Reflection P5

● the relationship between research and design
The research on using vegetation to stimulate creativity was used to generate design requirements. The results could not be literally implemented into the design, because the research had too many variables and was more focused on generating scientific result then design results. The research conducted on climate was however directly linked to materialising, dimensioning and organizing the design. The building technology report does also have a chapter with more general information on how to implement vegetation space to benefit the climate design that can be useful to other students and architects.

● the relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)
Architectural Engineering focuses on using technical innovation as the leading theme in design and coming to design requirements. My original subject was not very technical in nature, but focuses more on the psychological response of people to plants in a creative work environment. Deriving design requirements was possible but the subject did not yield the specific technical challenges to generate design. This made it hard to fit the subject into the studio’s approach and compare it to work of other students in the studio. By adding a second more technical focus to the design (climate design) it was possible to adjust the design subject to fit the Architectural Engineering studio. The extra technical restriction and possibilities of climate design have really defined my design and greatly helped my process, while giving me a unique challenge and learning opportunity. In the future I think that other students can greatly benefit from the combination of a psychological subject with a technical subject like I have.

● the relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework
Architectural Engineering focuses very strongly on technical innovation and as a result a lot of research is done using similar methods. Next to literature studies, this mainly consists of comparative case studies, material and construction experiments. By working with a PhD student (G. Mangone) I had the unique opportunity to use more methodologies to most architectural engineering students. This mainly consisted of extensive interviews and questionnaires focusing on using vegetation to stimulate creativity. On the other hand working with a PhD student also meant that the research results were more focused on the yielding scientific result beneficial for G. Mangone. This meant that in the end the overwhelming amount of data derived from the research was not clearly applicable to my design. In-depth interviews would have yielded better results for my design requirements then the questionnaires did.

● the relationship between the project and the wider social context
Current research on the relationship between people and vegetation focuses mainly on the health effects of plants for people in general and especially people recovering from physical or psychological illnesses. Vegetation is then implemented in the (usually) indoor environment to reduce and prevent illness, increase wellbeing and speed up recovery. This mainly focuses on hospital or other medical environments and the cost saving factor is found in reducing illness. The research I conducted with Mr. Mangone instead focused on using vegetation to enhance work performance, specifically creativity. Most participants found that plants in a natural environment gave the possibility of a more informal work environment that was beneficial for some creative works but not all. Vegetation could also be experienced as to distracting and to informal for some tasks. The addition of vegetation spaces to the work environment in a place with strong seasonal difference would allow worker to experience the benefits for creative work all year round. My design focuses on introducing vegetation workspaces into the renovation of a common outdated office building from the seventies. Thus the design intervention can be applied to similar buildings off the same period to increase work performance by using plants to stimulate creativity.

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