P5 REFLECTION – THE DEMOCRATIC LEARNING LANDSCAPE; THE VLEDDER AREA

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Relationship between theme of studio and subject chosen

The theme of the studio is democracy and the subject chosen is primary education. Democracy is used within the project as input to reform primary education as we know it. Mostly, democracy is seen as a way of governing. Besides this, it's also possible to approach it as a form of social democracy, which means that a society is democratic throughout its whole social fabric. This implies that every single person should be taken into account. Now, looking to current primary education, which has been set up by the higher educated, we can see that math and language are the priority of education. For the higher educated people, this is a perfect situation, since those people will perform very well on those subjects. However, within social sciences, many pedagogical theories are showing that people are a lot more different with many different kind of talents and capacities. Ignoring those other types of intelligence, means that a lot of capacities of people are neglected within current education. The research aims to show how educational buildings can take those different capacities into account. The design on the other hand, shows a design in which a differentiation of spaces is the key element.

Relationship between research and design

The relationship between the research and design can be found on two different scales. Firstly, the regional scale is about how schools can be organized in a different way in relation to each other. Nowadays schools are set up as independent institutes, but maybe there's more cooperation possible between different schools in a region. The research is showing which elements are important for a region, for the people living there. The vision on how education can be organized tries to implement those elements in a spatial way in order to create a new learning environment. Those aspects mainly focus on how educational places are spread out in a region and how it's possible to make this financial feasible.

Besides this, there's also research about specific learning spaces. Those aim to make the connection between pedagogical theories and architecture. Since there are many different ways of learning and types of intelligences, as Howard Gardner and David Kolb are arguing, the architecture of learning spaces should tell the same story. This means that learning spaces fitting to all kind of activities belonging to all kind of intelligences should be visible within the design. In such a differentiated learning environment two main elements are very important in order to make sure children can still concentrate: creating different centres of attention and the amount of intimacy of a space. The set up of the design is showing multiple ways in order to achieve this. Firstly, each main learning space exists of five multiple learning spaces. Within those learning spaces more differentiation has been created by thickening a wall. The thickness of the wall gives the opportunity to create multiple different smaller learning spaces, all with its own atmosphere. Furthermore, loose furniture that can be placed in different configurations, contributes to the differentiation of learning spaces.

The research about the development of educational buildings, made clear in which particular part of the school building design an improvement could be made. A differentiation of spaces is namely already for many years an issue within the design. However, this differentiation always happened

next to the traditional classroom typology. This is why, I've chosen to try to bring those different learning spaces into the classroom itself.

This idea of a differentiation of learning spaces can be used in any culture at any specific location. I believe ever style, every type of architecture, has its own elements to create and establish this differentiation. It's up to the architect and the client to find for every single project a certain style. Even modern and post-modern architecture are providing elements to achieve a differentiation of learning spaces.

Reflection on methodical line of approach
Two main elements were very important within the design process that I will take with me in practice. A design can be divided into five parts that are all related to each other: human context, urban context, form, function and construction. Going through all those aspects during the process very quickly helps to make decisions faster and one gets multiple reasons for doing something. Sometimes, working on a certain element of the design, one needs one of the other aspects, in order to be able to make a decision or to be able to come to a solution. The other aspect is that it's very useful to make different versions. Looking to different solutions gives the opportunity to make decisions more clear. Those two elements are very important to continue working on in order to become a good architect.

Relationship between the project and the wider social context
The vision on how a learning space should look like can be implemented everywhere. The difference can be made within the architectural style. But it can also be that in certain societies, specific capacities or skills are very important. Those can be highlighted within the design and can be different in every other situation. Still, most schools are more teacher orientated than pupil orientated, and in that sense the focus is more on teaching than on learning. This means that pupils are more passive than active. The architecture can help by improving the way children learn and what they learn. And in the end to give the opportunity to every person to discover and develop its own capacities and talents, so that all will flourish and not only the higher educated.