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The Integrated Teaching of CAAD in the School of Architecture at The Robert Gordon University

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This paper discusses how the introduction to computers in architecture being integrated into the design studio can create a stimulating environment for the understanding of the fundamentals of computer aided design.

During the spring term, Second Year students at The Scott Sutherland School of Architecture, undertake a nine week project involving the analysis and interpretation of an architect including background, beliefs, methodology and built work. This paradigm is then used as a basis for the students own design work that is expressed in a two week design project immediately following the study. The project brings about an awareness of the nature of architecture as an intelligible system of elements in a variety of describable relationships.

Small groups of students analyse a particular architect and their work concentrating on the determination of similarities and differences perceived in their work that may contribute to a paradigmatic framework. The students then go on to investigate the level of assimilation of this framework within a specific work by the architect focusing on structural, material, constructional and environmental issues as well as the actual design methodology employed. The conclusion of the project invites the students to apply the discovered 'language' that underpins their architects work in a new design project. The analogy of 'language' is reinforced through all studio projects in the second year.

This studio project was found to be an ideal base for the introduction to the use of computer as a design tool. In preparation for the Paradigm project, the students received a CAAD lecture course in the autumn term which includes an introduction to the methods of analysis based on the analogy of language. As a result the students are well equipped to use these methods in their paradigm. The analysis allows the exploration of an explicit methodology in their architects work and subsequently gives the students a design framework for the concluding 'Synthesis' of the project.

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