Unde et Quo

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To begin with, I would like to say a few words about the problem of alienation of modern technologies which we also inevitably faced while starting teaching CAD at our department. Quite often nowadays a technology becomes a fetish as a result of lack of clear goals in human mind. There are multiple technologies without sense of purpose which turned into pure experiments. There is always the danger of losing purpusness and drifting toward alienation. The cause of the danger lies in forgetting about original goals while mastering and developing the technology. Eventually the original idea is ignored and a great gap appears between technical factors and creativity.

We had the danger of alienation in mind when preparing the CAAD curriculum. Trying to avoid the tension between technical and creative elements we agreed not to introduce CAD too soon then the fourth year of studies and continue it for two semesters. One thing was clear - we should not teach the technique of CAD but how to design using a computer as a medium. We specified projects. The first was called "The bathroom I dream of" and meant to be a 2D drawing. The four introductory meetings were in fact teaching foundations of DOS, then a specific design followed with the help of AutoCAD program. In the IX semester, for example, it was "A family house" (plans, facades, perspective).

In January 1991 the IX semester was over. While the previous one was a success and we accomplished all the tasks, the following was not without difficulties. The time we had at our disposal (2 hours a week) proved to start making a proper design of the family house. We decided then to change the contents of the course slightly and from February 1991 students work over the period of two semesters on one design only - instead of two. This year the subject is "Holiday house for two". They are to make it in two stages: the plan in the first semester and the perspective in the second one. All the drawings enclosed are chosen from their 1990 and 1991 works.

"I have to follow them - I am their leader“ said L.J. Peter in "The Peter’s Prescription". This quotation reflects exactly the situation we find ourselves in teaching CAAD at our department. It means that ever growing students interest in CAAD made us introduce changes in the curriculum. According to the popular saying, "The more one gets the more one want", so did we and the students feel after the first semester of teaching CAD. From autumn 1991 CAAD classes will be carried from the third year of studying for two consecutive years. But before further planning one major step had to be done - we decided to reverse the typical of the seventies approach to the problem when teaching programming languages preceded practical goals hence discouraging many learners.

According to the changes which were carried on in the teaching of CAAD program, it can be separated on the following three stages:

1. first approaches to the computer as a designing medium and convincing students about its advantages,
2. introducing designing task and using AutoCAD program,
3. extending the area of students interests.

More detailed program description can be presented as follows: I.A. Obligatory program for all students.

a) Semester V - 15 hours (1h/week). The students are known with the bases of computer service and the necessary DOS options. After this, they have to make the design of the arms, visit card or ex-libris (for their choice) by the help of Paintbrush program.

b) Semester VI - 30 hours (2h/week). Extending of knowledge about DOS and giving the students the chance to know AutoCAD 2-D program. The students make the design of simple (little)
architectural structure e.g.: summer-house, bathroom, caravan. They try also to know the next orders of AutoCAD, which are closely connected with the progress of the design works.

In the time of this semester, the students work out at the computer the floor plane. They present also the sketch of solid composition, made by the traditional technique.

c) Semester VII - 30 hours (2h/week). Presenting of Norton Commander program. The continuation of AutoCAD learning according to the design of structure solid. The students fix their attention on the part connected with "3-D modelling". They can elaborate one of the three following designs: isometric drawing, 3-D wireframe drawing, Auto Shade.

I.B. The own work of students. On the every of mentioned semesters, each student has from 15 to 30 hours of work at the computer to his disposal (behind the obligatory lessons). In this time they can continue their work connected with the design, or they can acquaint with the programs proposed by the lecturer (Chiwriter, PCTools, WarCAD which is integrated with AutoCAD).

II.A. The optional program for the chosen group of 6 - 12 students. a) Semester VIII - 45 hours (3h/week). b) Semester IX - 45 hours (3h/week). The students make the visualisation of the architectural design elaborated at the lessons of the architectural planning in the cooperation with the architect leading this design. The range of the made works and their character are established separately for every student by the lecturer.

II.B. The own work of students. At the every one of the above mentioned semesters, each student has approx. 30 hours of work at the computer to his disposal. In this time, together with the lecturer, he can know the bases of the LISP language or the programs aided the town planning (CITY, Town Game, simulation of the town development).

III. Thesis. The student who wants to elaborate his thesis by the help of the computer, has to his disposal 90 hours of work, which are used by him in accordance with the plan stated with his professor conferring a degree and the lecturer of CAD Laboratory.

The separation of lessons for the obligatory and optional parts is the result of two things. One of them, there is not enough hardware to teach the all students, and the second one - not all students are interested in the knowledge about the computer application in the design. The third stage naturally reached by fewer students who form a small group well motivated to explore further applying of computer aid in urban design.

It is exactly what we wish to have in our department - a well trained team able to deal with complex problems of urban design through its separate stages.

We are going to gather all the necessary software as well as essential data about the existing shape of our town.

After all social and political changes in Poland it is absolutely necessary to workout new methods of designing adjusted to the new situation we found ourselves after the former administrative system fell through. The needs of the city itself and ever growing number of individual clients are immense.

All we intend to do in the nearest future may seen naive and not original but it is important to realise we are standing at the crossroads and the answer to "Quo vadis?" is neither straightforward nor definite.
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