Collaborative Planning and Design Constructing Children’s Epistemic Agency

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InnoArch: Spaces and Places for Learning
InnoSchool

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**Primary Goal:** to deepen the understanding of the interrelationship between a spatial experience and a meaningful learning process (TSL)

**Secondary Goal:** to develop a collaborative, inquiry based planning and design process for the future school

TSL* = teaching studying learning
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Research Frame and Focus Areas

Space & Experience

Space experience - Emotional -

Belonging Participation - socio-cultural -

Spaces
Neighbourhood
Physical Environment
Functions
Places
Observation - cognitive-

Usability

"Place & mapping"
INFORMAL

NONFORMAL

FORMAL

Pedagogies

Places and Spaces

Processes
Places and Spaces for Learning

Indoor Studies

Spatial experiences of the school house

Usability Report of the school house (users’ view)

Qualities for the PjBLL; Teamwork

Improvements in Peda&Arch interaction in design

Improvements in dimensioning the school house

Outdoor Studies

TSL supportive environmental qualities (teachers’ view)

• TSL supportive environmental qualities
• Children’s view

Children’s participation & "New School Typologies"
Indoor Studies/Case Opinmäki/ Sub-study:
Children’s Collaborative Workshops at Arkki School

Children’s participation & ”New School Typologies”
Research Questions

1. How/In what ways can the collaborative planning and design process with children act as a tool for active citizenship and cultural learning for children?

2. How/In what ways does children’s environmental local knowledge enrich urban planning?
Pilot Case Opinmäki

City of Espoo
Suurpelto
InnoArch as a co-developer in the Opinmäki architectural design process

Data collecting:
1. Digital video material
2. Interviews
3. Photographs
4. Notes
5. Artefacts (drawings and models)

InnoArch researchers apart and together all InnoSchool

Master’s thesis in architecture presents new typologies

InnoArch: Aija Staffans & Helena Teräväinen
Arkki workshops in autumn 2007

- Children & youth in ages 11-18 working together
- Documented in photographs and video tapes;
- 18 workshops and closing seminar

- Arkki = Architectural School for Children and Youth
- Architecture is part of the visual arts education in Finland
  at the comprehensive school in Finland
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meetings</th>
<th>Date/ Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Preliminary observations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. A nice place</td>
<td>A café, a round places, sofas and soft chairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. workshop</td>
<td>2.10. &amp; 3.10.</td>
<td>Future space (own) to work and learn (1)</td>
<td>PCs, smart boards, screens. Round shapes, transparent walls and cupolas, roof like the sky, green nature and bright colours, futuristic shapes in the furniture, ball-shaped chairs, sofas; separate moveable spaces, learning modules also outside.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Meeting Points and Routes</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Workshop</td>
<td>30.10. &amp; 31.10.</td>
<td>Meeting points and routes</td>
<td>Entrance and centre halls and all the other big halls like for physical education and feasts. Currents of people. Students were longing after nature: and works of art. Places to stay were cozy and peaceful, bordered by green belts. Many seats. Water in many different elements: ponds, rivers with bridges, falling waters. Plants to see and eat. Different surfaces, different materials, labyrinths, various levels: staircases, ramps etc. Roofs as playgrounds and gardens.</td>
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<td>5. Workshop</td>
<td>6.11. &amp; 7.11.</td>
<td>The outside environment of the school</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Specific Spaces</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>7. workshop</td>
<td>20.11. &amp; 21.11.</td>
<td>Future Spaces to study and learn (groups) (2)</td>
<td>Organic shapes. Cell shapes came out and also attempts to share round shape into cornered rooms. The big centre hall surrounded by smaller spaces (class rooms) came out several times. Rooms were very high with balconies, bridges and many levels inside. On the roofs open air living areas. Access outside directly from every class room. Nature elements like stones or water elements like fountains, ponds and brooks, were placed between the class rooms.</td>
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<td>8. workshop</td>
<td>27.11. &amp; 28.11.</td>
<td>Future Spaces to study and learn (clusters) (3)</td>
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<td>Seminar at Arkki School</td>
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<td>Discussion about all topics and creations together with parents</td>
<td>A huge amount of fantastic drawings and models. The overall picture was cleared up to, when everything was repeated and analysed together. The students (pupils) had again opportunity to explain their solutions to the audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Clusters, glass corridors"
"Clusters and bridges" (b)
"Roof garden/ court yard as roof" (c)
"New School Typologies"

Master Thesis in Architecture,
Sini Meskanen May 2008

"Piazza"
"Stoa"
"Serial Atriums"
"Roof Garden"
"Heart, bridge and clusters"
Participation

- Participation in the planning and design process: In Finland citizens’ participation in urban planning processes is defined in the Land Use and Building Act implemented in 2000.

- "3Ps" - *provision, protection and participation* - included in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - and participation is the least recognised of the "3Ps" (Horelli 1997).
Children acting

- Childhood is social category not merely a transition phase towards adults life (Alparena & Rissotto 2001)
- Children and youth have right to participate in planning and design of their own environment
- Children as users of the school house - User’s point of view in the design of the school house (places & spaces)
Workshop method

• Collaborative workshops as a method to collect data of children’s ideas and opinions

• Collaborative workshops as a method for educate children to know and use their rights

• Arkki Workshops as ”a boundary object”
Arkki Workshops as “a boundary object”

- Participation represents an important strategy in sustainable development.
- City Council of Espoo wants to make clear that also children’s voice will be heard.
- The preliminary results of Arkki workshops (and other InnoArch research) has been presented for Opinmäki Planning & working group (The New School as a center of the new neighbourhood).
Use of Video Analysis

1) **Video taping** useful “in making notes” when children described their ideas and drawings for the future school.

2) This would not have been possible by analyzing only the pictures students created.

3) The possibility of documenting their speech, of listening to their intentions and explanations, and of reviewing this material several times in different groups, has turned out to be fruitful.
2) The TSL (teaching studying learning) method used at Arkki School and generally in Finnish architectural and environmental education for children has its ground in “learning by doing” (John Dewey) and also experiential and reflecting learning, as well (see also Kolb 1984).

Hence it was extremely important to give each student a chance to present his/her own work; while explaining they also learned to clear their thinking and to know their rights as members of society. This is very important when raising children’s epistemic agency.
• "The city as a school and the school like a city”
• Local Internet Forums as mediators between the School and Neighbourhood
• International collaboration
• Collaboration, mediation and sustainability guiding the planning process of the school
• Learning Trails in the environment
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Further Aims and Next Phase

• **A learning neighbourhood**
  
  is a flexible concept outlining the key spatial elements of a neighbourhood that supports both life-wide and lifelong learning. The research will produce a pilot study for a neighbourhood where different formal and informal places for learning have an essential role in shaping the image of the place and supporting its residents and other actors in the aforementioned pursuits.
Thank You!

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