.a-aarhus.dk/chania>



# Questions and Debate on the students' workshop

Chaired by **Marvin Malecha**, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

**Juhani Katainen**, Tampere, FINLAND

That was interesting. I understand that when you have only a week's time, it is very difficult to travel to another city and make proposals. I really appreciate the fact that you used a systematic approach. By the way, did you have the chance to have any contact with the local people there and ask for their opinions? Although, I suppose, you would have needed more time for that. Besides, you would have had to contact such people as restaurant owners, etc. But, that's another story! In any case, thank you for sharing the experiment. I found it very interesting!

**Uffe Lentz**, Aarhus, DENMARK

That was just a short demonstration of the work of two students and we chose the theme of "young people" so as to ensure that they would meet someone they could communicate with. The goal was for them to talk with others and refer back to them in case they needed more information. Then we arranged for local people to attend a presentation, but only two of the residents appeared. In the group, however, there was also a Greek student who shared opinions with us that proved to be very helpful.

These user-oriented methods actually led to observations we would not have seen if we had looked at the city from the top-bound view of the statistics. We did find stories that were surprising!

**Simon Beeson**, Edinburgh, UNITED KINGDOM

You showed a very interesting diagram you had made in advance about how you wanted to run the project, but you have not told us or shown us what actually happened in the end.

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

We did what the diagram showed, but we did not go according to the schedule. For example, we had to alter or extend certain phases, but we actually went through the different phases, except for one, the 6th or 7th phase that was omitted. It served mostly as a guide or reference for everybody about what we were doing.

**Uffe Lentz**, Aarhus, DENMARK

I think the interesting part of all this was the reaction we got from our students. The situation was somewhat of a cultural shock for them because they were not used to the task of developing their own traffic space. They said that, normally, they were presented with a specific problem and expected to find solutions for it, whereas, here, they were divided into pairs and assessed on developing their own space, creating their own problems and finding solutions to them.

**Ali Uyanik**, Aarhus, DENMARK

That pretty much answered my question as far as your reflections on different students are concerned. Perhaps, you could just elaborate a bit more on how you see the differentiation between schools and how they work, because it is all very well to talk about all this interesting data, here, but you have actually lived through the experience and can give us some first-hand information.

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

We saw huge differences and these were related to culture, what students learned and what students thought were relevant problems for projects. Also, I think that in all those discussions on values, what was very important was that students were aware of these differences, right from the start; otherwise, unknowingly, they might have had many more clashes than they actually did. I could try to answer your question by saying that one of the main findings that is worth stressing from the student-evaluation scheme is that only 20% of the students had ever tried to "brainstorm" a problem. That was very surprising to us, because we had automatically assumed that students would approach and open up a project by thinking in a very structured and analytical manner. However, we were proven wrong. Also, students were not even used to working in groups, and, in this sense, they really gained a lot from the workshop. I think that the social experience of their finding a new companion to work with was important, but so was the experience of actually working with other people and getting mercenaries to facilitate this collaboration.

**Christian Huetz**, Regensburg, GERMANY

On the one hand, you mentioned that the students had a real socio-cultural and educational experience at the international workshop, but the question that is also very interesting is what were the teachers' reactions?

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

I am not quite sure that I understand your question. We were the ones that prepared everything... (Interrupted by next speaker)

**Maria Voyatzaki**, Thessaloniki, GREECE

Maybe we need to explain at this point that when we ran the workshop with Christian Huetz, like the students, most of the teachers did not know each other before the workshop. But, this exercise was run by a group of people that know each other, are of the same nationality, speak the same language and have taught as a team before.

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

We did have some difficulty in the beginning since we were a group of four different people that, although had worked together, did not actually know the others. However, all the cultural differences... (Interrupted by next speaker)

**Christian Huetz**, Regensburg, GERMANY

But you were the only ones running the workshop, so, there were no teachers from other countries whose input would have made the project even more advantageous and impressive.

**Uffe Lentz**, Aarhus, DENMARK

Actually, we saw our task as creating a very sharp profile of what we did so that we could demonstrate one way of working. This would allow us to discuss ...in an effort to determine what happened. It was for this reason that we wanted to establish a very strict profile and be able to say that in the school of architecture some tasks need new methods, though this is not always the case. Most of the methods we normally use come from the Design Institute and the design management group design methods for information...

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

We had difficulty since it was only the two designers that knew the mercenaries, and we had to get to know them. On the other hand, I knew the subject because I was the urban designer and

urban theorist. So, we each had our own problems in working together.

**Christian Huetz**, Regensburg, GERMANY

I would just like to point out as critic that it would have been very interesting if the students had been accompanied by a teacher from their own country.

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

That's an interesting idea!

**Simon Beeson**, Edinburgh, UNITED KINGDOM

I just want to probe a little deeper because I was surprised when you said that nothing different happened. I have been sitting here thinking about this as I did very similar projects, such as this, when I was a student in both winter and summer schools, and as a tutor as well, and something always happened. So, I would like to know whether there were other events outside your program of importance to your outcome. I think these diagrams are great and very useful for us to be able to see a project and lay out in advance what we think is going to happen, how you are going to lead and try to control the process and see what happens. But, that final bit of evaluation is very important to find out where or how the student process and your interaction with the students diverge from that. Therefore, there must be other experiences. I know that in workshops like this one, there are some students who often break out and refuse to cooperate. They decide that they are not going to design, but make something, or find an alternative way to presenting a drawing, such as collecting things rather than accepting to draw on our sheet of paper. So, I am actually surprised that none of that seems to have come forward in this particular project.

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

Of course, it did! In fact, one group was not able to do anything together. Despite their trying over and over again to present projects like the others, they were not advancing, so, we were forced to engage them in exploring why this was happening. As a result, they spent a good 24 hours trying to find out what was going on. Their presentation did not have any project or solution in terms of a description of what to place, when and where to start, mainly because they had conflicting ideas. We then asked them to develop their own ideas, which they tried to narrow down, during the course of a 3 to 4-hour period. Then, they reflected on the question of what the outcome could have been if they had been able to realize the task at an earlier stage. Although they had not given any solutions, in the end, it turned out to be a really good learning experience for them.

**Simon Beeson**, Edinburgh, UNITED KINGDOM

I think Constantin said something very interesting, earlier, to the effect that, as teachers, we quite often learn the most through our own failures. Therefore, it would be very interesting to see on your website a documentation of the ones that did not follow the way you went forward because information on these students would, presumably, tell us something new. The ones that followed the program and did what was expected, in the end, simply did the predictable, but it is the others that I would be interested in hearing about.

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

We could say that your expectations are predictable because they did not have time to deal with their solutions since they were concerned with the process. In that sense, they might have been a bit disappointed, but they did not mention it or do any critical evaluation, but I am sure that they had expected to reach a point other than where they started. Nevertheless, we are

used to that since it is our way of teaching.

**Uffe Lentz**, Aarhus, DENMARK

They may not have come up with solutions, but the product they produced was analyzing why, which was very important.

**Constantin Spiridonidis**, Thessaloniki, GREECE

It is quite possible that you might not be aware of how this particular project came about, so, let me give you a brief history. This was a pilot project, which the Socrates Office requested from our Thematic Network, with the aim of developing a program or initiative where students could participate in the activities or events of the ENHSA Network. After examining the various possibilities, we thought it would be useful to organize a workshop which would differ from the one we had already organized in the past into the framework of Socrates Intensive Programs.

The idea behind that was to establish an annual event where a school of architecture would invite students from various other schools of architecture to attend a workshop that would reflect "the contemporary face" of the particular school running the workshop. Therefore, with this in mind, we asked the Aarhus School of Architecture to assign a group of teachers who would run and present the workshop, and, in turn, we would distribute the results of the school's contemporary profile. Even if this is a pilot project, my impression from what has been echoed here, so far, is that it has been very successful, and if this will be positively evaluated by the Socrates Technical Assistance Office, then, next year, possibly, another school will be asked to run the project. Should this continue, over a number of years, we will have collected material which is beyond the official school program, with participants of a different student population from those that we are used to having in our courses. Therefore, keep this in mind, and it is possible that we will be discussing next year with another group of colleagues yet another experiment as the one Pia Bille and Uffe Lentz have presented today. Finally, I want to thank Pia Bille, Uffe Lentz, Brett Patching, Jane Willumsgård, very much for their fruitful and quality cooperation.

**Pia Bille**, Aarhus, DENMARK

We appreciate having had this opportunity.

