

16.2

Europe '94 - A Visitor's Report on the State of CAAD in Education

William L Glennie

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, New York USA

During May, June and July of this year, I had the pleasure of visiting twelve institutions across Europe where computers are being used in the teaching of Architecture.

There are as many different approaches to the incorporation of computers in the curriculum as there are places, and they all have some degree of success. My greatest surprise was the large size of these Schools, even in relatively small countries. Dealing with a huge number of students makes any kind of mandatory computer instruction almost impossible. In spite of all difficulties, enthusiasm and willingness to work directly with students was the single most important characteristic in the faculty and staff who are having the greatest success.

Support staff dedicated to the maintenance of equipment and software were provided at most of the institutions. For those who do not have this benefit it is critical to relieve the teaching and research faculty of the need for these time-consuming tasks.

Formal research activities are not essential to effective education. The process of setting up such efforts is again a distraction from the more important job of teaching. If research projects grow naturally out of the curriculum, they may be pursued without impeding instruction.

MOST serious of all, there is a substantial lack of communication and cooperation among these schools, and by implication, among all of the other schools in Europe. The mechanism of annual conferences held by ECAADE is insufficient to exchange information and interests. There were several occasions when I mentioned work that was being carried out at one place that would match very nicely with efforts at another. However, it is clearly impossible for any one school to spearhead this kind of collection and coordination of activities. The only appropriate organisation for this kind of exchange would be a centralised service initiated and maintained by the European Community. It is VERY important that such a body does NOT attempt to limit or direct the work of individual schools, rather simply serves as a clearinghouse through which the various groups can benefit from each other's work, to the mutual benefit of all.

**Order a complete set of
eCAADe Proceedings (1983 - 2000)
on CD-Rom!**

**Further information:
<http://www.ecaade.org>**