BOOK REVIEWS

INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN EDUCATION: THEORY, RESEARCH, AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS, STEVEN FAERM (2023)

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Design education is at a critical turning point. As design schools continue to question the future of the increasingly volatile design industries while enrolling a new, radically different generation of undergraduates, they are confronted with the dire need to provide their teachers with advanced forms of faculty development so that they can succeed in the years ahead. It is with this growing uncertainty and urgent need that *Introduction to Design Education* serves as a vivid beacon for design institutions and educators alike.

This comprehensive book, containing the four sections of 'Design Industries', 'Design Education', 'Design Pedagogy' and 'Design Classrooms', presents extensive insights firmly grounded in theory and research, as well as practical guidance centred on the key differentiating principles of design higher education vs. traditional liberal arts education methodologies. The text also provides a critical analysis of the significant differences between the generations of design students and what design educators must know about the emerging student cohort in order to customize their programmes' curricula and pedagogy to meet the distinct needs of this impending cohort.

Professor Faerm's book is ambitious in its scope. Yet, throughout its 22 chapters, he examines these topics with great levels of knowledge, skill and success that are informed by his extensive teaching and leadership experiences at one of the most famous and prestigious design schools in the world, Parsons School of Design. In developing this book, Faerm drew from his twenty-plus years of practical design education experience along with his scholarly research culminating in numerous journal articles and two books that are featured on college-level required readings lists around the world.

While his third book is primarily focused on design education at the college level, educators from any studio-based discipline will find this book useful. Middle and high school art studio teachers will gain insight not only in how to improve their teaching practices, but also how best to prepare students for the rigours of a collegiate art and design education.

In the book's opening two sections ('Design Industries' and 'Design Education'), Faerm examines the history and current states of the design industries and the design academy, both of which greatly contextualize the proceeding parts of his book. Other chapters within these sections speculate on the future of the design industries, the advancing roles and forthcoming attributes of designers, and the very nature of the design school structure *itself*. A range of future possibilities and potentials are well-articulated, ranging from the plausible to the fantastical, from the highly specific to the more universal in their applications and usages. In this regard, Faerm displays his impressive abilities to theorize how/why the sectors of design industry and design education must evolve, particularly in college accessibility and the purpose/role of the future design academy.

While these first two sections are powerful and offer great benefits to readers, it is within the latter two sections ('Design Pedagogy' and 'Design Classrooms') where Faerm shines most brightly. In 'Design Pedagogy', Faerm astutely pronounces what it *truly* means to be a design educator in the twenty-first century, which will undoubtedly leave teacher–readers feeling inspired. He delves into the complexities and nuances of design pedagogy, and richly describes how/why young adults are experiencing significant, unprecedented shifts in their cognitive and emotional development. These pronounced changes in student development, Faerm argues, must inform and subsequently reshape the ways in which future design educators work with students. Indeed, Faerm's expository on design student development and how it must always inform advancements in design education and pedagogy is what makes this book so exceptional and distinct from other publications.

Other chapters in the section 'Design Pedagogy' present a wide range of teaching methods that design educators can employ when honing their teaching practice. This is particularly evident in the chapter 'Developing competent pedagogy: A web of practices', which will be especially valuable to those who are new to the teaching profession and those who simply want to become better educators. Spanning four parts, this chapter gives new insights into what it means to be a 'teacher', how/why the role of the educator must evolve into a more complex 'teacher–mentor', ways design educators can cultivate a reflective teaching practice and how design schools can better train and support their faculty. Upon implementation, these actions will produce what Faerm terms 'The Pedagogical Ecosystem': an inter-dependant system that, when optimized, benefits our design institutions, teachers, students and the world at large.

The book's fourth and final section, 'Design Classrooms', provides an array of pragmatic teaching tools for design educators. These tools are comprehensive, focusing on everything from syllabus development to cultivating trust and managing conflict, from teacher body language and verbal communication to how to motivate students. Ways to promote more inclusive classroom environments and the strategic ways to develop teacher mentorship programmes are also discussed. Faerm clearly states why these educators need greater support from their institutions and proceeds to provide examples of what such investments might look like, including peer-to-peer mentoring and

workplace training, as well as making explicit the benefits that the university/ educational institution will derive from that investment. The chapter 'A practical guide to teaching the new design undergraduate', is particularly notable for its content. In this chapter, Faerm builds on his research and theories of young adult development along with emergent generation's attributes and mindsets presented in a previous chapter. Each characteristic is followed by practical pedagogical techniques that strategically target each attribute for students' holistic success. The chapter is extraordinarily useful for all design teachers, brimming with creative teaching methods that will undoubtedly make a big, positive impact on teachers and students in design classrooms everywhere, no matter their levels of experience, academic levels or design disciplines.

The book is written in an inclusive, kind and patient tone yet with an assurance of well-researched authority helping to model what we as educators must do with our students at any level that we teach. This book will help restructure readers' thinking about how best to support design students, so that they not only achieve optimal benefit from their education, but additionally have viable career options when they graduate and have the most positive experiences possible with their instructors while in design school.

Prescient in timing, *Introduction to Design Education* is an enlightening book that discusses many of the reasons why dedicated and advanced pedagogical approaches are more vital than ever in the contexts of the changing design school, student generation and industries. Faerm not only provides concrete evidence as to why this is the case, but provides solid guidance based on current data today and future projections of how the needs of students in design education will evolve in the areas of career, educational focus and social experience. We, as educators, have an incumbent responsibility to engage, communicate and inspire in a way that we might not have needed to in the past. Faerm does a brilliant job of bringing his rigorous and compelling research to us in an approachable yet authoritative book that should be recommended to both new and experienced teachers of design.

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