

Architectural Psychology in Action

Byron Mikellides

Introduction

Carrying out this project has been both academically rewarding and enjoyable. All the 9 outcomes proposed in the original application have been completed plus one or two more outcomes related to an exhibition of students' work at the Centre of Accessible Environments and a real possibility of the students' work being exhibited later this year at the GLC.

These outcomes have been completed within the proposed timetable and budget in close consultation with the Deputy Director of the Reinvention Centre, Dr Chris Rust. The outcomes are briefly listed below and where appropriate, appendices, internet information and various attachments are included at the end of the report.

A specially prepared CD on the mechanics of teaching the module in the future is also part of this report. A hard copy of this report has been handed to the Reinvention Centre together with two separate CDs.

Completed Outcomes

1. A paper on the experience of teaching the subject and module over the past 37 years has been written and published in the IAPS Bulletin of People-Environment studies No. 30, Special Issue, February 2007, ISSN 1301-3998. The paper is of 3,400 words, entitled "Investing the future: achievements of teaching" pp 29-35.

IAPS is the International Association of People-Environments Studies covering both theoretical and practical aspects of Environmental Psychology and the design professions.

2. A paper entitled "Architectural Psychology in Theory, Practice and Education" of approx 4000 words is attached to this report. This could be suitable for publication in Brookes' E-Journal of Learning and Teaching.

3. An exhibition and reception was organised of second year students' work at Headington Hill Hall on February 28th and was attended by local dignitaries, councillors and architectural practices. Presentations were made by the Head of Oxford Police, Superintendent James Trotman, John Darvill, senior partner of David Bonnett Associates, Dr Chris Rust of the Reinvention Centre. The event was also attend by approx 100 people including students and their parents who received the awards and prizes. See attached information of the event in the appendix from the "press release" and Onstream information about the event. The event was a great success as can be seen by the feedback of various emails of students and others. It is also interesting to note that students did not mind doing additional work for the exhibition after the module was completed in the previous semester. Students' educational job satisfaction is not only measured by their research findings and efforts but in sharing their success with friends and relatives. In this year's reception at Headington Hill Hall several families attended from all over England. The sense of occasion in meeting local architects and councillors who put these ideas in real projects was greatly appreciated. Putting research into practice makes the students feel that they contributing something to society. Making research not only interesting but digestible as well as beautifully presented helps both student and clients.

Reaching out specifically to the local community is particularly important and something that the present Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University, Jon Snow, has repeatedly identified. This type of research experience is also good for the students' CV and finding work by having special skills that other courses in Architecture do not provide. A former student who has done this module for example is currently working on making the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford accessible to all.

Three £50 prizes were donated by Professor David Bonnett's Office, 40 copies of two publications from the Home Office were donated by the Thames Valley Police. Specially designed certificates were presented to the students by the appropriate dignitaries. All this information and more is included in the specially produced CD.

4. The preparation of the special CD for the occasion of February 28th is also instrumental in providing a practical guide of module U30024 and how it is taught. This was in fact one of the concrete suggestions made by the Reinvention Centre. The module guide is included in the CD listing the main participants, speakers and helpers from the local community and alumni. This is helped by the fact that both John Stevenson and Mars Street from the School of the Built Environment attended the event and considered it an important part of architectural education, to be included in the architectural curriculum.

The CD includes amongst other things photographs of the event, specially designed certificates, students posters exhibited at Headington Hill Hall, some students' projects in full to enable a future coordinator of the module to repeat and improve the teaching of the module. This CD was given free of charge to all the students taking part in the exhibition at the end of May and was sent to the local councillors and local MP Andrew Smith who expressed his interest on the subject (See Appendix). The CD was also sent to the Head and Deputy Heads of Architecture and the Dean of BE. It is hope that by communicating this module to all concerned will create a climate of incorporating its rationale and practice in future architectural courses.

5. A production of another CD including the four modules of Architectural Psychology teaching over the years. This is important in order to put the above module in context of undergraduate education research-based experience; i.e. it is best suited to the course in year 2. This is based on 39 years experience under 5 different Heads of Architecture with different philosophies. The subject not only survived but got stronger. Students consider making architecture more humane is as important as winning design awards on creative designs.

In Year 1 students are exposed to different theoretical and experimental research and approaches – from human needs and emotions to colour, perception, space and cross cultural studies. In Year 2 they identify a problem, set up a hypothesis, establish the dependent, independent and intervening variables and test the hypothesis by meeting real people. In doing so they are exposed to quantitative and qualitative methods. In year 3 students, as a result of their year 2 research experience are able to look critically at research and other publications relevant to the practice of architecture. In addition to the research element of module U30024 entitled Interdisciplinary Practice (formerly know as M009921 Experiencing Architecture and Design) the emphasis is on “hands on” experience with the real world by talking to people and undertaking live projects and experiments where possible. It is possible every year to identify such projects whether on accessible architecture, “designing out crime” or as it happened this year in doing several University based projects with the help of the Head of Estate, Mr Ian King. A special meeting was arranged in March with Mr King and the University Creative Services to inspect and take away about 10 reports related to the campus. The feedback was also good.

6. Exhibition of students' work was arranged at the Annual General Meeting of the CAE (Centre of Accessible Environments), 70 South Lambert Road, London, SW8 1RL on Tuesday 21st March attended by 55 people. This exhibition was attended by over 50 people and the feedback from the Deputy Director Helen Carter was very positive indeed. (Phone conversation 19th March 2007 and email in the appendix).

7. A further development on the above work which was also not listed as an outcome in the original application to the Reinvention Centre is a real possibility of this exhibition to move to the GLC in London. In fact Helen Carter kept the projects for this development. I have met Prof. David Bonnett on the 7th July 2007 for this purpose and have sent him further information about the students' work to facilitate this development.

8. A special Reinvention Centre poster (A1 sized) was prepared and exhibited in both exhibitions, and for the forthcoming GLC exhibition.

9. Updating Instant Statistics/Architecture for People. With regard to teaching quantitative methods to Year 2 students it was decided to use extracts from the book written by B Mikellides on "Instant Statistics" and make it accessible on WebCT. The aspects will include:

1. Theorising the use of parametric and non-parametric tests
2. Guidelines in writing up a report in Environmental Psychology
3. Hard copies of other extracts of Instant Statistics on Difference and Correlation tests to be given in lectures
4. Other research projects such as Prof Küller's "Comprehension of Perceived Environments" on Web CT
5. Access of SPSS version 14 – "A Beginners Guide to SPSS for Windows", devised by Wakefield Carter to be available to architectural students. The cost of the booklet is set to be £5 per copy.

With regard to a new edition of "Architecture for People" published by Studio Vista (UK) and Holt Rinehart & Winston (US) in 1980 there is interest of a new edition by Architectural Press.

10. Housed Environmental Psychology Reports in the Resource Centre of the School of the Built Environment (supervised by Inga Taylor). About 1000 projects are housed there.

11. The database of the students' projects over the past few years was completed. The database contains approximately 1400 projects. This database contains the titles of most of the projects done by students for module U30024 in its various guises from 1974 till 2007. Each project was identified by a key word – 100 words in all (see appendix). One can identify how many projects were carried out over the period on a particular topic e.g. disability issues of design (85) crime (148) and colour (153). Further more the reader can identify the year and title whether the project is physically available in the Resources Centre or the School of the Built Environment. Most of the projects are stored there chronologically in a special section supervised by Ms Taylor.

This database can be accessed on the Internet at
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/social/psych/year2projects.html>

The visitor can enter a key word and the titles including year and country will be listed. This is a unique database representing interests in Environmental Psychology by design students. Future usage or research could compare this database, for example, to interests of full-time researchers in this area in refereed journals such as the Journal of Environmental Psychology, Ergonomics, Environment & Behaviour to ascertain whether these interests identified by designers at undergraduate level are pursued further by international research journals.

The reader can access this unique database on the internet. A hardcopy of 33 pages is also available of the titles, date and key words. In the Appendix one can see the usefulness of this database by identifying on a longitudinal basis the number of projects undertaken by students. For example there is a constant interest over the years on colour whereas there is a sharp increase in "designing out crime" in the past 10 years. It is also possible within a particular topic such as "colour" to isolate what aspects of the topic were investigated, whether colour preference, post occupancy evaluation or emotional aspects of light and colour. (See graph in the appendix).

12. A seminar to the Reinvention Centre on the subject if and when needed can be arranged any time.

Final Word

In the original application I have listed 9 outcomes for the completion of the project. I have listed above, 12 outcomes including the possible exhibition at the GLC later this year. I will inform the Reinvention Centre of any new developments as well as the students who will by then be in their third year. I also include in the appendix a detailed account of the money spent on different aspects of the project as requested in the original application. A further list of actual receipts is also available for inspection.

Finally I would like to thank you for making this project possible in its various outcomes and hope that the Centre has made a worthwhile contribution in making this work more accessible to students here and abroad in the future.

Byron Mikellides

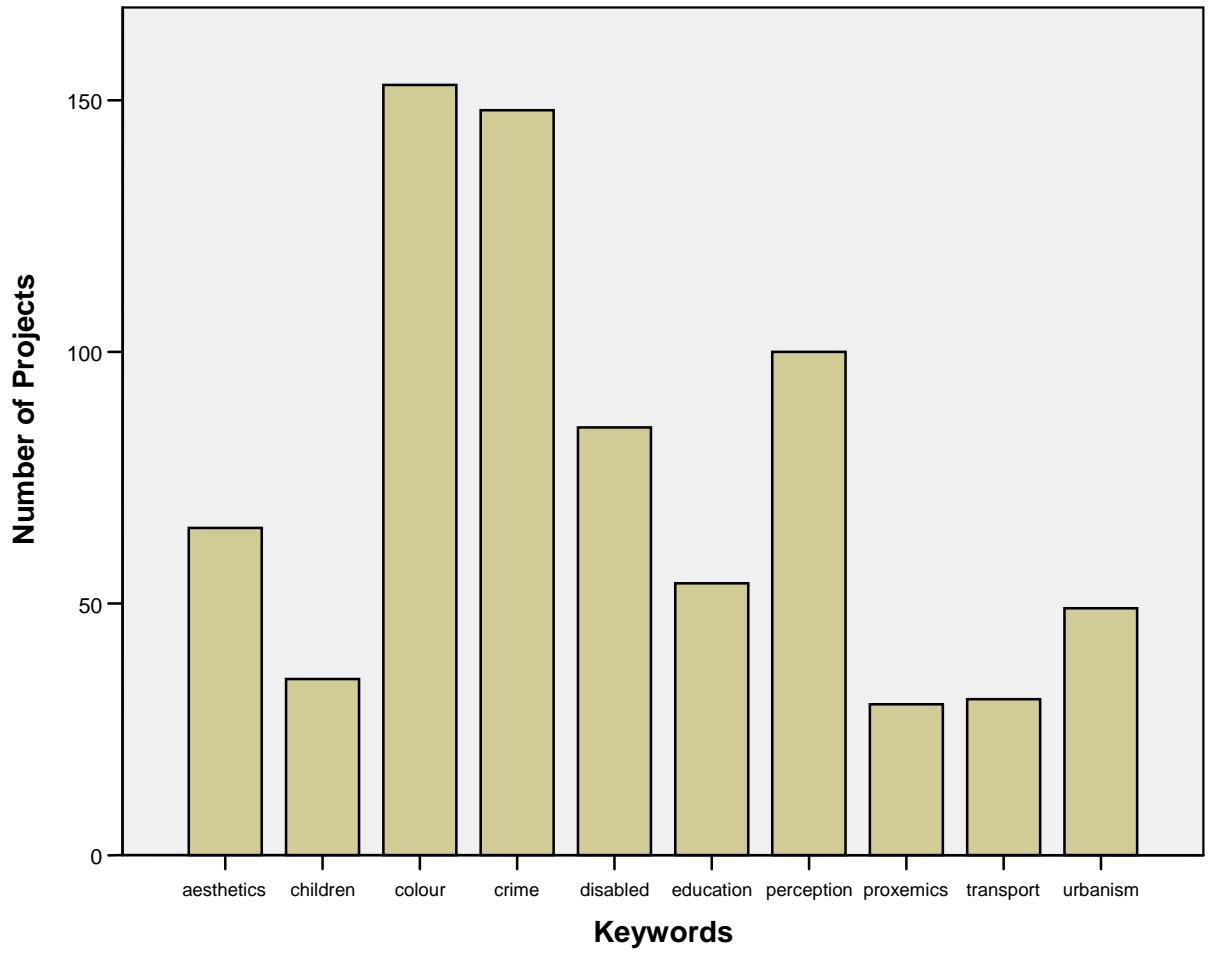


Figure 1 Number of topics of the top 10 Keywords in students projects

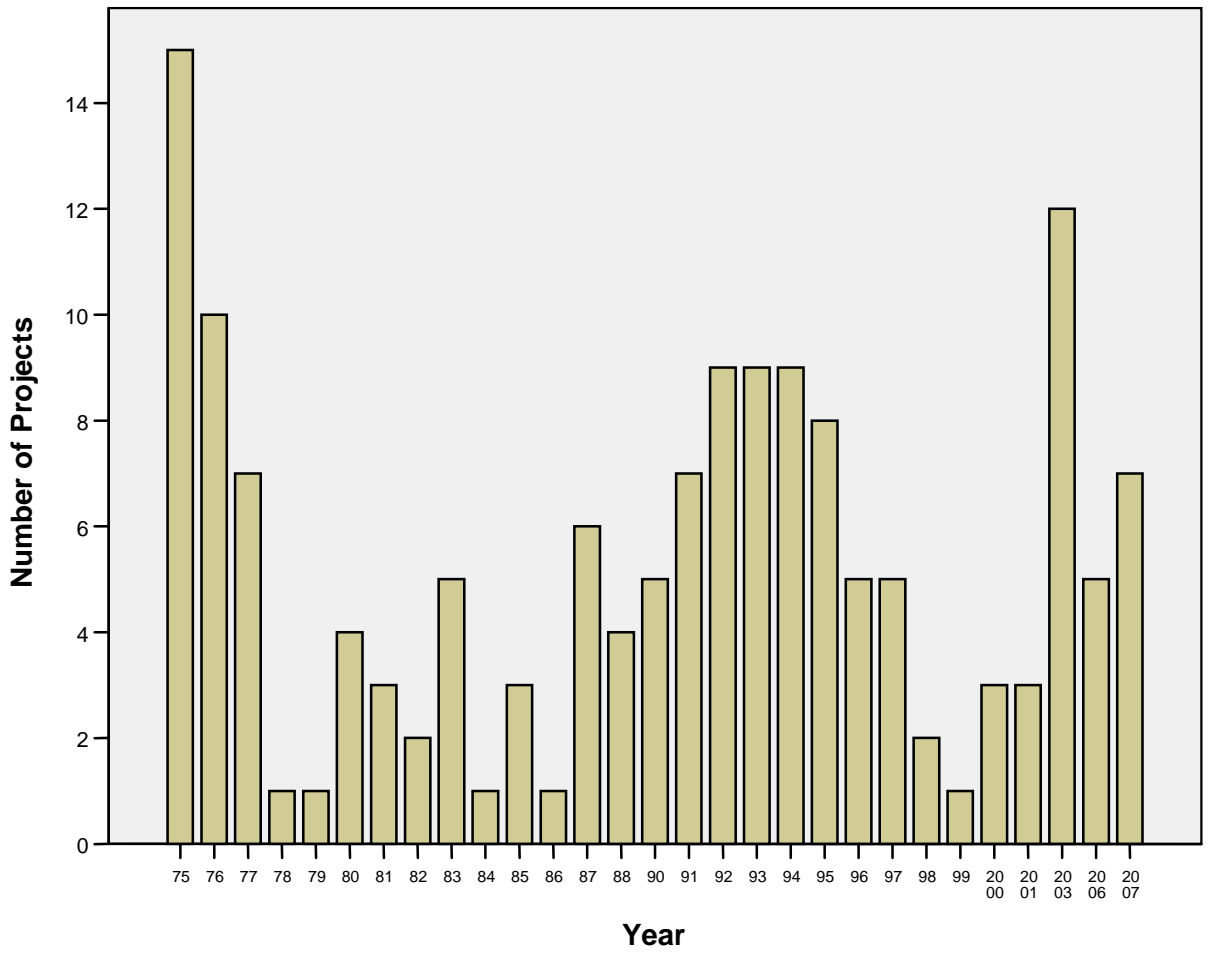


Figure 2 Number of Colour projects over the years

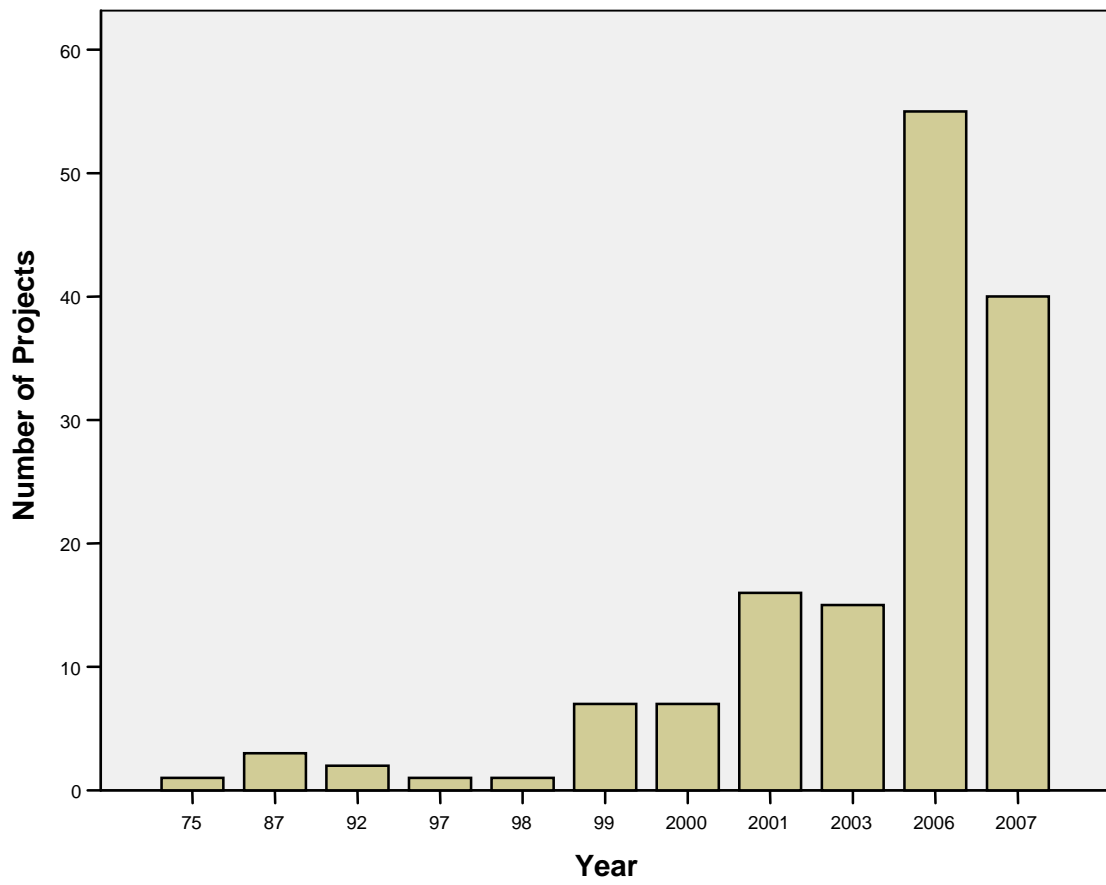


Figure 3 Number of "Designing Out Crime" projects over the years

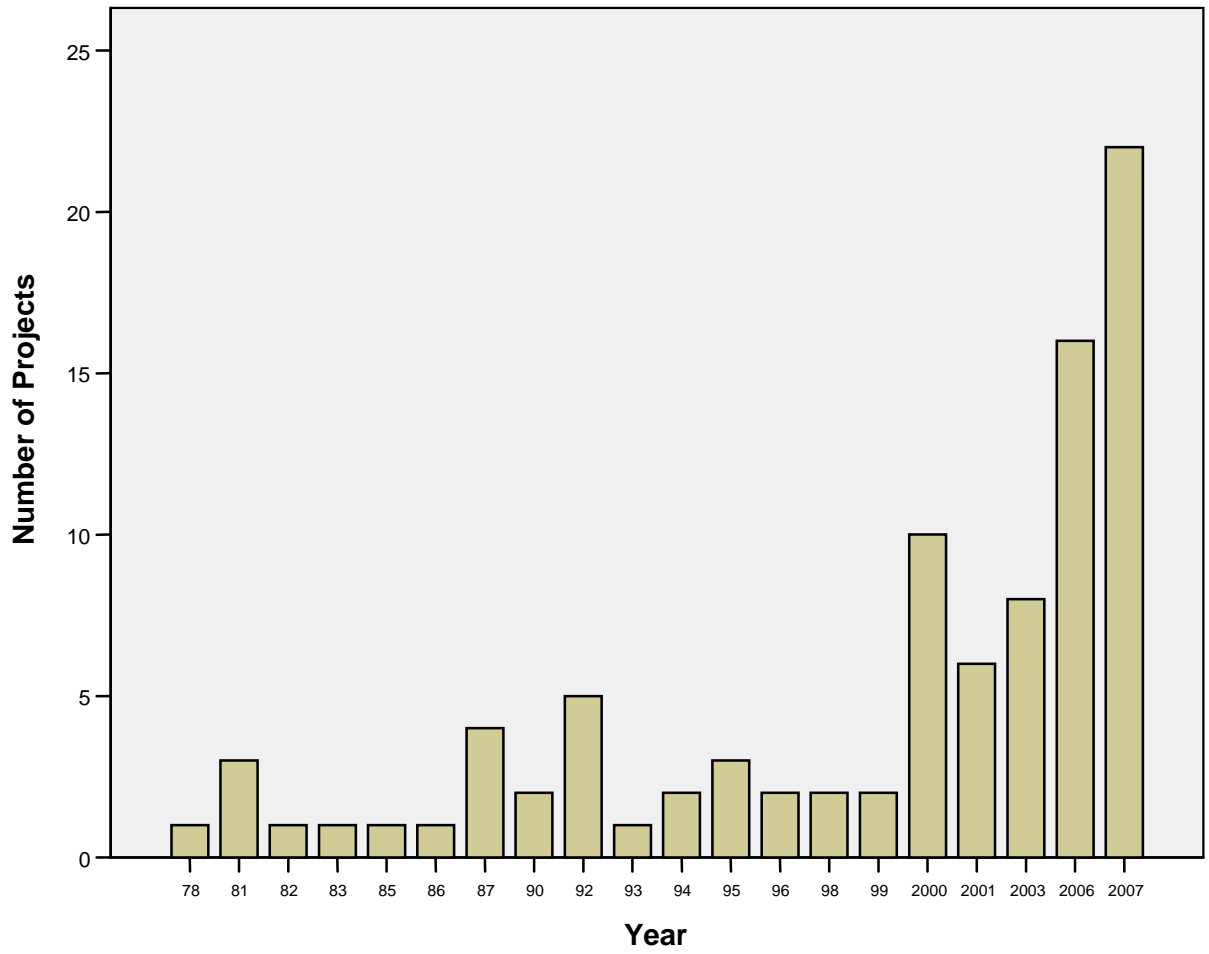


Figure 4 Number of projects on disability aspects of design and access over the years

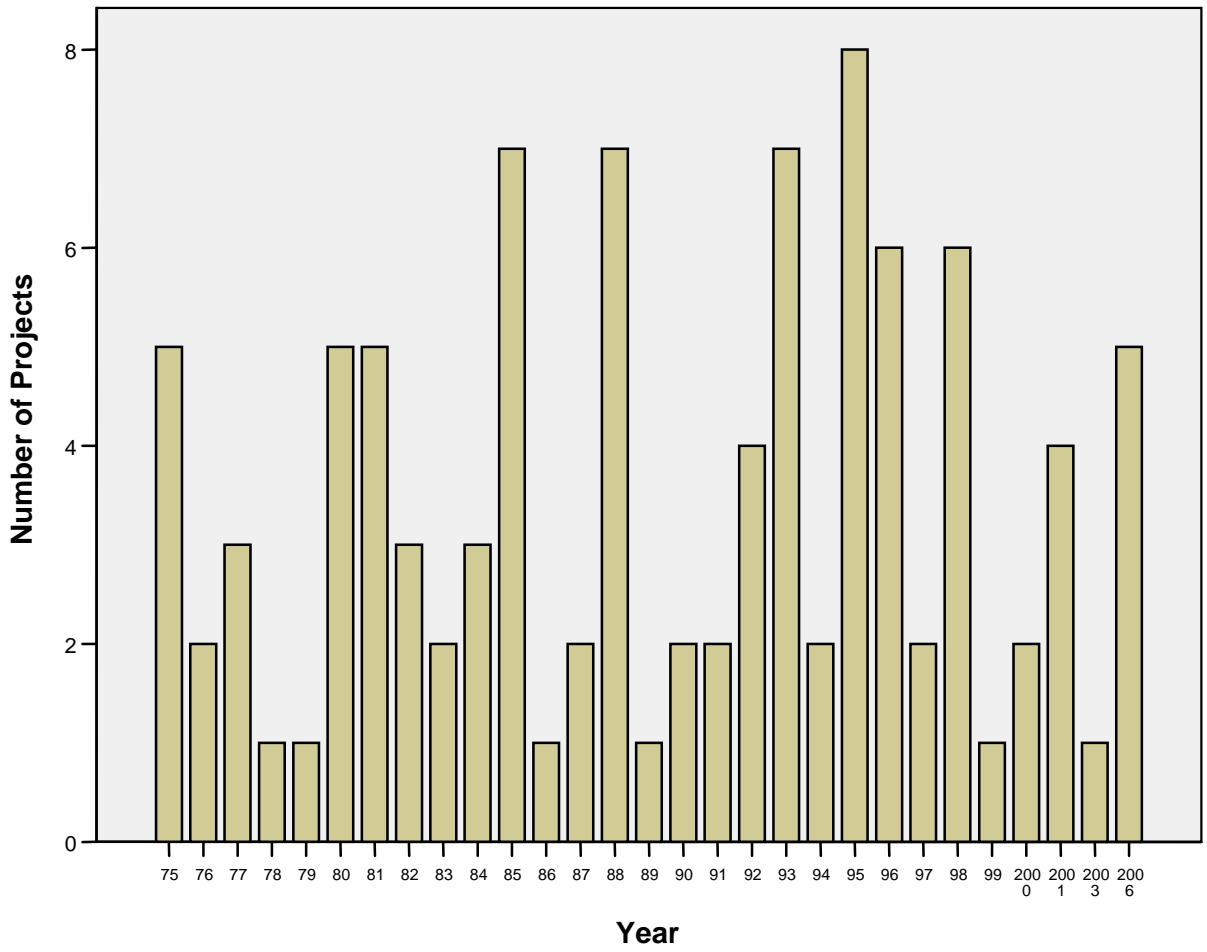


Figure 5 Number of projects on perception

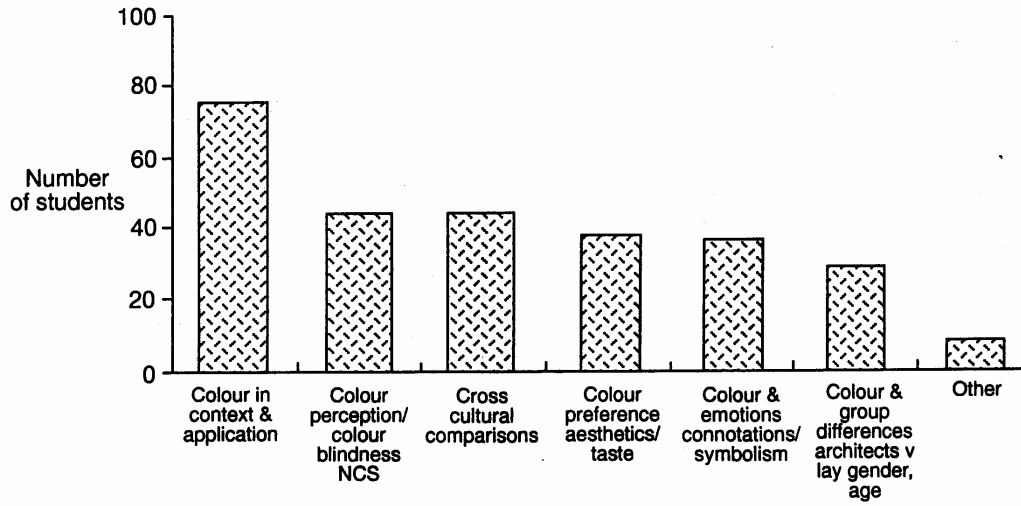


Fig 8: Topics of colour reports

Keyword	Frequency	Percentage	Keyword	Frequency	Percentage
colour	153	11.1	elderly	6	0.4
crime	148	10.7	windows	6	0.4
perception	100	7.3	leisure	6	0.4
disabled	85	6.2	ncs	5	0.4
aesthetics	65	4.7	detail	5	0.4
education	54	3.9	dyslexia	5	0.4
urbanism	49	3.6	orientation	5	0.4
shopping	42	3.1	age	5	0.4
university	39	2.8	emotions	5	0.4
children	35	2.5	motivation	4	0.3
transport	31	2.3	furniture	4	0.3
proxemics	30	2.2	admissions	4	0.3
estates	29	2.1	sociometric	4	0.3
social	28	2.0	humanising	4	0.3
halls	26	1.9	interior	4	0.3
gender	25	1.8	dulux	4	0.3
art	23	1.7	parking	4	0.3
graffiti	23	1.7	live	3	0.2
design	23	1.7	feedback	3	0.2
personality	19	1.4	lifts	3	0.2
privacy	18	1.3	creativity	3	0.2
entrances	18	1.3	crits	3	0.2
music	17	1.2	clothes	3	0.2
defensible	16	1.2	mentoring	3	0.2
emotion	15	1.1	gardens	3	0.2
laymen	14	1.0	time	3	0.2
presentation	13	0.9	semiotics	3	0.2
scale	13	0.9	friendliness	3	0.2
pubs	12	0.9	material	2	0.1
lighting	12	0.9	ergonomics	2	0.1
image	12	0.9	favourite	2	0.1
museum	12	0.9	smoking	2	0.1
participation	11	0.8	housing	2	0.1
modern	11	0.8	performance	2	0.1
library	11	0.8	religion	2	0.1
poe	11	0.8	eysenck	2	0.1
personalisation	10	0.7	queues	2	0.1
hospital	10	0.7	advert	2	0.1
course	10	0.7	materials	2	0.1
memory	9	0.7	aesthetics	1	0.1
toilets	9	0.7	luscher	1	0.1
fengshui	9	0.7	politics	1	0.1
access	8	0.6	museums	1	0.1
signs	8	0.6	sick	1	0.1
working	8	0.6	merrett	1	0.1
parapsychology	7	0.5	biorhythms	1	0.1
emergency	7	0.5	toilet	1	0.1
client	7	0.5	film	1	0.1
hospitals	6	0.4	landscape	1	0.1
technology	6	0.4	escape	1	0.1
sport	6	0.4	sustainability	1	0.1
texture	6	0.4	blindness	1	0.1

studio	6	0.4	barriers	1	0.1
eating	6	0.4	vandalism	1	0.1
maps	6	0.4	colour	1	0.1
boundaries	6	0.4	sex	1	0.1

Dear Byron

I hope that this is sufficient.

Question 1.

The module, I thought, was quite challenging and really combined both the theory and practical side of architecture. I enjoyed the guest lectures the most, where more practical work was undertaken.

Personally, I expanded my knowledge in a variety of areas including:

First hand experience on how the public move around a space.

Actively think about crime prevention in a building.

Interaction with numerous members of the public

Question 2.

I thought the prize ceremony was a great opportunity to interact with other architects and visitors. This was also the aspect that I enjoyed the most, since it is not too often that the opportunity arises to meet such people.

Thanks

Rahul

Question 1

I enjoyed doing this module. The module content was really interesting and helpful. Especially Assael's lecture on our year out. It helped me to open my eyes to the day to day problems. It made me realise that I need to keep in mind the accessibility of my building and how it can help the local community as well but still manage to create an interesting building.

Question 2

I didn't mind doing the additional work for the posters because I was really happy that I got chosen to participate in the exhibition! The ceremony was fun, it was short and sweet. Plus the cookies were good!

It was really interesting talking to the police and the guests and explaining to them our projects.

I like this exhibition idea because it makes you feel that what you did actually is interesting to others rather than 'just another essay I have to write to pass this module'.

Hope my answers were helpful.

Filipa

Hi Byron

Question 1. What was your overall experience of this module? What have you personally gained from it?

Overall I really enjoyed this module, I feel now I understand perceptions of safety and the causes of these perceptions. The module I feel had some very good lectures, which were not only very informative in content but were also very interesting, and I looked forward to attending them.

Question 2. How did you personally experience the prize ceremony, visitors, last week? What aspect did you appreciate most? Did you mind doing the additional work (e.g. posters)? on a module that finished before Xmas?!

I really appreciated the prize ceremony, not only that our work had been valued but it also gave us the chance to speak to the guests who deal with what our projects are about everyday. I appreciated the most the fact that the visitors would actively talk to the students, and genuinely seemed interested in the work. I didn't mind doing the extra work because I felt honoured to be given a prize for it.

George Calver

Hi Byron,

Question 1. What was your overall experience of this module?

It is a great module and I really enjoyed it. The issues put forward are relevant to our design work.

What have you personally gained from it?

The module put forward some issues in architecture that I did not know about, so I have gained knowledge that there may be many unknown issues out there that need to be seeking out and exploring.

The research aspect of the module is very relevant to what we are doing in the rest of the course. Carrying out the project/experiment required by your module has given me a set of skills and the confidence to research more issues in the future.

Question 2. How did you personally experience the prize ceremony, visitors, last week?

I thought that it was wonderful to get everybody together and celebrate our hard work.

What aspect did you appreciate most?

For me it was a great event that gave most students a sense of achievement.

Did you mind doing the additional work?

No it only took a few hours.

Byron your work and enthusiasm is appreciated by many of the students and your module is refreshing and extremely important as part of education.

Thank you

Emma

Hi Byron,

I thought the module was very interesting, Roger Hampshire is a very good speaker introducing interesting and relevant topics. I particularly enjoyed his input into the module. David Bonnet was also a great addition and in terms of future relevance, I enjoyed David Assaels visit.

Sometimes in architecture we get so wrapped up in conceptual work that we forget that one day we will have to design for real people with real issues and I think that the visiting lecturers provided a good platform for exploring these ideas. This is especially true with a view to the practice of architecture that will be inevitable for most of us in our year out ie small scale projects that could have a big impact. I think that this is particularly relevant for those on the course who have never actually been employed.

The prize ceremony was a nice touch, an extra incentive to do well, everyone likes a cookie for their efforts!! It was good to meet people who may be instrumental in the decision making processes involving crime and disability issues. These people could be our future employers. Good to get their opinions early in our careers. The posters did not really take that much time - it was worth it for the buffet!

Regards, Penny Dixon

Dear Byron,

As always I enjoyed the overall experience of the module, in particular the talks from David Bonnett and the designing out crime officer, which both encouraged me to look at my designs in a new light.

I was delighted to receive the award last week and found the experience enjoyable and sadly rare at brookes. I didn't mind at all producing the extra work as it was great to be chosen and only positive outcomes can come from such an exercise.

Thanks again

James Stroud

Subject: Student exhibition
From: Helen Carter <helen.carter@cae.org.uk>
Date: Mon, 02 Apr 2007 09:21:46 +0100
To: <bmikellides@brookes.ac.uk>

Dear Byron

Thank you for loaning us the exhibition of students' works. We displayed them in the Access Lab space at our Annual General Meeting. It was extremely well received by our members prompting discussion and constructive dialogue about inclusive design. I would recommend this exhibition to anyone interested in the concept and practical application of inclusive signage and look forward to hosting future recipients of the David Bonnett Award.

Best regards

Yours sincerely

Miss Helen Carter
Head of Finance
Acting, Deputy Chief Executive
helen.carter@cae.org.uk

Centre for Accessible Environments

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www.cae.org.uk

SMITH, Andrew (MP)

From: SMITH, Andrew (MP)
Sent: 27 February 2007 16:09
To: 'arch@brookes.ac.uk'
Subject: FAO Professor Byron Mikellides

Dear Prof Mikellides,

Thanks very much for your letter of 18th February and invitation to the Designing out Crime & Inclusive Design Exhibition tomorrow.

I am sorry that as the Commons is sitting and there are votes, I will not be able to get back to Oxford to attend.

I well recall my visit last year, where I was impressed with the quality of work being undertaken.

I agree with you about the importance of accessible architecture and high quality design. I wish the event tomorrow and the ongoing work of your students every success.

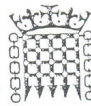
Best wishes,

Andrew Smith MP

*Copy of e-mail - I
want see whether it
would reach you.*

*Best wishes for the
exhibition - sorry I
can't be there.*

Andrew Smith



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon DAVID CAMERON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Prof. Byron Mikellides
Architectural Psychologist – Oxford Brookes University
Headlington Campus
Gipsy Lane
Oxford OX3 0BP

Thursday 1 February
DC/ABR

Dear Prof. Mikellides

Thank you very much for inviting David Cameron to attend the Oxford School of Architecture's celebratory exhibition.

David greatly appreciated receiving your invitation. Regrettably, however, he will be unable to accept your kind offer, owing to a prior commitment in his diary on the date in question.

He has asked me to send his best wishes to the Oxford School of Architecture on its 80th birthday, and to thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Louise Hall', with a long, sweeping underline.

Louise Hall
Diary Secretary

Press Release

1 March 2007

Designs for a crime-free and accessible Oxford

Oxford Brookes students are continuing to lead the way in architectural designs that work to reduce crime and make city environments more accessible for people with disabilities.

At an exhibition and awards ceremony on 28 February, city councillors and planners were invited on campus to view designs by second year students studying Architecture or Interior Architecture.

The innovative projects showed how good design can help prevent crime and cultivate a feeling of safety, and councillors, planners, and the police are considering how to take on board some of the ideas that the students presented.

This year's 'Designing out crime' projects looked at issues such as perceptions of safety on the Cowley road, where a survey showed that 71 per cent of females felt unsafe walking on Cowley road at night. Another project looked at how to improve safety at the Barnes road multi-story car park in Temple Cowley, and there were several proposals for Blackbird Leys.

40 students received prizes and certificates which were presented by Superintendent James Trotman, Head of Thames Valley Police for Oxford City and Roger Hampshire, Crime Prevention Design Advisor for Thames Valley Police. John Darvill, of Bonnett Associates, also presented certificates on Accessible Architecture. The students presentations on disability issues of design and universal design will also be exhibited at the AGM of the Centre of Accessible Environments in London.

In his speech to students, Superintendent Trotman said: "It's really important that students get involved in making safer places. Reducing crime is all of our responsibility, not just that of the police, so keep playing your part, we need people like you."

The students' projects formed part of the architectural psychology module which looks at the relationship between people and their environment, and is taught by Professor Byron Mikellides. Through these projects, undergraduates are encouraged to embark on their own research and to consult local residents. In the process, students feel they have the chance to give something back to society.

Professor Mikellides is also a fellow of the Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research, a joint venture between Warwick University and Oxford Brookes University which aims to encourage research-based learning in the undergraduate curriculum. Through the Reinvention Centre, Professor Mikellides will be sharing his experience of the project and competition with other Universities in the UK.

Notes to editors:

For more information, or to obtain photos of the event, please contact Elaine Bible, Oxford Brookes Public Relations on 01865 484452.

[Designs for a crime-free and accessible Oxford](#)

[Fairtrade Fashion Show](#)

[A thousand lights to transform Oxford's centre](#)

[Pension Fund news](#)

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Brookes staff news

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The students' projects formed part of the architectural psychology module which looks at the relationship between people and their environment, and is taught by Professor Byron Mikellides. Roger Hampshire from Thames Valley Police has also been involved in advising the student and giving guest lectures at the University.

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[top of page](#)

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